



*Make Time for*  
**PEACE**

*Peace Sunday*

*21<sup>st</sup> September 2025*



[www.for.org.uk](http://www.for.org.uk)

## Background

The UN International Day of Peace was created as an opportunity for ‘commemorating and strengthening the ideals of peace both within and among all nations and peoples’. This call was enhanced in 2001 by inclusions of the ideas that the day should become one of ‘global ceasefire and observance of peace’.

The World Council of Churches is a global fellowship of 356 members churches who, between them, represent more than half a billion Christians around the world. They have encouraged marking the Sunday closest to the UN International Day of Peace as ‘Peace Sunday’. By taking time each year to join this global focus on peace it is hoped that the churches local, national and international will feel strengthened and challenged to be more active in their peace work.

## What is Peace?

Peace can come in many different forms and can be described in many different ways. Dictionaries, such as the Oxford Learners Dictionary, will tend to describe **one way**. Such as a ‘Noun’; “a situation or a period of time in which there is no war or violence in a country or an area”. Academics, who spend their life studying peace, will tend to think more broadly. Johan Galtung, the first Director of the Peace Research Institute in Oslo, Norway, thought of peace in **two ways**. Positive and Negative Peace. Positive Peace is about the ‘integration of human society’ and the establishment of things that make for good and secure life. Negative Peace is about ‘the absence of violence’ and ‘the absence of war’. Positive and Negative Peace is interlinked and the type of peace action you take is almost like a see saw – either positive or negative peace I needing built.

**What about Jesus?** The biblical vision of peace is not about one way or two ways but a multitude of ways that help create and establish a kingdom of peace. We are invited to look at a vision of ‘shalom’. Walter Bruggeman thought of this as ‘the flourishing wholeness of creation into the purposes of God’. This flourishing is created through an absence of conflict, a just sharing of resources and today would also ensure care and nurture of creation. The practice of this is shown in many of the words and actions throughout the life and ministry of Jesus.

## **The Context of Your Worship**

Every act of Worship shared in on 21<sup>st</sup> September will have different situations and circumstances that surround it. The main detail of these notes are to help you bring the need for world peace more deeply into focus. This may lead you to also reflect on what builds and sustains peace in your locality or what the challenges and sources of conflict are and how you are called to respond.

## **Theme**

**This year we are encouraging acts of worship and action to use the theme ‘Make Time for Peace’. The bible readings explore this by challenging us to:**

- a) Take time and lament over the pain of the world (Psalm 79, Jeremiah 8)
- b) Take time to think carefully about the impact and purpose of our actions ( Luke 16)
- c) Take time to seek peace for everyone (1 Timothy 2)

Prayer pointers: When praying for peace in the world you may value using <https://www.crisisgroup.org/crisiswatch> to look at where things are improving and where they are getting worse..

## **About the People who Produce the Resource**

The Fellowship of Reconciliation was founded in 1914 and since then has kept a flame of peace lit in a world of war and conflict. We are a faith shaped movement that seeks to bring to life a biblical vision in which love and justice are what rule the world and this is delivered through powerful acts of nonviolence.

We have nearly 900 members today in England and Scotland drawn from a wide range of theologies and church backgrounds. We have within us the Methodist Peace Fellowship and United Reformed Peace Fellowship, helping distil and shape their unique gifts into our movement and supporting their witness for peace in their respective churches.

We carry out Education and Action on issues of Peace, Justice and Nonviolence in the UK. We seek common cause with people of all faiths and none, and use our faith as our starting point and energy for action.

We network with sister branches in many countries around the globe, through the International Fellowship of Reconciliation. This also includes representation at the United Nations.

### **Pointers on the Readings**

These pull out some of the main themes and how they tie into the broader theme of 'Make Time for Peace'

### **Commentary on**

#### **Jeremiah 9: 18 – 9:1 and Psalm 79: 1 - 9**

A reading in Jeremiah of weeping and lamentation. It invites the listener to consider the potential of God weeping over all that is seen. It suggests that God looks over a world that is broken and full of death. People have not opened themselves up to encounter God and this combination breaks God's heart. Tears will flow.

