

tearfund

Together as **one**

Lent Devotional 2025

Reflections, stories and prayers



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Lent Devotional 2025

9 – 15 March | Week 1: Together as one

Read

‘Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter— when you see the naked, to clothe them, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?’

Isaiah 58:6-11

Reflect

What does Lent mean to you? Perhaps you’re giving something up – chocolate, TV, social media... or perhaps you’re starting something new, a new Bible plan, or a new daily routine.

Traditionally, Lent is a time set aside for reflection, repentance and preparation. It can be a time to enjoy closeness with God. Seek his guidance and wisdom. Choose healthy daily practices. Give up the not-so-healthy ones.

The fruit of fasting

For centuries, Christians have fasted from food during Lent to help them surrender to God once again and remember Jesus fasting for forty days and nights in the wilderness (Matthew 4:1-11).

Fasting is a wonderful spiritual discipline, and in today’s passage, God highlights one of the purposes of fasting: to help us love and care for people facing poverty and injustice.

At Tearfund, we’re amazed every day by the communities and local churches we work with, who are coming together to do just what Isaiah describes: to ‘loose the chains of injustice’ and ‘set the oppressed free’. In the coming weeks, you’ll read stories of how God is moving powerfully through the church across the world. This Lent, let’s ask God to use us to pray and act on behalf of people living in poverty and build unity with and love those around us.

Whatever you're doing this Lent, my prayer for you as you read these devotionals is that you will know just how much God loves you. So much that he gave his one and only son to bring you into a relationship with him, and with a family of believers across the globe. Wherever you are, thank you for praying with us this Lent, together as one.

Discussion questions

1. What are your hopes for Lent this year? Is there anything you want to give up, or any healthy practices you'd like to start?
2. What would it look like for you to practise the kind of fasting described in this passage – one that brings freedom to others?
3. Is there anything you would like God to speak to you about during Lent?



Heavenly Father,

Thank you for the precious time to spend with you this Lent. As I look forward to remembering Jesus' death and celebrating his resurrection at Easter, help me to surrender my heart and focus my mind on you.

Show me how I can help to bring justice and freedom to people facing poverty around the world and close to home, and to share what I have with people in need.

In Jesus' name, amen.

Lent Devotional 2025

16 – 22 March | Week 2: Together with the body of Christ

Read

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you. For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.

Romans 12:3-8

Reflect

Did you know you have unique, God-given gifts? I love the way that Paul describes us as 'belonging' to one another. That means our gifts aren't just for us; they're given to us by God so that we might serve and bless each other. Your relationship with Jesus is precious and unique, but you are also part of a bigger story: the story of the body of Christ.

As followers of Jesus, we're working together for a common purpose – to see God's kingdom come on earth. We each come in different shapes and sizes, with individual skills and passions, but **together we form one body with one aim – to look and act like Christ.**

Does that sound like your local church? For Pastor Sakala in Zambia, it was this vision of belonging to one another that completely transformed his church...

Beyond the building The fruit of fasting

For years Pastor Sakala struggled to get his rural church up and running. His congregation would increase in numbers and then fall again. It was discouraging and very hard work. But the turning point came when he was invited to attend Tearfund's Transforming Communities training. He says, 'We were taught about resource mobilisation, and I realised that, as a church, we had resources we were not using.'

With new found enthusiasm, Pastor Sakala went back to his church and began teaching them about working together. They started a community church building project, each person using skills and resources they already had. Pastor Sakala says, '**It was like a dream seeing a community coming together like this**'. This struggling church with no place to meet suddenly had a new building, built by the community members, and grew from 28 to 135! He says that his church is now 'salt and light' and an example to the community.

The purpose of God's church is not to build church buildings. As Paul says, it's to form one body where all the members belong to each other and work together to see God's kingdom come. For Pastor Sakala, building the church was just the first step in his community's journey to transformation. He is now a facilitator of Tearfund's Transforming Communities training, and has helped seven local churches achieve this same vision of working together to solve problems in their community.

What is vital, for real and lasting transformation in any community, is that the body acts as one in Christ.

Discussion questions

1. How has God uniquely equipped you to bless others? Reflecting on the passage, think about how your abilities and passions can contribute to the healthy functioning of the body of Christ.
2. What do you have in your hands? What are the resources and practical skills that you could use to serve God, his church and your community?
3. Who could you bless today with one of these gifts? Ask God to bring someone to mind.



