



Look at your hands. Have a good look. However, your hands look to you. They're most certainly clean in these days of regular hand washing to prevent spreading the corona virus. Our hands really are the most remarkable and useful tools involved in so much of what we do and how we do things. Even in these days of social distancing. The Psalmist writes of committing his spirit into God's hands. And at times of being in God's hands. And our hands have become even more significant in these days of physical distance.

We might long to hold the hand of a person we can no longer touch. We pray for the hands of medics to bring healing and comfort. We are grateful for hands stacking shelves and delivering groceries and post. And we're extra wary of anything our hands touch that comes from outside our own home. And this Christian Aid week, we also think of how our hands can be far from ideal. They're not handing out envelopes or hosting events or the many things we're usually busy ourselves with this week.



Our hands can still reach out virtually to our neighbours around the world. Neighbours in refugee camps and cramped living conditions. Neighbours without adequate handwashing facilities. Neighbours who face the devastating impact of Corona virus. With even less of the medical resources we have struggled to access here. So we reach out by clasping our hands together in prayer for our neighbours. And holding our hand open before God. As we declare our needs and concerns for their well-being and our own.

So let us pray together using our open hands.

God, our refuge. We come to you with open hands. Some of us with hearts full of questions. Some of us bruised by bereavement. Some of us fearful of what the future holds. All of us stunned by the events of this year. Draw close to us now. In each of our homes, as we place our honest questions and hopes into your open. Resurrected yet scarred hands. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

With the honesty of the Psalmist. The wrestling questions of Jacob. And the lament of the prophets. We bring to you our questions or our silence. I invite you to hold your index finger. And in silence, ask the question that most burdens your heart. Or simply sit in silence before God. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer. Hear the cry of our hearts, Lord. Silent and aloud for bereaved neighbours near and far.

Comfort those pained by being absent. And hold close those who are hurting alone. Hold your ring finger. And pray for comfort for those you know who are bereaved. Or simply sit in silence before God. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

In this season of Easter, renew us with resurrection hope. That while weeping lingers in this night, Joy will come with the morning. So hold your middle finger. And in the silence, tell God what you are most looking forward to in the future.

Or simply sit in silence before God.
Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

On this Christian Aid week, Sunday, we pray for and with communities across the world who are most vulnerable to corona virus. We pray for people living in refugee camps in cities, slums with limited sanitation facilities. Those who are unable to wash their hands regularly. And have little opportunities to isolate from others. We pray for Christian Aid partners working to provide soap and buckets, communicating clear, accurate information, raising the voices of the most vulnerable and ensuring they're kept as safe as possible.

So hold your thumb as you pray for the most vulnerable. Those closest to God's heart.

Or simply sit in silence before God.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

For those of us who are self isolating, which can sometimes feel like we're not doing anything. Remind us that we're all doing our part and saving lives by simply staying at home.

Hold your little finger and ask God for what you need.

Or simply sit in silence before God.

Lord, in your mercy, hear, our prayer.

We pray for much wisdom and resources for those in local and national authority, for all frontline and key workers here in Britain, Ireland and across the world. So put your hands together. And pray for the many frontline workers and volunteers. And for Christian Aid partners working to help others across the world.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

As we have clapped to honour them, we clap our hands in praise of your glorious creation.

And with the hope that the first shoots of another possible world are coming into view.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayers. Amen.

And we pray together the Lord's Prayer.

Our father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, forever and ever.

Amen.

