

Intercessory Prophetic Poetry

Standing in the Gap with Words of Fire

A handbook for watchmen, intercessors and prayer poets,
with activation moments, Scripture declarations, a 40-day
plan and a small-group guide

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Intercessory Prophetic Poetry: Standing in the Gap with Words of Fire

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*To every watchman on the wall, and every quiet one who weeps in secret
for a city.*

*I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall
never hold their peace day nor night: ye that make mention of the
LORD, keep not silence.*

ISAIAH 62:6

Contents

Foreword	1
The First Poem	3
Introduction	5

PART ONE · FOUNDATIONS

1 The Roots and Nature of Intercessory Prophetic Poetry	9
2 The Practice of Intercessory Prophetic Poetry	15

PART TWO · THE INNER LIFE AND THE CRAFT

3 The Watchman's Call	23
4 Hearing God	27
5 The Language of Lament	31
6 Declaration	35
7 Hebrew Poetic Forms	39
8 Imagery and Symbol	43

PART THREE · WIDENING THE CIRCLE

9 Praying for Individuals	49
10 Praying for Families and Generations	53
11 Praying for Cities and Communities	57
12 Praying for Nations	61
13 Praying for the Church and Revival	65
14 Poetry and Spiritual Warfare	69
15 Worship, Song and Spontaneous Poetry	73
16 Praying Poems Together	77

PART FOUR · FINISHING WELL

17 Seasons of Waiting, Fasting and Weariness	83
18 Discernment, Accountability and Pitfalls	87

19 Poetry for Healing and Comfort	91
20 A Lifelong Practice and Legacy	95

CLOSING

Summary	99
Scripture Declaration Index	101
The 40-Day Plan	105
Small-Group Guide	109
Quotation Sources	115
About the Author	117

Foreword

I never liked poetry at school. Then, in March 2025, the Lord woke me from sleep and gave me a poem. It was a prayer for the leadership of The Salvation Army, from the General down to the officers, soldiers, adherents, staff and volunteers. Since that night the poems have not stopped, especially prophetic intercessory poems. As I have looked back over my Christian life and ministry, I have seen how often God has used me in the prophetic, and how much of it came through poetry. All the glory goes to him.

This book is for those who pray and find that plain sentences are not enough. Some burdens arrive as images, rhythms and cries before they arrive as requests. Intercessory prophetic poetry gives those burdens a shape.

The church has always prayed in verse. Israel's hymnbook was a book of poems. Moses sang at the sea, Hannah sang over her son, Jeremiah wept in acrostics, and Mary sang the upside-down justice of God. Many of the Bible's most urgent prayers for nations and people were written as poetry.

This book has twenty chapters in four movements. Chapters 1 and 2 lay the foundation and the basic practice. Chapters 3 to 8 build the intercessor's inner life and craft: the watchman's call, listening, lament, declaration, poetic forms and imagery. Chapters 9 to 16 turn outward to individuals, families, cities, nations, the church, spiritual warfare, worship and praying together. Chapters 17 to 20 cover endurance, discernment, comfort and a lifelong legacy.

You do not need to be a trained poet. You need a willing heart, an open ear, and love for the people you carry before God. Read slowly. Keep a notebook nearby. Let the pages become prayers.

The First Poem

This is the prayer the Lord gave me after waking me from sleep in March 2025. Everything in this book grew from it.

A Continued Prayer for the Salvation Army Family

By Rob Davis

*Lord of mercy, Lord of grace,
We seek Your blessing in this sacred space.
For every officer, from high to low,
May Your guiding blood and fire be all they know.*

*Strengthen the generals' strategic mind,
To lead with wisdom, just and kind,
Fueled by Your blood and fire divine,
To guide Your people in Your sacred sign.*

*Empower the corps officers daily,
To serve with love, compassionate and steady,
Burning with blood and fire's pure light,
Bringing hope into the darkest night.*

*Bless the local leaders and their teams,
To pursue Your mission, fulfilling dreams,
With blood and fire in every deed,
Planting Your love—a sacred seed.*

*Touch the hearts of the care teams too,
With patience, mercy, and love so true,
Set their spirits ablaze with holy fire,
To heal, uplift, and lift up higher.*

*Bless the volunteers, and all who give
Their blood, their sweat, their talents to live
To serve with joy, in Your holy flame,
Reflecting Christ's enduring name.*

*For the members, young and old, unite,
With fervent passion and holy fire's light,
May each soul be stirred anew,
Fueled by blood and fire, strong and true.*

*Lord, pour Your Spirit on every land,
Set hearts ablaze through Your mighty hand,
Let Your salvation's blood and fire resound—
Through every hill, and every town.*

*Fill us anew with hope and peace,
Led by Your blood and fire's release,
Guide us all in Your perfect way,
By blood and fire, day after day.*

*In Jesus' name, we raise our prayer,
With faith and love beyond compare,
Amen, Amen, forevermore,
Empowered by blood and fire to serve and soar.*

Notice how the poem does what this book teaches. It carries a burden, and it is aimed at a specific people, naming each group from the General to the volunteers. It keeps returning to one image, the Army's motto of "Blood and Fire," and it ends in declaration.

Introduction

Intercessory prophetic poetry is prayer that stands in the gap for others, speaks what the Spirit is showing, and does both in the language of poetry. It is where three streams meet.

“Prayer is the way of approach to God, and the soul-winner keeps it open by constant use. It is the breath of the soul, and other things being equal, it is the secret of power.”

— **Commissioner Samuel Logan Brengle**, The Salvation Army. *The Soul-Winner's Secret* (New York: The Salvation Army, 1903), ch. 3, “Prayer.”

Norman Grubb, recording the teaching of Welsh intercessor Rees Howells, names “three things to be seen in an intercessor”:
“identification, agony and authority.”

— **Norman P. Grubb**, *Rees Howells, Intercessor* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1952), ch. 12.

Intercession is standing between God and people on their behalf. Abraham pleaded for Sodom. Moses stood before God for a rebellious nation. Ezekiel heard God seek for a man to “stand in the gap before me for the land” (Ezekiel 22:30, KJV). Jesus himself “ever liveth to make intercession” (Hebrews 7:25, KJV).

Prophecy is hearing from God and speaking what he reveals. In prayer it often works in two directions. We speak God’s heart to people, and we

pray God's promises back to him. The prophet is not only a mouthpiece. He or she is also a pray-er who reminds God of his word.

Poetry is language compressed, patterned and charged with feeling. It carries what prose cannot: grief too deep for argument, hope too large for a list, and images that lodge in the memory. Hebrew poetry works mainly through parallelism, one line echoing, deepening or contrasting with the next.

When these three meet, something distinct happens. The intercessor is no longer just asking. They are declaring, lamenting and envisioning. The poem becomes both a cry to heaven and a word into the earth.

Why poetry, and why now?

- ◆ **Poetry slows us down.** It forces attention to each word, which is the posture of listening prayer.
- ◆ **Poetry holds tension.** It can hold lament and faith in the same breath, as the Psalms do.
- ◆ **Poetry is memorable.** A community can pray a poem together and carry it for years.
- ◆ **Poetry reaches the heart.** It speaks to imagination, where hope is often lost first and regained first.