Pray

Heavenly Father,

Thank you that, through Jesus, you provide not just a saviour, but a family. As we each become one with Christ, we also become one with each other – one family, one body, one church, but with many members.

Today, help me to learn my part in your body. Reveal to me the skills, abilities and gifts you have given me. Help me use them to become more like Christ and to help my local community become more like Christ as well.

I pray for local churches around the world who are partnering with Tearfund to lift their communities out of poverty. Equip them to be salt and light in their communities and to bring lasting transformation to people's lives.

Please help my own church to be a blessing to our community as we learn to be one body with many members, each actively participating for your glory and to see your kingdom come.

In Jesus' name, amen.

Lent Devotional 2025

23 – 29 March | Week 3: Together through trials

Read

We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body. For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that his life may also be revealed in our mortal body. So then, death is at work in us, but life is at work in you.

2 Corinthians 4:8-9

Reflect

What kinds of trials are you facing at the moment? Have you ever felt like Paul in this passage, 'hard pressed', 'perplexed', or 'struck down'? We all experience difficulties at some stage – it's part of being human. But the good news is that God is with us. As Paul reminds us in verse 12 of this passage, **Jesus is 'at work in you'**, even if you can't always see it. And that's a great comfort.

And through the church, God is at work in communities around the world who are suffering in extreme poverty.

Hope in trials

Perched on the banks of the river in San Pedro Sula, Honduras, are the slum communities known as los bordos [the edges]. People there have no access to clean drinking water or sewage systems. During the rainy season, rivers break their banks and wash away what little belongings people have. Poverty is fueling violence and crime.

But **Jesus is bringing new life there, too**. Alongside 26 churches, Tearfund's partner helped communities advocate for their right to a safe place to live.

They also provided training in emotional wellbeing, communication, and how to apply for jobs, helping people to lift themselves and their families out of poverty.

This training was transformational for twenty-five-year-old Pyeni Carolina Fuentes. She applied to the program and enrolled in a beauty school training course.

‘I never imagined that the support would be so complete,’ she said. ‘It was not only money for the tuition of the course; it was also the spiritual talks, the counselling and the business talks.’

Pyeni now has a permanent job at a beauty salon. She used to share a cramped house with 15 people, but with the money she earns, she’s able to support her parents and has built a better home for her family.

When we go through trials, it can be tempting to isolate ourselves from other people. But what if God wants to use the people in our lives to support us, encourage and strengthen us?

Discussion questions

1. It must have taken Pyeni courage to apply for the training course. Do you ever find it difficult to ask for help when you go through trials? Why do you think that is?
2. Who do you feel encouraged by when you go through difficult times? Spend time thanking God for them.
3. Do you know anyone who is facing a trial at the moment? Spend time praying for them, and ask God to show you some practical ways you could support them.

Pray

Loving Jesus,

Thank you that when I walk through trials, you are with me. You never leave me. Thank you that when I feel hard-pressed or struck down, you are still at work in me. Help me to draw strength from the comfort of your presence.

I pray for people around the world who are persecuted because of their faith, or who are living in extreme poverty. Let your life be at work in them, bringing them joy and peace.

Open my eyes to see the ways you are working in my life, and may my life reveal your love and goodness to everyone around me.

In Jesus’ name, amen.

Lent Devotional 2025

30 March – 5 April | Week 4: Together with our community

Read

Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfil the law of Christ.

Galatians 6:2

Reflect

Have you ever faced a challenge that felt too heavy to bear alone? Perhaps a kind word, a helping hand, or a prayer from someone lightened your load. Moments like these remind us of the truth in Galatians 6:2, 'Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfil the law of Christ.'

Acts of love can transform communities

God's calling to 'carry each other's burdens' begins with individuals, but it can also inspire whole communities to collectively reflect Christ's love by supporting and serving others. In the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), violence had divided one village in the Ituri province for years. But through Tearfund's peacebuilding workshops, local churches held community dialogues, which involve gathering information and ideas from a group of people and using that to make changes. By listening, forgiving, and working collaboratively, these communities began to heal. **What seemed impossible became a reality through the power of Christ's love bringing unity.**

As we continue to journey through Lent, we remember that Jesus carried the ultimate burden of our sins on the cross. In response, we are called to bear one another's burdens, reflecting Christ's love in our communities. We can learn from the Ituri community in the DRC, where carrying each other's burdens through community dialogues brought renewed peace to people living in the area.

Patience, who took part in one of the dialogues, said, 'Today, we no longer experience the tension between the two communities that we did before. We now live in peace. The teachings have set me free.'

