



# Prayer Service: Through Suffering

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## **PURPOSE**

In the days between May 14 and May 24, 2022, 42 people have died in mass shootings in Buffalo, NY, Orange County, CA, and Uvalde, TX. This prayer service is offered as a means for teens to pray in solidarity with those who have lost people they love. It is also a prayer to entrust the victims to the embrace of God their Father and for the teens to pray through any fear or grief that they feel in light of these horrible events.

## **PRAYER SERVICE AT A GLANCE**

0:00 Gather

0:08 Psalmody and Scripture

0:20 Ritual Response

0:30 Closing

## **PREPARATION**

### **Materials Needed**

- 44 Candles: 10 for Buffalo, 1 for California, 21 for Texas, plus two others
- Votive Candles (enough for each participant); these are in addition to the 44 candles noted above
- Lighter - way in which to light the votives
- Optional Opening Songs:

*Battle Belongs* by Phil Wickham <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qtvQNzPHn-w>



*The King of Love My Shepherd Is*

*We've Come This Far by Faith* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=81a7V0MhJpg>

- Optional Psalm: <https://www.ocp.org/en-us/songs/16023/the-lord-is-my-light>
- Optional Closing Songs:

*Way Maker* by Leeland [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iJCV\\_2H9xD0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iJCV_2H9xD0)

*Give Us Your Peace* <https://www.ocp.org/en-us/songs/82167/give-us-your-peace>

*Amazing Grace (My Chains Are Gone)* by Chris Tomlin <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y-4NFvI5U9w>

## Prepare in Advance

**The following are set-up instructions and resources needed for the prayer:**

- Secure the use of the church's sanctuary
- Sheet music for the optional songs

*Battle Belongs* by Phil Wickham, can be obtained if your church subscribes to SongSelect from CCLI <https://songselect.ccli.com/Songs/7148126/battle-belongs>

*The King of Love My Shepherd Is* <https://www.ocp.org/en-us/songs/1527/the-king-of-love-my-shepherd-is>

*We've Come This Far by Faith* <https://www.musicnotes.com/sheetmusic/weve-come-this-far-by-faith/33763>

*The Lord Is My Light*, can be found here: <https://www.ocp.org/en-us/songs/16023/the-lord-is-my-light>

*Way Maker* <https://songselect.ccli.com/Songs/7115744/way-maker>

*Give Us Your Peace* <https://www.ocp.org/en-us/songs/82167/give-us-your-peace>

*Amazing Grace (My Chains Are Gone)* <https://songselect.ccli.com/Songs/4768151/amazing-grace-my-chains-are-gone>

- Arrange 42 candles either in a line or grouped together.



- Arrange one candle behind the 42 candles and arrange the other candle (just one) in front of the group of 42 candles.
- Print enough copies of **Handout 1 - Prayer Service Through Suffering** for each person if the Psalm is recited.
- As you prepare for the prayer service, please note the options presented for the opening and closing songs as well as the psalm (spoken or sung). Review the choices and make the selections that work best.

## **PRAYER SERVICE OUTLINE**

### **Gathering (8 minutes)**

It is suggested that you secure the use of the church's sanctuary and gather here for this prayer service.

### **Psalmody and Scripture (12 minutes)**

*All Stand*

**Prayer Leader:** *(begin with the Sign of the Cross)*

Lord, you are here with us and we ask you to hear the prayers that we bring before you now. Our faith is built upon the power of your Son's resurrection. He lived. He suffered. He died. He also rose in victory over death. Strengthen our faith that you will comfort everyone who is brokenhearted and that all who died in your friendship will live forever in your embrace. We ask this through Christ who is Lord, forever and ever. Amen.

**Opening Song** (suggested songs are below)

*Battle Belongs*

*The King of Love My Shepherd Is*

*We've Come This Far by Faith*

*All Sit*



At this time, you should choose the sung or spoken response. Options and corresponding resources identified below:

**Psalm: (Sung Response)**

If you are choosing to sing the Psalm, the resources needed can be found at the web address cited above.

**Psalm: (Spoken Response)**

If you are choosing to recite the Psalm, please distribute copies of **Handout 1 - Prayer Service Through Suffering** to each person.

**Psalm 34**

*(Side 1)*

- | I sought the Lord, and he answered me
- | and delivered me from all my fears.

*(Side 2)*

- | Look to him, and be radiant,
- | so your faces shall never be ashamed.
- | This poor soul cried and was heard by the Lord
- | and was saved from every trouble.

*(Side 1)*

- | The angel of the Lord encamps
- | around those who fear him and delivers them.
- | O taste and see that the Lord is good;
- | happy are those who take refuge in him.

*(Side 2)*



| O fear the Lord, you his holy ones,  
| for those who fear him have no want.  
| The young lions suffer want and hunger,  
| but those who seek the Lord lack no good thing.

*(Side 1)*

| Come, O children, listen to me;  
| I will teach you the fear of the Lord.  
| Which of you desires life  
| and covets many days to enjoy good?

*(Side 2)*

| Keep your tongue from evil  
| and your lips from speaking deceit.  
| Depart from evil, and do good;  
| seek peace, and pursue it.

*(Side 1)*

| The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous,  
| and his ears are open to their cry.  
| The face of the Lord is against evildoers,  
| to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth.

*(Side 2)*

| When the righteous cry for help, the Lord hears  
| and rescues them from all their troubles.  
| The Lord is near to the brokenhearted



and saves the crushed in spirit.

*(Side 1)*

Many are the afflictions of the righteous,

but the Lord rescues them from them all.

He keeps all their bones;

not one of them will be broken.

*(Side 2)*

Evil brings death to the wicked,

and those who hate the righteous will be condemned.