How to use this book

Read a section, then pray. Try the short exercises in Chapter 2. Keep a notebook dated and honest. Above all, test everything against Scripture and share it within a community that can weigh it (1 Thessalonians 5:20–21).

Each chapter ends with an **Activation Moment**. It has Scripture declarations, a short poem declaration and a few practical steps. Speak them aloud. Declarations are not magic formulas. They are a way of agreeing with what God has already said.

PART ONE

Foundations

The Roots and Nature of Intercessory Prophetic Poetry

Intercessory prophetic poetry is not a modern invention. It runs through the whole of Scripture, and its patterns can still guide us.

“...these words become like a mirror to the person singing them, so that he might perceive himself and the emotions of his soul.”

— **Athanasius of Alexandria**, bishop, on the Psalms. *Letter to Marcellinus on the Interpretation of the Psalms* (4th century).

1.1 The Psalms: Israel’s prayer book in verse

The Psalms are the clearest model. They pray for the king, for Jerusalem, for the poor, and for the nations. Psalm 72 is a royal intercession asking that the king would “judge the poor of the people” and “break in pieces the oppressor” (Psalm 72:4, KJV). Psalm 122 calls worshippers to “pray for the peace of Jerusalem” (Psalm 122:6, KJV).

Many psalms move from complaint to confidence. Psalm 13 begins “How long, O LORD?” and ends in trust and song. This movement, from honest grief to declared faith, is the heartbeat of intercessory poetry.

1.2 The prophets: burden, lament and vision

The prophets often spoke in poetry. Their words were intercession as much as announcement.

- ◆ **Isaiah** refuses silence: “For Zion’s sake will I not hold my peace” (Isaiah 62:1, KJV). He then calls watchmen who “give him no rest” until Jerusalem is restored (Isaiah 62:6–7).
- ◆ **Jeremiah** weeps for his people: “Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears” (Jeremiah 9:1, KJV).
- ◆ **Lamentations** is five poems of grief over a fallen city, four of them acrostics. Grief is given order without being tamed.
- ◆ **Habakkuk** turns complaint into a prayer-song (Habakkuk 3) that ends in defiant joy even when the fig tree does not blossom.

1.3 Songs of deliverance and reversal

Some biblical songs declare what God has done and, in doing so, call for more of it. Miriam and Moses sing at the sea (Exodus 15). Deborah sings after victory (Judges 5). Hannah’s prayer (1 Samuel 2) and Mary’s song (Luke 1:46–55) announce that God lifts the lowly and humbles the proud. These are prophetic poems of reversal. They pray the future into the present.

1.4 The New Testament and the church

Paul urges believers to speak to one another “in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs” (Ephesians 5:19, KJV). Revelation is filled with hymns sung in heaven, and the “prayers of saints” rise like incense (Revelation 5:8). Across church history, poets such as the psalm-singing Celtic monks, the Wesleys and the writers of African American spirituals carried the same tradition. Their songs prayed for freedom, mercy and revival.

1.5 Marks of intercessory prophetic poetry

Five marks help identify and shape this kind of prayer.

1. **It carries a burden.** It begins with weight for a person, place or people, not with a wish to write well.
2. **It listens before it speaks.** It is received as much as composed.
3. **It is anchored in Scripture.** Its images and promises echo God's revealed word.
4. **It holds lament and hope together.** It names what is broken and declares what God will do.
5. **It is aimed.** It has a subject. It prays for someone or something specific.

1.6 An example

This short original poem shows the marks in action. It is written as an intercession for a struggling town.

*Lord, the streets are grey with waiting,
the shop doors shut before the noon;
the young ones leave on early buses,
the old ones speak of better June.*

*But you who made the dry bones rattle,
who called a river from the rock,
breathe here, where hope has gone to hiding;
stand at the door of us, and knock.*

*I will not hold my peace for this place.
I will not give you rest.
Let this town be called Sought Out,
a city not forsaken, but blessed.*

Notice the movement. It begins in lament, remembers God's acts (Ezekiel 37; Exodus 17), and ends in declaration drawn from Isaiah 62:12.

1.7 Guardrails

Prophetic poetry is powerful, so it needs humility. It is not a tool for control or accusation. It is never a substitute for Scripture. It should build up, encourage and comfort (1 Corinthians 14:3). Words about specific people or events should be offered tentatively and weighed by mature believers.

1.8 Activation Moment: Standing in the Gap

Stand if you are able. Speak these declarations aloud, slowly, as agreement with God's word over your call.

Scripture declarations

- ◆ *God sought for someone to stand in the gap for the land (Ezekiel 22:30). Here I am, Lord. I will stand in the gap.*
- ◆ *Jesus ever lives to make intercession (Hebrews 7:25). I join my prayers to his, and I am not alone.*
- ◆ *For Zion's sake I will not hold my peace (Isaiah 62:1). I will not be silent over the people you give me.*
- ◆ *The prayers of the saints rise like incense before the throne (Revelation 5:8). My prayers are heard.*

Poem declaration

*I step into the gap tonight,
not strong, but called and sent;
my voice joins his who intercedes,
whose love is never spent.
I will not hold my peace, O Lord,
till righteousness shines bright;
my prayers rise up like incense sweet
before your throne of light.*

Activate

1. Write the names of three people or places God has placed on your heart.

2. Speak Ezekiel 22:30 over each one: "For [name], I stand in the gap."
3. Pray the poem declaration aloud once a day this week.

CHAPTER TWO

The Practice of Intercessory Prophetic Poetry

The practice follows a simple rhythm: wait, receive, shape, pray, release and steward. Each step can take minutes or months.

“Prayer does not fit us for the greater work; prayer is the greater work.”

— **Oswald Chambers**, Bible teacher and chaplain. *My Utmost for His Highest*, reading for October 17, “The Key of the Greater Work” (John 14:12).

2.1 Wait: posture before pen

Begin in stillness, not in composition. Read a psalm aloud. Worship. Ask the Spirit to share his heart for the person or place on your mind. Habakkuk’s pattern is a good guide: “I will stand upon my watch... and will watch to see what he will say unto me” (Habakkuk 2:1, KJV).

Write down what comes, however small. It may be a word, a Scripture, a picture, a sound or simply a feeling of grief or joy.

2.2 Receive: the seed of the poem

Most prophetic poems start with a seed. Common seeds include:

- ♦ **An image.** A dry riverbed, a lamp in a window, a locked gate.

- ◆ **A verse.** A promise that seems to light up for this situation.
- ◆ **A name or title.** Like the new names in Isaiah 62, a word God seems to speak over a people.
- ◆ **A cry.** A phrase such as “How long?” or “Remember them” that keeps rising.

Do not rush past the seed. Ask God what it means and how it connects to his word.

2.3 Shape: crafting the poem

Now write. Craft serves the burden, not the other way round.

1. **Use parallelism.** Let a second line echo or deepen the first. *“Lord, the fields are thirsty; / the children cry for bread.”*
2. **Move through a pattern.** A useful structure is lament, remembrance, request, declaration.
 - ◆ Lament: name what is broken.
 - ◆ Remembrance: recall what God has done.
 - ◆ Request: ask plainly.
 - ◆ Declaration: speak his promise over the situation.
3. **Choose concrete words.** “The shuttered mill” prays better than “economic difficulty.”
4. **Keep it short at first.** Four to twelve lines is enough.
5. **Read it aloud.** If it cannot be prayed, revise until it can.

