



GCF Prayer Calendar

The Global Christian Forum (GCF) is a space where Christian communities gather to build relationships, broaden conversations, share faith-stories, and foster mutual respect. GCF invites all traditions in the global Christian family to join in the shared work of Christian unity. It provides the opportunity for theological conversations and encounters in a space of welcome and mutual friendship. GCF makes a special effort to include Christian communities who have traditionally chosen not to join existing ecumenical bodies, including African instituted churches, independent churches, mega churches, charismatic movements, and migrant churches, as well as Protestant, Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Pentecostal and Evangelical churches. There is space for everyone at the GCF table.

In April 2024, the Global Christian Forum is hosting a Global Gathering in Accra, Ghana. This gathering will bring together Christian leaders from all areas of the world and all families of Christianity, so we can journey with Jesus together.

The success of any endeavor is rooted in prayer. Therefore the Global Christian Forum is looking for prayer partners from every corner of Christianity. We are inviting you to join us for four weeks of praying for every aspect of the Global Gathering. 1 Thessalonians 5 instructs us to “pray continually” and it promises that “the God who calls you is faithful.” We rely on the faithfulness of God who has called us to the ministry of Christian unity and who has commanded us to pray continually for this good work. To God alone be the glory - in the church, in the world, and in our lives.

The theme for the Global Gathering in Accra is “That the World May Know” which comes from John 17:23b. We will begin our four weeks of prayer with a reflection on this theme and areas to prayer for during the week. Each subsequent week will have a brief reflection on Scripture and areas to pray for during the week. Thank you for covering the Global Gathering in prayer. We trust that God is doing a mighty work through the Global Christian Forum.

Week One

“My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one—I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

-John 17:20-23 (New International Version)

John 13-17 are considered the Farewell Discourse of Jesus. They include the final words that Jesus speaks to his disciples before his arrest and crucifixion. But as we come to John 17, the last words that Jesus speaks to his disciples are not instructions or teaching, instead he says a prayer over them. Jesus himself knew the power of prayer, and he lifted up his disciples in prayer. At the same time, Jesus lifted up in prayer “all who would believe in him through them.” As followers of Jesus Christ, we can trust that Jesus was praying for us as well.

Jesus prays that all of his followers in every time and every place “may be one as we are one.” Jesus prays that we might be united as brothers and sisters in his love. He prays that we might be surrounded by and drawn into the love of the Father and Son. What a gift to know that Jesus has prayed for us! We also pray that the global church might join hearts together to worship the Lord, “one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all,” as the apostle Paul tells us in Ephesians.

Our prayer this first week is that the Global Gathering theme “That the World May Know” will take root in the hearts of the participants. We pray that Christians may stand together in the love of Christ, so that the world may experience the goodness and grace of Almighty God.

Prayers for Week One:

- 1) Pray for the theme, “That the World May Know” so God’s message might transform the hearts of participants.
- 2) Pray that the Global Gathering might be a sign of hope and Christian unity for the world. In the midst of conflict and division, the gathering might show the peace of Christ.
- 3) Pray for the participants who will attend the gathering, that they might be commissioned to further the work of Christian unity wherever they live and serve.

Week Two

But now apart from the law the righteousness of God has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.

-Romans 3:21-24 (New International Version)

As human beings, we are created in the image of God, yet we often fail to live as God's holy people. In the book of Romans, the apostle Paul tells us that in every time and place, the people of God have fallen short of the glory of God. We live in the reality of brokenness where we sin as individuals and we participate in the collective sins of systemic injustice. One of history's most brutal sins can be seen in the Cape Coast Castle in Ghana. This stands as a witness to the horrors of the transatlantic slave trade which tore Africans from their homes and families for the profit of slave owners in Europe, North America and the Caribbean. The Christian church was an integral part of the slave trade, often providing religious justification for its brutality. As the GCF Great Global Gathering meets in Ghana, participants will travel to the Cape Coast Castle to remember the brokenness of our shared past and acknowledge the ways we continue to live in a world of injustice and inequity.