As we reflect upon the imagery, particularly the 'eyes a fountain of tears' it is important to think about how we lament, weep and express our pain at the war and violence in the world. Social media has turbo-charged the news cycle, yet we all know grief has its own timeline.

The Psalm picks up on similar hurt and pain. It is more graphic and suggests that author felt like they were being punished by God. Looking out over the world the author is challenging God to bring the same 'wrath' to neighbours instead of them.

For both of these readings it's easy to get swept up in the brutal and intense imagery they convey. However if we take a step back we can recognise much of what is going on. How often have we seen a community broken by violence? How often have we cried out 'why me and not them'. How often have we thought we saw the work of God in the fire and rain, and not in something different?

Rowan Williams, former archbishop of Canterbury, was called into the Radio 4 'Today' studio for a 'gotcha' style interview after the Asian Tsunami. This brutal natural disaster, in the early 2000s devastated the land and killed thousands of people. The radio presenter challenged Mr Williams on if God could be seen in the waves. After a suitably long pause the reply was simply that no God wasn't found in the waves, but in the response of the world to this outbreak of suffering in the world.

As we seek to make time for peace how do we each create time and space to reflect and share together in the pain of the world? How often are we creating opportunities not just for personal prayer but for people passing by just to drop in and be part of the witness?

## **1 Timothy 2:1-7 A Call to Prayer, Peace and Peacemaking**

Today, as war and violence create waves of displaced peoples, even politicians feel powerless. The very idea of peace seems to mock with hollow laughter. Two opening thoughts. One, 'Jesus came proclaiming peace' (Eph 2:17). 'Peace' (the Hebrew concept *shalom*) is the entire Christian message. Our good news, gospel, Jesus' message of the kingdom of God. Two, notice the repetition of 'everyone'. All are included in this prayer for peace, the gift of *shalom*.

### **The Prayer** (looking at vv1-2):

Prayer centers us; our heart can be molded into a peacemaker. It deals with our deep inner attitudes to develop 'godliness and dignity'. Prayer opens hearts - however cold they may seem - to the wellbeing of society. Prayer can be an anguished heart-cry amid the terrors of evil, yet simultaneously a cry for peace.

### **The Peace** (looking at v4):

The concept of peace is profound. Here it is 'salvation' in the most complete sense. An important Hebrew word for 'salvation' is *yasha* (from

which Jesus -*Yeshua* - is named), to bring people into a 'wide open space', 'somewhere you are free'. This peace is God's free and universal gift, touching every facet of society. *Shalom* require all physical needs to be met, justice in relationships, and integrity in characters. 'Knowing this truth' is vital. Realising it is our work as peacemakers.

**The Peacemaker** (looking at vv 5-7):

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God" (Mt 5:9). Jesus being *the* child of God, is the perfect peacemaker, and the author knows it. Notice six key peacemaking words in the passage:

- **Mediator**: one who stands between opposing groups, intervening for peace
- **Ransom**: the price to put things right and enable peace; peacemaking always has a price: very hard work, and on occasions it might even cost you your life.
- **Herald**: one who proclaims a message, 'Jesus came proclaiming peace'; in a world of darkness and fear we make it loudly clear that there's an alternative.
- **Witness**: one who claims to have irrefutable evidence that something is true. Our lives, not just our words should make it clear that peace is possible.
- **Envoy**: not just a messenger, but represents the one who sends the message; we are envoys of the God of peace (see Heb 15:33; 1Th 5:23)
- **Teacher**: the person who enables people to understand the meaning of *shalom*

This call is full of wisdom and challenge, to personally embrace it as an act of faith within our communities. We know it is God's plan that the whole earth, and everything that lives within her embrace, will experience the fullness of *shalom*.

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## Luke 15: 1 – 13

The parable of the dishonest steward is a difficult one to listen to. It is complicated, with lots of characters and movement, yet it's conclusion is simple 'you cannot serve God and Wealth'.

This profound challenge is not one that sits easy in our society. Everything is monetised and it is often viewed that if you cannot add financial value then it isn't worth engaging with.