2.4 Pray: from page to prayer

A poem becomes intercession when it is prayed. Pray it slowly, alone and then with others. Repeat key lines. Pause after each stanza and let spontaneous prayer rise. Some groups pray a poem daily for a season, as a watch on the wall.

2.5 Release: sharing with wisdom

Not every poem is meant to be shared. Some are for the prayer closet only. When sharing is right:

- ◆ Submit it to leaders or trusted intercessors first.
- ◆ Share with humility: “I sense...” rather than “God says...” when speaking of specifics.
- ◆ Keep it life-giving. Correction, if any, belongs in private and in love.
- ◆ Honour the people you pray for. Protect their dignity and privacy.

2.6 Steward: journaling and testing

Date every poem. Note who or what it was for. Return later and record what God did. Over time your journal becomes a record of faithfulness, and it helps you discern how God speaks to you. Test every word by Scripture, by its fruit, and by the witness of your community.

2.7 Exercises

- ☐ **A psalm for a place.** Choose your street or town. Write eight lines using the lament-to-declaration pattern.
- ☐ **A name over a person.** Pray for someone for a week. Write a short poem around one promise or name you sense for them.
- ☐ **A nation in four lines.** Pick one nation. Write a four-line intercession using one verse from the prophets.
- ☐ **Group watch.** Pray one poem together every day for thirty days. Journal what changes.

2.8 A closing example

This original poem models the full pattern.

*They sit in waiting rooms tonight,
with folded hands and fading light. (lament)*

*Yet you are the God who heard the cry
of Hagar weeping, and drew nigh. (remembrance)*

*So hear them now, and heal, and stay;
be bread and water on their way. (request)*

*The God who sees is here, is near:
there is a well, and it is here. (declaration)*

The final lines draw on Genesis 16:13 and 21:19, where God sees Hagar and opens her eyes to a well.

2.9 Activation Moment: From Seed to Spoken Word

This activation walks the whole rhythm of the chapter in fifteen minutes. Have a pen and notebook ready.

Scripture declarations

- ◆ *I will stand upon my watch and see what he will say to me (Habakkuk 2:1).
My ears are open, Lord.*
- ◆ *The vision is for an appointed time; it will surely come (Habakkuk 2:3). I
write it down and wait in faith.*
- ◆ *Your word will not return to you empty (Isaiah 55:11). What you speak
through me will accomplish your purpose.*

Poem declaration

*I wait, I watch, I write it plain;
the seed you give, I sow.
Your word goes out and won't return
until it makes things grow.*

Activate

1. **Wait (3 minutes).** Sit in silence. Ask, "Lord, who or what is on your heart right now?"

2. **Receive (2 minutes)**. Write the first image, verse, name or cry that comes.
3. **Shape (5 minutes)**. Write four lines: lament, remembrance, request, declaration.
4. **Pray (3 minutes)**. Read your poem aloud three times, slower each time.
5. **Declare (2 minutes)**. End by speaking Isaiah 55:11 over what you have prayed.

PART TWO

The Inner Life and the Craft

CHAPTER THREE

The Watchman's Call

The intercessor-poet is first a watchman: someone set on the wall to see, to cry out, and to refuse silence until God acts.

"History belongs to the intercessors, who believe the future into being."

— **Walter Wink**, United Methodist minister and theologian. "God Is the Intercessor," *Sojourners*, November 1990.

3.1 The watchman in Scripture

God told Ezekiel, "I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel" (Ezekiel 3:17, KJV). The watchman had two duties. He watched for danger and warned the city. He also watched for God and reminded him of his promises (Isaiah 62:6–7). The intercessor-poet carries both. Their poems warn gently, and they plead boldly.

3.2 Identity before activity

You do not become a watchman by writing well. You become one by being called, and every believer is invited into prayer. Your identity rests on three truths:

- ♦ **You are a child before you are a watchman.** Prayer flows from belonging, not from duty (Romans 8:15).

- ◆ **You are a priest.** Believers are a “royal priesthood” who carry others before God (1 Peter 2:9).
- ◆ **You are a friend.** Abraham interceded as God’s friend, and God shared his plans with him (Genesis 18:17).

3.3 The weight and the joy

Watchmen carry weight. Some nights you will feel the grief of a city or a family. Yet the call is not only heavy. There is joy in being trusted with God’s heart, and joy when answers come. Nehemiah wept, fasted and prayed, and then built a wall with singing (Nehemiah 1:4; 12:27).

3.4 A watchman’s poem

*I climbed the stair when lamps were low
and found the wall still standing.*

*Below me slept the ones I love,
unguarded and unknowing.*

*So here I stand, and here I call,
your promise on my breath:
you do not sleep, you do not slumber;
keep this house from death.*

The second stanza prays Psalm 121:4 back to God.

3.5 Reflection

- ◆ Who has God placed on your wall: which people, streets or nations?
- ◆ What keeps you from standing watch, and what would help you stay?

3.6 Activation Moment: Taking Your Place on the Wall

This activation affirms your identity before your assignment. Speak each declaration as a statement of who you are in Christ.

Scripture declarations

- ◆ *I have received the Spirit of adoption; I cry, "Abba, Father" (Romans 8:15). I pray as a child, not as a servant.*
- ◆ *I am part of a royal priesthood (1 Peter 2:9). I carry people before God.*
- ◆ *God has set watchmen on the walls who will never hold their peace day or night (Isaiah 62:6). I take my place.*
- ◆ *He who keeps me will not slumber (Psalm 121:3–4). I can watch in peace, because he watches first.*

Poem declaration

*Child of the Father, priest of the King,
friend of the Lord, I stand;
I take my post upon the wall
with his promise in my hand.
He does not sleep, he does not tire,
he keeps the ones I love;
so I will watch and I will call
and trust the One above.*

Activate

1. Draw a simple wall in your notebook. Write on it the names God has given you to carry.
2. Place your hand on the page and speak Isaiah 62:6 over each name.
3. Choose a regular "watch" time this week, even ten minutes a day, and keep it.

CHAPTER FOUR

Hearing God

Prophetic poetry depends on listening. Before a line is written, the intercessor must learn how God speaks and how to tell his voice from their own.

“God is speaking. Not God spoke, but God is speaking. He is by His nature continuously articulate.”

— **A. W. Tozer**, pastor. *The Pursuit of God* (1948), ch. 6, “The Speaking Voice.”

4.1 How God speaks

Scripture shows God speaking in many ways (Hebrews 1:1):

- ♦ **Through his written word.** This is the primary and final test of all other hearing.
- ♦ **Through a still small voice.** Elijah heard God not in the wind or fire but in a gentle whisper (1 Kings 19:12).
- ♦ **Through pictures and visions.** Jeremiah saw an almond branch and a boiling pot (Jeremiah 1:11–13).
- ♦ **Through circumstances and people.** God often confirms his word through others.
- ♦ **Through inner burden.** A weight that will not lift may be the Spirit’s invitation to pray.

4.2 Practices of listening

1. **Quiet the noise.** Set aside phones and lists. Sit in silence for five to ten minutes.
2. **Soak in Scripture.** Read a passage slowly and notice what stands out.
3. **Ask a simple question.** “Lord, how do you see this person?” or “What do you want to pray here?”
4. **Write without editing.** Capture impressions first. Shape them later.
5. **Wait for peace.** God’s words bring peace even when they are weighty (James 3:17).