Are you carrying any burdens at the moment? As well as bringing them to God in prayer, why not reach out to someone you trust and share it with them? Sometimes it can be hard to ask for help, but when we do, we give someone an opportunity to carry our burdens with us and in doing so, 'fulfil the law of Christ'. Through sharing one another's burdens, we can experience the blessing of community.

Discussion questions

1. Do you know anyone who is struggling at the moment? Ask God to help you carry their burden, whether it's through a kind word, prayer, quality time, or a practical act of kindness.
2. Pray for communities like Patience's in the DRC, asking God to bring healing and reconciliation where there is conflict and division.
3. Why not commit to a week of intentional listening? Seek to understand the burdens people around you are carrying, and ask how you can help share their load.



Loving Lord,

Thank you for your great love and for sending Jesus to carry the ultimate burden of our sins. Help us to follow Christ's example by bearing one another's burdens with compassion and grace. Open our eyes to the needs in our communities and give us the courage to act in love and unity.

I pray for reconciliation in places torn by conflict, like the DRC, and for your church to be a light bringing hope and peace.

Strengthen my hands to serve, my ears to listen, and my spirit to walk humbly with you. Help me to fulfil the law of Christ by sharing in the struggles of others and reflecting your love in all I do.

In Jesus' name, amen.

Lent Devotional 2025

6 – 12 April | Week 5: Together with our enemies

Read

“You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbour and hate your enemy.’ But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”

Matthew 5:43-48

Reflect

Sometimes when we read these verses, it can be hard to know who our ‘enemies’ are. But if you’re anything like me, I’m sure you can think of people you need to forgive and keep forgiving, sometimes daily!

Jesus’ revolutionary model for peace is to love and pray for our enemies and to forgive those who’ve wronged us. And for many communities around the world who face violent conflict daily, forgiveness is a powerful way to usher in the peace of Jesus.

Joy’s story

In 2011, communities in Anglos-Jos, Nigeria were torn apart by religious conflict. Relationships between Christians and Muslims were severely damaged, and communities became deeply divided. Young people were exposed to crime and drug abuse, which made them vulnerable to being recruited for violence.

Thirty-two-year-old Joy Ibrahim, a Christian in the community, was heartbroken by the devastation around her, and longed to do something about it.

‘Many organisations have attempted to reunite us and restore the peace, but to no avail,’ she said.

The path to peace

So when Tearfund provided peacebuilding training in Joy's community, she seized it. Women and girls excluded from decision-making because of conflict received coaching on achieving peace. Joy coordinated girls' groups, educating them on addressing challenges like alcoholism and drug abuse.

Joy was transformed. Fearful of working with Muslim leaders due to religious conflict, the training empowered her to forgive them. She now partners with Muslim women, teaching girls to handle conflict non-violently. **'I have learnt how to forgive, accept and tolerate,'** she said.

Joy shares her renewed purpose, empowering others. None of this would be possible without forgiveness. As Easter approaches, be inspired by Jesus' words and Joy's story to forgive, love, and pray for others. Forgiveness is a gift to pass on.

Discussion questions

1. As you reflect on Joy's story, thank God for his forgiveness through Jesus' death on the cross, and for his peace that surpasses all understanding.
2. How does knowing God's forgiveness for yourself help you to forgive others?
3. What would it look like for there to be more of God's peace in your home, your family, your church, or your community? Is there anyone you need to forgive for there to be peace? Ask God to speak to you and help you.



Pray

Gracious God,

Thank you for the gift of forgiveness. Thank you that through Jesus, my sins are forgiven, and I am clothed in your righteousness.

I bring to mind now the people who I need to forgive. Please give me the grace and strength to forgive them, just as you forgave me.

May you continue to use the local church to build peace in communities like Joy's around the world. Please use me to bring your perfect peace wherever I go.

In Jesus' name, amen.

Lent Devotional 2025

13 – 19 April | Week 6: Together with creation

Read

The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it; for he founded it on the seas and established it on the waters.

Psalm 24:1-2

Reflect

Which themes do you most associate with the Psalms? Do you notice the themes of **praise, lament, and hope**? These attitudes run throughout the Psalms, but they're also how I often respond to creation, something the psalmist reflects on in today's scripture. In a time of climate crisis, this humbling truth can lead us to praise, lament and hope as we reflect on what it means for us today.