While there are complications in the Gospel reading, the final line is where our ears as peacemakers should be drawn. This was a story about what someone did with the money they had. We have a mirriad of resources at our disposal. Time, money, friends, ideas and creative skills. What are we going do to with them?

At the moment the world, and our nation seems to be spending more time talking about War than it has for a long time. This decision, to pivot towards being more aware of war is an intentional decision.

But are we called to follow that? Or maybe we are called to walk a different path. Jesus came, as Prince of Peace, to offer life in all its fullness. Is fullness of life delivered through the barrel of a gun or through the full flourishing of all society? While wars are being fought it can be easy to think 'this war is just' yet when the war ends the global attention and funding disappears. Meaning that the people and places shattered by war don't get the support needed to rebuild.

Instead the money is going elsewhere. Even when the work of God is needed through human hands in the nation shattered by war.

So in the week ahead, use the challenge and take time to take an action to build peace. This could include (and is not limited to!)

- Ringing a friend or speaking to a neighbour to build community strength
- Helping out at a foodbank or similar to help those affected by the violence of poverty

- Working with others to create a drop in prayer station – helping our local community come together to lament the presence of war in the world
- Learn more about the financial spending decisions being made which sees money moved from International Development to Military Expenditure.
- Take a walk in nature and use that as a spur to take action that protects and defends the environment.

## Extra Prayer and Hymn

### **Hymn: [Tune: WINCHESTER NEW 8.8.8.8 ]**

O God, the things that make for  
peace Seem hidden, distant, out  
of reach. Our world is violent, bent  
on war; Lord, show us peace  
worth struggling for.

Your peace begins when we  
embrace Your Son — your  
wondrous gift of grace. For peace  
with others surely starts When we  
find peace within our hearts.

Yet peace is not a quiet thing, An  
inward gift to which we cling. For  
Jesus blessed the ones who share  
Your peace and justice  
everywhere.

We thank you that your love  
extends Beyond the circle of our  
friends. You teach us: Give the  
stranger bread And see that  
enemies are fed.

We long to live your way, O Lord,  
To see relationships restored; May  
we, in all we say and do, Seek  
peace and therefore honor you.

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### **A Prayer for the Holy Land**

Gracious Father, whose blessed  
Son Jesus Christ  
came down from heaven to be  
the true bread  
which gives life to the world:

In your mercy,  
provide for all those in Gaza and  
beyond who suffer from hunger  
and starvation,  
that they may be given both  
physical bread  
to nourish their bodies and  
heavenly bread to sustain their  
souls.

By the power of your Spirit,  
bring a speedy end to this cruel  
war,  
the release of all captives,  
care for the sick and wounded,  
comfort for those who have lost  
loved-ones,  
and the opening of a pathway for  
a just and lasting peace  
here in the very homeland where  
your Son,  
our Lord Jesus Christ, ministered  
during his earthly life;

who lives and reigns with you  
and the Holy Spirit,  
one God,

now and forever.

*Amen. Anglican Archbishop in  
Jerusalem, Most Reverend Dr  
Hosam E. Naoum. August, 2025*

Loving God,

Thank you for our marvellous  
world.

Thank you for all living things that  
dwell on it,  
And those who have gone before.

We are truly sorry for times we  
stray

Into the path of violence and  
hatred.

For times we fail to see long-term  
consequences,

Forgive our apathy, our  
selfishness, our inaction.

We are often quick to anger and  
slow to listen,

Hearing what is simple and easy,  
Not what is helpful and true.

Help us to hear kindly and  
respond with integrity.

Lead us into righteous anger and  
active resistance,

To speak out against injustice,

Help us to love our neighbour,

To see past race, age, gender,  
sexuality, faith or body shape.

We hold up to you those working  
for peace,

Who face violence with courage  
and love

In places where it is dangerous to  
do so.

Help us to be more like your son,  
Jesus Christ,  
Who is friend of the poor and  
said, "Blessed are the  
peacemakers".

We pray this in your name,

Amen