4.3 Testing what you hear

Not every impression is from God. Ask:

- ◆ Does it agree with Scripture?
- ◆ Does it reflect the character of Jesus: humble, truthful, loving?
- ◆ Does it build up, encourage or comfort (1 Corinthians 14:3)?
- ◆ Do mature believers bear witness to it?
- ◆ Does it bear good fruit over time?

4.4 A listening poem

*Speak, Lord, your servant listens,
not for thunder, not for flame;
but for the hush beneath the hurry
where you whisper out a name.*

*Give me ears that bend toward heaven,
give me eyes that see the least;
let my words be only echoes
of the word you gave in peace.*

The opening echoes Samuel’s first prayer (1 Samuel 3:10).

4.5 Reflection

- ◆ When have you most clearly sensed God speaking? What was it like?
- ◆ Which of the testing questions do you most need to practise?

4.6 Activation Moment: Opening the Ear

This activation is a practice of listening. Speak the declarations, then wait in silence.

Scripture declarations

- ◆ *My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me (John 10:27). I am his, and I can hear him.*
- ◆ *Speak, Lord; for your servant hears (1 Samuel 3:9). I make room for you to speak.*
- ◆ *The Lord God wakens my ear morning by morning to hear as the learned (Isaiah 50:4). My ear is awake to you today.*
- ◆ *The wisdom from above is pure, peaceable, gentle (James 3:17). I will know your voice by its peace.*

Poem declaration

*I am your sheep; I know your voice
above the crowd's loud din.
Wake up my ear this morning, Lord;
I'm listening. Come in.*

Activate

1. Declare John 10:27 aloud three times.
2. Set a timer for five minutes of silence. Ask, "Lord, what are you saying about someone I love?"
3. Write down whatever comes, without judging it.
4. Test it with the five questions in 4.3.
5. If it passes, turn it into a four-line poem and pray it over that person.

The Language of Lament

Lament is faith that dares to complain to God. It is not the opposite of trust. It is trust honest enough to bring its pain into his presence.

“I have been accustomed to call this book, I think not inappropriately, ‘An Anatomy of all the Parts of the Soul;’ for there is not an emotion of which any one can be conscious that is not here represented as in a mirror.”

— John Calvin, pastor in Geneva. *Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, “The Author’s Preface” (dated Geneva, 22 July 1557), trans. James Anderson (Edinburgh: Calvin Translation Society, 1845), vol. 1.

5.1 Why lament matters

About a third of the Psalms are laments. Jesus prayed a lament from the cross: “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” (Matthew 27:46, quoting Psalm 22:1). Lament refuses both denial and despair. It names the wound and still addresses God.

For the intercessor, lament is identification. We stand with the grieving and give voice to what they cannot say.

5.2 The shape of a lament

Most biblical laments follow a pattern:

1. **Address.** Turn to God by name: “O LORD.”

2. **Complaint.** Say plainly what is wrong.
3. **Request.** Ask God to act.
4. **Motive.** Give reasons: his character, his promises, his glory.
5. **Trust.** Declare confidence in him.
6. **Praise or vow.** Commit to thank him when he answers.

Not every lament resolves. Psalm 88 ends in darkness, and it is still Scripture. Sometimes faithfulness is simply staying in the conversation.

5.3 Writing lament well

- ◆ Use honest, concrete language. God is not offended by truth.
- ◆ Avoid blaming people you pray for. Lament grieves with them, not against them.
- ◆ Let silence and short lines carry weight.
- ◆ End with at least a thread of hope, even if it is small.

5.4 A lament for the lost

*How long, O Lord, the empty chair,
the phone that does not ring?
How long the wandering of my son,
the winter with no spring?*

*You ran to meet the prodigal
while he was far away;
then run again, O Father, run,
and bring him home today.*

*I will not stop this asking;
I will keep the porch light on.
For you are the God of turning roads,
and night gives way to dawn.*

The central stanza draws on Luke 15:20.

5.5 Reflection

- ♦ What grief have you not yet brought honestly to God?
- ♦ Write a six-line lament using the six-part pattern above.

5.6 Activation Moment: Lament That Turns to Trust

This activation follows the turn found in so many psalms, from “How long?” to “I will trust.” Begin honestly and end with declaration.

Scripture declarations

- ♦ *How long, O Lord? Yet I have trusted in your mercy; my heart shall rejoice in your salvation (Psalm 13:1, 5). I bring my grief, and I choose trust.*
- ♦ *Weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning (Psalm 30:5). This night will not last forever.*
- ♦ *The Lord’s mercies are new every morning; great is your faithfulness (Lamentations 3:22–23). Even here, your mercy meets me.*
- ♦ *Why are you cast down, O my soul? Hope in God, for I shall yet praise him (Psalm 42:11). I will yet praise him.*

Poem declaration

*How long, how long? I’ve asked it, Lord,
and still I ask it now;
yet in the dark I choose to trust
though I cannot see how.
Your mercy wakes with every dawn,
your faithfulness is wide;
my soul, be still, and hope in God:
and in his love abide.*

Activate

1. Write one honest “How long?” sentence about a situation you are carrying.
2. Speak it aloud to God. Do not soften it.
3. Then speak Lamentations 3:22–23 over the same situation.

4. Finish by reading the poem declaration aloud, and write the date beside it.

CHAPTER SIX

Declaration

If lament is the cry of the night, declaration is the song of morning spoken before the sun rises. It speaks God's promises over a situation as true because he has said them.

"The task of prophetic ministry is to nurture, nourish, and evoke a consciousness and perception alternative to the consciousness and perception of the dominant culture around us."

— **Walter Brueggemann**, Old Testament scholar and ordained minister. *The Prophetic Imagination*, 2nd ed. (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2001), p. 3.

6.1 The basis of declaration

Declaration is not wishful thinking or positive confession. Its power lies in God's word, not ours. God says his word "shall not return unto me void" (Isaiah 55:11, KJV). When we declare his promises, we agree with what he has already spoken.

Ezekiel is the clearest model. God told him to prophesy to dry bones and to the wind, and as he spoke, the bones came together (Ezekiel 37:4–10).

6.2 Two directions of declaration

- ◆ **Toward God.** “You have said... so do it.” This is praying the promise back to him, as Moses and Daniel did (Exodus 32:13; Daniel 9:18–19).
- ◆ **Toward the situation.** “Be lifted up, O gates” (Psalm 24:7). This speaks God’s intent over people and places.

6.3 Guidelines for declarative poetry

1. Root every line in a specific promise or truth of Scripture.
2. Declare God’s character more than outcomes you prefer.
3. Avoid demanding specific results God has not promised.
4. Mix declaration with humility and thanksgiving.
5. Let the tone be confident, not aggressive.

6.4 A declaration over a young person

*You are not what the whispers say,
nor what the mirror shows;
you are the work of patient hands,
the seed that God still grows.*

*He who began a good work in you
will finish what he starts;
the plans he holds are hope and peace,
a future for your heart.*

This poem declares Philippians 1:6 and Jeremiah 29:11.

6.5 Reflection

- ◆ Choose one promise from Scripture that fits someone you are carrying.
- ◆ Write four lines that speak that promise over them.