The Lord redeems the life of his servants;

none of those who take refuge in him will be condemned.

*(All)*

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.

As it is was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,

world without end. Amen.

### **Psalm Prayer**

Graciously hear us, Lord, for we are seeking comfort and refuge in you. We believe that you are near to those who are grieving. Open yourself to accept our sorrowful spirits. Calm our bodies and minds with the peace which surpasses understanding. For we pray this through Christ your son and our Lord.

### **Scripture: Revelation 7:9-17**

#### **A Reading from the Book of Revelation:**



<sup>9</sup> After this I looked, and there was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, robed in white, with palm branches in their hands.

<sup>10</sup> They cried out in a loud voice, saying,

“Salvation belongs to our God who is seated on the throne and to the Lamb!”

<sup>11</sup> And all the angels stood around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, <sup>12</sup> singing,

“Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom

and thanksgiving and honor

and power and might

be to our God forever and ever! Amen.”

<sup>13</sup> Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, “Who are these, robed in white, and where have they come from?” <sup>14</sup> I said to him, “Sir, you are the one who knows.” Then he said to me, “These are they who have come out of the great ordeal; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

<sup>15</sup> For this reason they are before the throne of God

and worship him day and night within his temple,

and the one who is seated on the throne will shelter them.

<sup>16</sup> They will hunger no more and thirst no more;

the sun will not strike them, nor any scorching heat,

<sup>17</sup> for the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd,

and he will guide them to springs of the water of life,

and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”

The Word of the Lord



## Ritual Response (10 minutes)

Gather near the 44 candles that have been arranged and have the lighter ready for use. At the appropriate time, you will (first) light the 42 candles. Next, the candle behind the larger group of 42 candles will be lit. Finally, the candle in front of the 42 candles will be lit. The script below will help guide you for when it is time to light the candles noted above.

Begin this ritual response by addressing the participants in the follow way:

Between the days of May 14 and May 24, forty-two innocent lives were lost to cruel and senseless violence in Buffalo, NY, Orange County, CA, and Uvalde, TX. The pain of the families is unthinkable. The world has lost laughs that will never be heard again. Achievements, joys, and friendships will never be realized because of this senseless loss of life. This is complete evil and the thickest darkness.

Yet when St. John wrote his Gospel of Jesus Christ, he said that a light has shined in the darkness and the darkness cannot overcome it. The light is Jesus himself and He offers light and hope.

The great mystery of our faith is the fact that in Jesus, God lived a human life. He suffered human anguish. He died a human death. He also rose from the dead to never die again. When we are joined to Jesus, death does not have the final word. No matter how tragic or how dark or how evil the cause of death is, death does not win. Jesus wins. Jesus wins. Jesus wins.

He is the light. Even the smallest light dispels darkness. During our prayer tonight, we commemorate each life to the light of Christ.

Start by lighting one of the 42 candles and then invite each person that is gathered to light a candle until all 42 are lit.

Before the events of May 14, others have violently and tragically lost their lives. Violence with roots in poverty, the violent war in Ukraine, the violence of the death penalty, and violence against the unborn. Loneliness, sickness, and depression have all caused great loss of life. We light this candle in remembrance of all those whose time with us has been too short.

Light the candle that is behind the 42 candles. You can do this or invite someone to light the candle at this time.

We have hope because of Jesus. Jesus wins. He is the great healer. He has taken on Himself the sin of us all. He has taken on our death and neither sin, nor sickness, nor death has eternal power. God is a God of life and we have victory in Him. The small light that we have here with us now, will illuminate the world and dispel all that is against the God of Life. Jesus wins. To remind us of Christ's victory, we light the final candle in hope of the world that is to come.





Light the candle that is in front of the 42 candles and then pray the intercessions. You can light the candle or invite someone to light it at this time.

## Intercessions

You can now use **Handout 1 - Prayer Service Through Suffering**.

Our response to the intercessions are: *Lord, you are our life and resurrection.*

We acknowledge Christ the Lord through whom we hope that our bodies will be made like His in glory, as we pray.

*Lord, you are our life and resurrection.*

Christ, Son of the living God, who raised up Lazarus, your friend, from the dead, raise up to life and glory all whom you have redeemed by your precious blood.

*Lord, you are our life and resurrection.*

Christ, consoler of those who mourn, you dried the tears of the family of Lazarus, of the widow's son, and the daughter of Jairus, comfort those who mourn.

*Lord, you are our life and resurrection.*

Christ, Savior, destroy the reign of sin in us, so that through you we may gain eternal life.

*Lord, you are our life and resurrection.*

Christ, Redeemer, look on those who have no hope because they do not know you, may they receive faith in the resurrection and in the life of the world to come.

*Lord, you are our life and resurrection.*



You revealed yourself to the blind man who begged for the light of his eyes, show your face to all of those who are deprived of your light.

*Lord, you are our life and resurrection.*

When at last our earthly home is dissolved, give us a home, not of earthly making, but built of eternity in heaven.

*Lord, you are our life and resurrection.*

Jesus gave to us the perfect prayer. Let us join together in one voice in the perfect prayer.

Our Father ...

### **Closing Prayer**

God, our creator and redeemer, by your power Christ conquered death and returned to you in glory. May all your people, especially those we remember today, who have gone before us in faith share his victory and enjoy the vision of your glory for ever, where Christ lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

### **Closing Song** (suggested songs are below)

*Way Maker*

*Give Us Your Peace*

*Amazing Grace*

*Scripture quotes from the prayer have been taken from the New Revised Standard Edition.*

*Prayers have been modified from the Office of the Dead from The Liturgy of the Hours: Catholic Book Publishing Co.: New York 1976*