Praise for our creator

God's creation is one of the greatest gifts we get to experience. We can marvel at its beauty, be nourished by its provision, and wonder at the intricacies of its design – all leading us to praise the beautiful creator who provides for us.

Lamenting the climate crisis

In response to our creator, we must also take seriously our calling to nurture God's creation and ensure that we preserve a natural environment where everyone can thrive. And this means lamenting where climate breakdown and plastic pollution are affecting many of our global neighbours.

People like Mr Kastro are forced to adapt to feed their families because of the growing climate crisis...

Hope for our planet in Ethiopia

Mr Kastro was introduced to conservation farming through a Tearfund self-help group in Ethiopia. Struggling to feed his family using conventional farming methods, he tried out sustainable methods on one plot of land and conventional methods on the other. Astonishingly, he harvested almost 500kg of maize on the sustainably-farmed plot – a remarkable four-fold increase! This would be enough to feed his family for six months.

Using sustainable farming techniques not only improved the quality of the soil and reduced the backbreaking workload for Mr Kastro. It also overcame food shortages: **'We now harvest better crops in greater quantities while preserving our land for future production,'** he says.

Despite the challenges of adapting to a changing climate, Mr Kastro is working together with creation to bring hope for our planet and meet the needs of his family for years to come.

You can read more about how your support for Tearfund is helping families like Mr Kastro's through our Lent appeal at tearfund.org/steps.

Discussion questions

1. How does it make you feel when you spend time in nature? Could you create space to praise God in his beautiful creation this Lent?
2. As you reflect on Mr Kastro's story, spend time giving thanks for communities that are modelling care for God's creation and restoring hope to people living in poverty.
3. How does knowing that 'the earth is the Lord's and everything in it' affect how you view your resources, money, and possessions? Ask God to speak to you this Lent about how you are stewarding what he's given you.



Creator God,

Thank you for the gift of our world. We praise you for the ways it reflects your glory, from the flowers blossoming between paving slabs to the birds soaring above our homes.

We acknowledge that the earth is yours and we lament the ways we have not cared for it as we should. We lament the ways that the people who are least responsible for climate change are often experiencing its worst impacts.

May you continue to use communities like Mr Kastro's to reflect God's hope for our world. Please use me to work together with your creation in all I do.

In Jesus' name, amen.

Lent Devotional 2025

20 - 26 April | Week 7: Together with God

Read

But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! For if, while we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! Not only is this so, but we also boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

Romans 5:8-11

Reflect

Happy Easter!

In Romans 5:11, Paul invites us to 'boast in God', which means to give God glory, praise and honour for the things he has done. And what better day to do that than on Easter Sunday, when we remember and celebrate the incredible gift of salvation?

Through Jesus' death and resurrection, we are reconciled to God — not because of anything we've done, but because of God's unconditional love. Through Christ, **we've been joined together with God**, once and for all! The cross stands as the ultimate symbol of hope, showing us that no situation is beyond God's power to transform.

From death to life

Firas, a father in Aleppo, Syria, experienced the transformative power of hope through training from Tearfund's partner. After losing his home to war and earthquakes, Firas' family faced unimaginable suffering, including the tragic loss of his son. Burdened by grief and living in extreme poverty, Firas found hope through vocational training and began installing electricity in homes in the community.

Even more important than these skills, he gained confidence, support for his mental health and renewed hope for the future. Today, Firas earns enough to provide for his wife and five children, and pay for his youngest child's medical treatment. His story shows us that when Jesus' resurrection power is at work, despair is turned into flourishing life. **'My mental health significantly improved because of the kind treatment I received from the excellent trainers. I rediscovered my humanity. My wife, my children and I are profoundly grateful for you,'** he said.

At Easter, we celebrate Jesus bringing new life. Firas' story is one of many needing this resurrection power. Tearfund partners with churches to end extreme poverty. Support our Lent appeal at tearfund.org/steps.

Discussion questions

1. Why not spend a few minutes 'boasting' in God? In other words, give God glory and praise for the things you're grateful for.
2. Are there any areas of your life where you need new life? Ask God to bring his life and transformation.
3. This Easter, how could you share the hope and love of Jesus with others? Could you pray, give, or act to help families like Firas' find new life?



Risen Lord Jesus,

I praise you today for your death and resurrection. Thank you that through the cross, I am reconciled to God forever. Thank you for the new life you bring to me, and communities like Firas' around the world.

I lift up to you those people and places I know of who need your resurrection power today. Help me to trust in the transforming power of your love, and to share it with those around me.

In Jesus' name, amen.