6.6 Activation Moment: Speaking the Promise

This activation practises both directions of declaration: praying a promise back to God, and speaking it over a situation.

Scripture declarations

- ◆ *Toward God: You said your word will not return void (Isaiah 55:11). Lord, do what you have said.*
- ◆ *Toward the situation: Dry bones, hear the word of the Lord (Ezekiel 37:4). I speak life where hope has died.*
- ◆ *All the promises of God in Christ are yes and amen (2 Corinthians 1:20). I say amen to what God has spoken.*
- ◆ *He who began a good work will complete it (Philippians 1:6). What God started, he will finish.*

Poem declaration

*Dry bones, hear the word of God:
breath is coming in;
sinew, flesh and beating hearts,
stand up and live again.
Every promise, yes in Christ;
every word, amen;
what he began, he'll finish well:
so let it be, amen.*

Activate

1. Choose one situation that feels like a valley of dry bones.
2. Speak Isaiah 55:11 toward God: "Lord, you said..."
3. Then turn and speak Ezekiel 37:4–5 over the situation, naming it.
4. Read the poem declaration aloud and end with "amen," which means "so be it."

Hebrew Poetic Forms

Biblical poetry rhymes ideas more than sounds. Learning its main forms gives the intercessor tested shapes for prayer.

“Most emphatically the Psalms must be read as poems; as lyrics, with all the licences and all the formalities, the hyperboles, the emotional rather than logical connections, which are proper to lyric poetry.”

— C. S. Lewis. *Reflections on the Psalms* (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1958), ch. 1, “Introductory,” p. 3.

7.1 Parallelism

Parallelism pairs lines so the second responds to the first.

- ♦ **Synonymous:** the second line restates the first. “The heavens declare the glory of God; / and the firmament sheweth his handywork” (Psalm 19:1, KJV).
- ♦ **Antithetic:** the second line contrasts. “Weeping may endure for a night, / but joy cometh in the morning” (Psalm 30:5, KJV).
- ♦ **Synthetic or climactic:** the second line builds and advances. “Give unto the LORD, O ye mighty, / give unto the LORD glory and strength” (Psalm 29:1, KJV).

7.2 The acrostic

In an acrostic, each line or stanza begins with the next letter of the alphabet. Psalm 119 and Lamentations 1–4 use this form. It says, in effect, “from A to Z, we bring the whole of it to God.” In English you can write an A-to-Z prayer, or spell a person’s or town’s name down the page.

7.3 Chiasm

A chiasm mirrors itself: A, B, C, B', A'. The centre carries the main point. Psalm 67 is often read this way, with its centre declaring that God judges the peoples righteously. Chiasm suits intercession because it circles around a single truth.

7.4 Refrain

A repeated line anchors a poem and helps groups pray together. Psalm 136 repeats “for his mercy endureth for ever” in every verse.

7.5 Examples in English

An acrostic for a city named HOPE

*Hear the cry of every street,
Open doors that fear has sealed,
Pour your Spirit on the weary,
Every broken place be healed.*

A small chiasm

*A — Lord, the children wander,
B — the elders lose their way;
C — but you are the Shepherd, and you stay.
B' — Guide the elders' feet today;
A' — bring the children home to pray.*

7.6 Reflection

- ♦ Try one form you have never used: an acrostic, a chiasm, or a refrain.

- ◆ Which form best fits the burden you carry this week?

7.7 Activation Moment: Declaring in Parallel Lines

This activation uses Hebrew forms as declarations. Read each pair aloud, letting the second line strengthen the first.

Scripture declarations in parallel

- ◆ *The Lord is my light and my salvation; / the Lord is the strength of my life (Psalm 27:1). Whom shall I fear?*
- ◆ *Weeping may endure for a night, / but joy comes in the morning (Psalm 30:5). I declare the morning is coming.*
- ◆ *Give unto the Lord glory and strength; / give unto the Lord the glory due his name (Psalm 29:1–2). I give him glory over this situation.*
- ◆ *His mercy endures forever (Psalm 136). I declare it again and again.*

Poem declaration: a refrain

Over my family: his mercy endures.

Over my city: his mercy endures.

Over my nation: his mercy endures.

Over my future: his mercy endures forever.

Activate

1. Write a list of five things you are praying for.
2. After each one, speak the refrain “his mercy endures forever,” as Psalm 136 does.
3. Write a two-line parallel declaration for one item: a promise, then a stronger echo of it.
4. Try a short acrostic declaration on a name God has put on your heart.

Imagery and Symbol

Prophets think in pictures. A single image can carry a whole prayer, and biblical symbols give the intercessor a shared language with Scripture.

“There you look into the hearts of all the saints, as into fair and pleasant gardens, yes, as into heaven itself.”

— **Martin Luther**, pastor and reformer. “Preface to the Psalter” (1528), in *Luther’s Works*, vol. 35 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press), pp. 254–257.

8.1 Why images matter

God often spoke through things seen: a potter at his wheel (Jeremiah 18), a plumb line (Amos 7:7–8), a basket of summer fruit (Amos 8:1–2), a river flowing from the temple (Ezekiel 47). Jesus taught in images too: seed, salt, light, vine. Images bypass argument and reach the heart.

8.2 A glossary of common biblical images

IMAGE	COMMON MEANING IN SCRIPTURE	KEY PASSAGE
Water, river	Life, Spirit, cleansing, renewal	Ezekiel 47:9; John 7:38
Fire	Presence, purifying, zeal	Exodus 3:2; Malachi 3:2–3
Wind, breath	Spirit, life-giving power	Ezekiel 37:9; John 3:8
Oil	Anointing, healing, joy	Psalms 23:5; James 5:14
Wall, gate	Protection, authority, access	Nehemiah 2:17; Psalm 24:7

IMAGE	COMMON MEANING IN SCRIPTURE	KEY PASSAGE
Seed	Beginnings, word, future harvest	Mark 4:26–29
Wilderness	Testing, dependence, new ways	Isaiah 43:19; Hosea 2:14
Morning, dawn	Mercy, new beginnings, deliverance	Lamentations 3:22–23
Watchtower	Vigilance, prayer, prophetic sight	Habakkuk 2:1
Tree	Stability, fruitfulness, legacy	Psalms 1:3; Jeremiah 17:8

8.3 Receiving your own images

God may also give fresh images that are not in any glossary: a bridge half built, a child's swing moving in still air, a bakery at dawn. Record them faithfully. Ask what they mean and whether they echo any biblical theme. Resist over-interpreting. An image can simply invite prayer without a detailed explanation.

8.4 Using images well

- ◆ Build a poem around one central image rather than many.
- ◆ Let the image move: a dry river begins to flow, a closed gate opens.
- ◆ Keep images concrete and local where possible.
- ◆ Stay faithful to how Scripture uses a symbol.

8.5 An image poem

*I saw a well beneath the square,
its stones grown over, dry;
the town walked by it every day
and never wondered why.*

*Lord, dig again the ancient wells
our fathers dug in faith;
let water rise where footsteps pass,
and thirst meet living grace.*

The second stanza draws on Isaac re-digging his father's wells (Genesis 26:18).

8.6 Reflection

- ◆ What image has God given you recently for a place or person?
- ◆ Write a poem where that image changes from its first state to its redeemed state.