In large and small ways, we do not love God with our whole heart, and we do not love our neighbors as ourselves. But the promise of God is that his mercies are new every morning. Every morning we can wake up as forgiven people and live again into the newness of God's love.

Even as we acknowledge our own brokenness, God does not leave us forsaken, for though we fall short, we are freely forgiven through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Christ has paid the price for our sin, so we might live as the free, beloved children of God!

Prayers for Week Two:

- 1) Pray for participants, that they may remember the brokenness of the past, acknowledge the brokenness of the present systems, and commit to building a world of freedom, peace, and possibility for all people.
- 2) Pray for those who are struggling in current economic crises around the world as inflation and cost of living continue to rise making daily necessities a challenge for many families.

Week Three

Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever.

-Revelation 22:1-5

Revelation 22 is the end of our sacred scriptures; the final chapter in the Bible. It reveals to us God's ultimate intention for the world, for the church and for humankind; it paints the picture of God's vision for healing and unity. This portrait of healing is where we are going: "*all shall be well and all shall be well and all manner of things shall be well,*" as Julian of Norwich put it. God has told us that through Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, our story ends in healing. Our story ends in the eternal presence of God's infinite love when the church will be one, and we will see God's face fully. It ends in the redemption of our hearts, the healing of our divisions, and the renewal of the entire creation. Revelation is God's promise to us that everything which is broken will be made new in Jesus Christ. We can trust the power and promise of Christ's resurrection, the first fruits of what is to come. We can catch glimpses of that beautiful world, even now, in moments of forgiveness and reconciliation, in acts of compassion and care.

As you go into this week, let Revelation 22 draw you toward something wonderful and beautiful. Let the promise of healing and redemption give you the confidence to look for the glimpses of God's goodness all around you. This week we pray that the GCF Global Gathering will provide a small glimpse of the unity and fellowship that is to come when we join all our voices in eternal praise.

Prayers for Week Three

- 1) Pray for the venue, that it may be a space of grace and fellowship, and pray for the logistics team, that all preparations will be done well.
- 2) Pray for the church in Accra and for those who are hosting the gathering, that God's love may be reflected in their hospitality. Pray that the church in Accra will be equipped to host this event.
- 3) Pray for the hospitality team, for those cooking and preparing food.

Week Four

On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.

Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit."

-John 20:19-22

This gospel story from John 20 begins in a place of fear, but it moves to a place of sending. This is a post-resurrection encounter with Jesus which offers us a narrative that acknowledges the reality of danger in the world, but it is a story that ultimately speaks of peace, faithful risk-taking, and transformation in the presence of Jesus Christ.

In our text, the disciples are locked in a room out of fear. They have witnessed the execution of Jesus, and they are terrified that they might be next. If the Jewish leaders and the Roman empire could so easily kill the Messiah, the One who had embodied the very Love and Power of Almighty God - they could easily wipe out the disciples. So the disciples do what so many of us do when we feel anxious or threatened - they turn inwards and they lock the doors. They try to stay safe by keeping only to themselves.

In the midst of their fear, when the disciples have shut out the world, Jesus appears and offers them shalom - the peace that passes all human understanding. Jesus says to them "*as the Father has sent me, so I send you.*" Jesus is sending them into the world, so all people may know the good news of God's transformative love. He is sending them today, not when they are braver, not when they have it all together, not when they are more comfortable. Jesus sends the disciples as they are: broken, vulnerable, scared out of their minds. He sends them with the breath of the Holy Spirit to share God's love and God's peace with the world.

Our prayer for this week is that we may be ambassadors of God's shalom in the midst of a world that is hurting. Just as Jesus sent the disciples, he also sends us. We pray that the GCF Global Gathering may be a time of nourishment and connection, so everyone who participates virtually and in person may be sent out as a witness to God's peace.

Prayers for Week Four

- 1) Pray for the speakers, that they will be empowered by the Holy Spirit to share the word of God.
- 2) Pray for the translators and interpreters, so participants may hear and understand one another.
- 3) Pray for everyone involved in the gathering, that the love of Christ will transform their hearts. Pray that all participants will be commissioned as ambassadors of unity in the name of Jesus Christ.



GLOBAL CHRISTIAN FORUM

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