8.7 Activation Moment: Speaking to the Image

This activation takes a biblical image and speaks its redemption over a place or person, as Ezekiel spoke to the bones and the wind.

Scripture declarations

- ◆ *Everything shall live wherever the river comes (Ezekiel 47:9). I declare the river of God flowing into this place.*
- ◆ *I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert (Isaiah 43:19). New things are springing up.*
- ◆ *Lift up your heads, O gates, and the King of glory shall come in (Psalm 24:7). Gates of this home and city, open to the King.*
- ◆ *He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water (Psalm 1:3). I declare deep roots and fruit in season.*

Poem declaration

*River of God, run through our streets,
make every dry place green;
gates, lift your heads, the King is near,
the glory will be seen.
Wilderness, bloom; wasteland, sing;
let roots go deep and wide;
where the river runs, all things will live,
and nothing dies inside.*

Activate

1. Pick one image from the glossary in 8.2 that fits a need you carry.
2. Close your eyes and picture that image in its broken state, then in its redeemed state.

3. Speak the matching Scripture over the need, using the image: "River of God, flow into..."
4. Write your own four-line image declaration and pray it daily this week.

PART THREE

Widening the Circle

Praying for Individuals

The most personal intercessory poems are written for one person. They ask what God sees in someone and pray it into being.

“Earnest intercession will be sure to bring love with it. I do not believe you can hate a man for whom you habitually pray.”

—**Charles H. Spurgeon**, pastor. Sermon No. 1049, “Intercessory Prayer” (Psalm 141:5), preached at the Metropolitan Tabernacle, London, 5 May 1872.

9.1 Seeing as God sees

God renamed people to reveal their destiny: Abram became Abraham, Jacob became Israel, Simon became Peter (“rock”). Jesus saw Nathanael as “an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile” (John 1:47, KJV) before Nathanael said a word. Intercessory poetry for individuals asks the same question: “Lord, who is this person to you?”

9.2 Paul’s prayers as models

Paul’s prayers for believers are rich templates. He asks for wisdom and revelation (Ephesians 1:17–19), inner strength and a grasp of Christ’s love (Ephesians 3:16–19), overflowing love and discernment (Philippians 1:9–11). These can be turned directly into poems.

9.3 Practical steps

1. **Pray for a week before you write.** Let God form a burden and a picture.
2. **Find one anchor verse.** Build the poem around it.
3. **Name strengths before needs.** Honour who the person is.
4. **Keep it private unless led.** Many personal poems are for your prayer alone.
5. **If you share it, share it gently.** Offer it as encouragement, not as a verdict on their life.

9.4 A poem for a friend in a hard season

*I see you like a lamp in wind,
your flame bent low but burning;
the storm has worn your shoulders thin,
yet still your face is turning
toward the One who will not snuff
the wick that barely glows.
He shields you with his careful hands;
his gentleness still knows
the way you're made, the way you'll heal,
the strength that's being grown.
So rest, my friend: you're held in love,
and you are not alone.*

The poem prays Isaiah 42:3, God's promise not to quench a smoking flax.

9.5 Reflection

- ♦ Who is one person God is inviting you to carry this month?
- ♦ What do you think God delights in about them? Start your poem there.

9.6 Activation Moment: Declaring Identity Over a Person

This activation turns Paul's prayers into personal declarations. Insert the name of the person you are carrying.

Scripture declarations

- ♦ *May God give [name] the spirit of wisdom and revelation in knowing him (Ephesians 1:17). I declare [name]'s eyes are opened to God's hope and calling.*
- ♦ *May [name] be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man (Ephesians 3:16). I declare inner strength for [name].*
- ♦ *May [name] be rooted and grounded in love (Ephesians 3:17–19). I declare [name] knows the love of Christ that passes knowledge.*
- ♦ *A bruised reed he will not break (Isaiah 42:3). I declare God's gentleness over [name]'s weakness.*

Poem declaration

*[Name], you are seen and you are known,
your name is in his hand;
he gives you wisdom, strength and light
and roots in love to stand.
The bruised reed he will never break,
the faint flame he will fan;
you are the work of patient love,
and part of heaven's plan.*

Activate

1. Choose one person. Write their name at the top of a page.
2. Pray each Scripture declaration over them by name, aloud.
3. Ask God for one word that describes how he sees them. Write it down.
4. Pray the poem declaration daily for seven days. Share it only if you sense peace to do so.

CHAPTER TEN

Praying for Families and Generations

God thinks in generations. He calls himself “the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob” (Exodus 3:6, KJV). Intercessory poetry for families prays blessing forward and healing backward.

“...settle it in your minds that your child belongs absolutely to God, and not to you.”

— **Catherine Booth**, co-founder of The Salvation Army. *Papers on Practical Religion*, ch. 1, “The Training of Children: An Address to Parents.”

10.1 Blessing across generations

Scripture is full of spoken family blessings. Isaac blessed Jacob, Jacob blessed his sons and grandsons (Genesis 27; 48–49). Priests spoke the Aaronic blessing over Israel (Numbers 6:24–26). Psalm 78 urges each generation to tell the next of God’s works so that “they might set their hope in God” (Psalm 78:7, KJV).

10.2 Praying for healing of family patterns

Many families carry patterns of addiction, anger, abandonment or fear. Nehemiah and Daniel confessed the sins of their fathers as well as their own (Nehemiah 1:6; Daniel 9:8). Intercessors can do the same: not

blaming, but humbly asking God to break cycles and write a new story. Ezekiel 18 reminds us that each generation can turn and live.

10.3 Ideas for family poems

- ◆ **A blessing for a newborn**, written at birth and given on a later birthday.
- ◆ **A prayer over a marriage**, built on Ecclesiastes 4:12's threefold cord.
- ◆ **A poem for a prodigal**, prayed weekly until they come home.
- ◆ **A generational psalm**, naming grandparents, parents and children before God.
- ◆ **A table blessing**, said together at family meals.

10.4 A generational psalm

*You were the God of my grandmother's kitchen,
her Bible propped by the bread;
you were the God of my father's silence,
the prayers he never said.*

*Be the God of my own unsteady hands,
and of my children's feet;
where we have broken, bind us up;
where we have wandered, meet.*

*Let mercy run from age to age
like water down a hill,
till children's children rise and say,
"Our fathers' God is faithful still."*

The last stanza echoes Psalm 103:17.

10.5 Reflection

- ◆ What blessing do you want to pass to the next generation of your family?
- ◆ What pattern would you ask God to end with you?

10.6 Activation Moment: Blessing the Generations

This activation speaks blessing over your family line, past, present and future. If your family story is painful, go gently; God's blessing can begin with you.

Scripture declarations

- ◆ *The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine upon you (Numbers 6:24–26). I speak this blessing over my household.*
- ◆ *The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting, and his righteousness to children's children (Psalm 103:17). Mercy runs down our family line.*
- ◆ *As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord (Joshua 24:15). I choose this for my home.*
- ◆ *I will pour my Spirit upon your seed, and my blessing upon your offspring (Isaiah 44:3). I declare the Spirit over the next generation.*

Poem declaration

*From my mothers and my fathers,
to my children and their own,
let the mercy of the Lord run on
like rivers over stone.
Where the line was broken, mend it;
where the curse was spoken, bless;
let the Spirit rest on every child
in faith and faithfulness.*

Activate

1. Sketch a simple family tree with three generations.
2. Place your hand over it and speak the Aaronic blessing (Numbers 6:24–26) over each generation.
3. Name one pattern you ask God to end, and declare Isaiah 44:3 over the next generation.
4. Speak a short blessing over a child or family member this week, face to face if appropriate.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Praying for Cities and Communities

God told exiles in Babylon to “seek the peace of the city... and pray unto the LORD for it” (Jeremiah 29:7, KJV). The place where you live is a place to intercede for, even if it is not yet home.

General William Booth recalled being moved as a young man by
*“the degradation and helpless misery of the poor Stockingers of my
native town, wandering gaunt and hunger-stricken through the streets.”*

— **General William Booth**, founder of The Salvation Army. *In Darkest
England and the Way Out* (London: The Salvation Army, 1890), Preface.

11.1 God’s heart for cities

God spared Nineveh because of its people and even its animals (Jonah 4:11). Jesus wept over Jerusalem (Luke 19:41). The Bible ends with a city: the new Jerusalem, where God dwells with his people (Revelation 21:2–3). Cities matter to God.

11.2 Prayer walking

Prayer walking is a simple way to gather material for city poems. Walk your streets slowly. Notice schools, hospitals, shops, empty buildings,

places of beauty and places of pain. Ask God what he sees. Write down images, names and burdens as you go.

11.3 Areas to cover

SPHERE	WHAT TO PRAY FOR
Families and homes	Safety, love, restored relationships
Schools and youth	Wisdom, protection, hope, good teachers
Business and work	Honest trade, jobs, provision
Government and justice	Wise leaders, fairness, peace (1 Timothy 2:1–2)
Health and care	Healing, compassion, strength for carers
Churches	Unity, love, courage, good witness
The vulnerable	The poor, lonely, addicted, refugees, the elderly

11.4 A poem for a town

*Bless the bus stop and the bakery,
bless the clinic and the school;
bless the river running brown with rain,
the playground and the pool.*

*Where the shop fronts have gone empty,
fill them, Lord, with work and song;
where the lonely eat in silence,
show them where they might belong.*

*Make this town a place of welcome,
make our streets a place of peace;
seek the good of all who live here,
and let every sorrow cease.*

This poem uses a litany style suited to prayer walks.

11.5 Reflection

- ◆ Take a thirty-minute prayer walk in your neighbourhood this week.
- ◆ Write one stanza for each of three places you pass.

11.6 Activation Moment: Declaring Peace Over the City

This activation is designed for a prayer walk. Take the declarations with you and speak them quietly at each place you pass.

Scripture declarations

- ♦ *Seek the peace of the city, for in its peace you will have peace (Jeremiah 29:7). I declare shalom over [town name].*
- ♦ *Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain; except the Lord keep the city, the watchman wakes in vain (Psalm 127:1). Lord, build and keep this city.*
- ♦ *Peace be within your walls, and prosperity within your palaces (Psalm 122:7). I declare peace in homes and plenty in workplaces.*
- ♦ *They shall build the old wastes and repair the desolate cities (Isaiah 61:4). I declare restoration over every neglected street.*

Poem declaration: a walking litany

*At the school gate: peace be here.
At the hospital door: healing be here.
At the empty shop: provision be here.
At the council chambers: wisdom be here.
At the lonely house: welcome be here.
Over the whole town: Lord, be here.*

Activate

1. Plan a route that passes at least five places from the table in 11.3.
2. At each place, stop briefly and speak the matching line of the litany.
3. Declare Jeremiah 29:7 at the start and Isaiah 61:4 at the end.
4. Afterwards, write down any image or burden that stayed with you.

Praying for Nations

God invites intercessors to think as widely as his love: “Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance” (Psalm 2:8, KJV). Poems for nations join the prophets’ vision of every tribe and tongue worshipping God (Revelation 7:9).

“Expect great things. Attempt great things.”

—**William Carey**, pastor and missionary. The “Deathless Sermon” on Isaiah 54:2–3, preached to the Northamptonshire Baptist Association at Friar Lane Baptist Chapel, Nottingham, 30 May 1792. Later retellings add “from God” and “for God”; this shorter form follows the earliest printed summary (William Staughton, 1811).

12.1 Prophets and the nations

The prophets spoke to many nations beyond Israel: Egypt, Assyria, Moab, Tyre and others (Isaiah 13–23; Amos 1–2). Their words included judgment, but also astonishing hope. Isaiah foresaw a day when God would say, “Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands” (Isaiah 19:25, KJV).

12.2 Posture for praying for nations

- ◆ **Humility.** Pray for your own nation first, including its sins (Daniel 9).

- ◆ **Love.** Pray for other nations as people God cherishes, not as enemies.
- ◆ **Knowledge.** Learn about a nation's history, peoples, church and needs.
- ◆ **Hope.** Hold the end of the story: the leaves of the tree are "for the healing of the nations" (Revelation 22:2, KJV).

12.3 A simple framework

1. **Thank** God for the nation's people, land and gifts.
2. **Lament** its wounds: war, poverty, injustice, division.
3. **Ask** for leaders, peace, justice and the church.
4. **Declare** God's purposes of healing and blessing.

12.4 A poem for your own nation

This poem can be adapted for any land. Replace the images with those of your own country.

*Lord of these islands, mountains, plains,
of harbour, farm and town,
we bring the land you've given us
and lay our boasting down.*

*Forgive the wrongs we would not name,
the treaties we have torn;
heal the old wounds between our peoples;
let justice be reborn.*

*Then pour your Spirit like the rain
on every hill and shore,
till all who dwell within this land
know you, and fear no more.*

12.5 Reflection

- ◆ Choose one nation to pray for over the next month. Learn three facts about it.

- ◆ Write a poem using the four-step framework above.

12.6 Activation Moment: Asking for the Nations

This activation takes up the invitation of Psalm 2:8. Have a map, a globe, or a list of nations in front of you.

Scripture declarations

- ◆ *Ask of me, and I will give you the nations for your inheritance (Psalm 2:8). Lord, I ask for [nation].*
- ◆ *If my people humble themselves and pray, I will heal their land (2 Chronicles 7:14). I humble myself for my own nation, and I ask you to heal it.*
- ◆ *The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea (Habakkuk 2:14). I declare your glory over every coastline.*
- ◆ *The leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations (Revelation 22:2). I declare healing for wounded peoples.*
- ◆ *Every nation, tribe, people and tongue will stand before the throne (Revelation 7:9). I declare [nation] will be there.*

Poem declaration

*I ask, O Lord, for every land,
from mountain range to sea;
let every tribe and every tongue
come bowing, glad and free.
As waters cover ocean floors,
let glory fill the earth;
heal the nations with your leaves,
and bring them to new birth.*

Activate

1. Place your hand on your own nation on the map. Pray 2 Chronicles 7:14 in humility.
2. Choose one other nation. Speak Psalm 2:8 and Revelation 7:9 over it by name.

3. Pray the poem declaration, pausing after “every land” to name three nations aloud.
4. Commit to pray for one nation each week for the next month.

Praying for the Church and Revival

The church is both the community of intercessors and one of its main subjects. Poems for the church pray for its purity, unity, courage and renewal.

*Thou Christ of burning, cleansing flame,
Send the fire!
Thy blood-bought gift today we claim,
Send the fire!*

— **General William Booth.** “Send the Fire,” *The Song Book of The Salvation Army* (1986), no. 203.

13.1 Revival prayers in Scripture

The Psalms and prophets often cry for renewal:

- ♦ “Wilt thou not revive us again: that thy people may rejoice in thee?” (Psalm 85:6, KJV)
- ♦ “O LORD, revive thy work in the midst of the years” (Habakkuk 3:2, KJV)
- ♦ “Oh that thou wouldest rend the heavens, that thou wouldest come down” (Isaiah 64:1, KJV)

The early church prayed together, and the place was shaken and they spoke with boldness (Acts 4:31).

13.2 Jesus' prayer for the church

In John 17, Jesus prays that his followers would be kept from evil, made holy by the truth, and made one "that the world may believe" (John 17:21, KJV). This prayer is a pattern for all intercession for the church.

13.3 Themes for church poems

- ◆ **Unity** across denominations, cultures and generations.
- ◆ **Holiness** and repentance where the church has failed.
- ◆ **Love** for the poor and for neighbours.
- ◆ **Courage** to speak and serve.
- ◆ **Leaders:** wisdom, integrity and rest for pastors.
- ◆ **The persecuted church** worldwide (Hebrews 13:3).

13.4 A revival poem

*We have grown quiet in our pews,
our lamps are low on oil;
we tend our programmes and our plans
and wonder at the toil.*

*Come, Wind of heaven, shake this house;
come, Fire, and fall again;
not for our name or our renown,
but for the sake of men*

*and women, children, far and near,
who've never heard your voice.
Revive us, Lord, and send us out,
and make the streets rejoice.*

The poem draws on Acts 2 and the parable of the ten virgins (Matthew 25).

13.5 Reflection

- ◆ Pray John 17 slowly for your local church this week.
- ◆ What would revival look like in your congregation? Write it as a declaration.

13.6 Activation Moment: Calling for Revival

This activation joins the ancient cry for renewal. If possible, pray it inside your church building or with members of your congregation.

Scripture declarations

- ◆ *Will you not revive us again, that your people may rejoice in you? (Psalm 85:6). I ask for revival that ends in joy.*
- ◆ *O Lord, revive your work in the midst of the years; in wrath remember mercy (Habakkuk 3:2). Revive your work in our generation.*
- ◆ *That they all may be one, that the world may believe (John 17:21). I declare unity over the churches of this place.*
- ◆ *They were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and spoke the word of God with boldness (Acts 4:31). I declare boldness over God's people.*
- ◆ *I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh (Joel 2:28). I declare the outpouring of your Spirit on young and old.*

Poem declaration

*Revive us, Lord, revive us again;
rekindle what burned low;
make us one, as you are one,
that all the world may know.
Pour out your Spirit on sons and daughters,
on old men and the young;
fill this house, and send us out
with fire on every tongue.*

Activate

1. Pray John 17:20–23 slowly, replacing “they” with the names of local churches.

2. Declare Acts 4:31 over your pastor and leaders by name.
3. Pray the poem declaration together as a group, repeating the first line as a refrain.
4. Ask God for one practical step your church could take to show love to its neighbours.

Poetry and Spiritual Warfare

Scripture presents prayer as part of a real spiritual struggle. Yet the weapons it names are truth, faith, the word of God and prayer, not fear or spectacle.

*And though this world, with devils filled,
Should threaten to undo us,
We will not fear, for God hath willed
His truth to triumph through us.*

—Martin Luther, “A Mighty Fortress Is Our God” (c. 1527–29), stanza 3,
trans. Frederic H. Hedge (1853).

14.1 The biblical picture

Paul writes that “we wrestle not against flesh and blood” (Ephesians 6:12, KJV), and he describes the armour of God: truth, righteousness, the gospel of peace, faith, salvation, the word of God and prayer (Ephesians 6:13–18). Daniel’s prayers were connected to an unseen conflict (Daniel 10:12–13). Jesus answered temptation with Scripture (Matthew 4:1–11).

14.2 Praise as a weapon

When Jehoshaphat’s army faced invasion, singers went out in front praising God, and the enemy was defeated (2 Chronicles 20:21–22). Paul

and Silas sang in prison at midnight, and the doors opened (Acts 16:25–26). Songs of praise declare God’s victory in the face of threat.

14.3 Wise warfare

- ◆ **Keep Christ central.** The focus is his finished work (Colossians 2:15), not the enemy.
- ◆ **Stand, don’t strut.** Ephesians 6 calls believers to “stand” again and again. Warfare is steady faithfulness.
- ◆ **Fight evil, not people.** Never use warfare language against individuals.
- ◆ **Stay humble and accountable.** Even the archangel Michael said, “The Lord rebuke thee” (Jude 9).
- ◆ **Pair warfare with love and practical care.**

14.4 A battle psalm

*Let God arise, and fear shall flee
like mist before the sun;
the chains that held this household fast
will fall, for Christ has won.*

*We put on truth, we lift up faith,
we stand upon your word;
we sing before the battle starts,
for the battle is the Lord’s.*

The poem echoes Psalm 68:1 and 1 Samuel 17:47.

14.5 Reflection

- ◆ Which piece of the armour of God do you most need to put on today?
- ◆ Write a short song of praise to pray over a situation that feels like a battle.

14.6 Activation Moment: Standing in the Armour

This activation walks through the armour of God as a spoken declaration. Some find it helpful to make a simple gesture as they name each piece.

Scripture declarations: the armour (Ephesians 6:13–18)

- ◆ *I fasten the belt of truth. I stand in what God says, not in lies or fear.*
- ◆ *I put on the breastplate of righteousness. I am made right with God through Christ.*
- ◆ *My feet are ready with the gospel of peace. I carry peace wherever I go.*
- ◆ *I take up the shield of faith. Every fiery dart of doubt is quenched.*
- ◆ *I put on the helmet of salvation. My mind is guarded by what Christ has done.*
- ◆ *I take the sword of the Spirit, the word of God. I answer darkness with Scripture.*
- ◆ *I pray always in the Spirit, watching with perseverance for all the saints.*

More Scripture declarations

- ◆ *Christ has disarmed the powers and triumphed over them (Colossians 2:15). The victory is already won.*
- ◆ *Greater is he that is in me than he that is in the world (1 John 4:4). I will not fear.*
- ◆ *The battle is the Lord's (1 Samuel 17:47). I stand, and he fights.*

Poem declaration

*Truth around me, righteousness within,
 peace upon my feet;
 faith my shield and hope my crown,
 the word my sword complete.
 I do not fight with fists or fear;
 I stand, and he has won;
 the battle and the victory
 belong to God's own Son.*

Activate

1. Speak through each piece of armour slowly, pausing after each one.
2. Name one situation that feels like a battle. Declare 1 Samuel 17:47 over it.
3. Sing or speak a song of praise over the situation, following Jehoshaphat's example (2 Chronicles 20:21–22).
4. Keep your focus on Jesus. End by thanking him rather than addressing the enemy.

Worship, Song and Spontaneous Poetry

Not every prophetic poem is written at a desk. Some rise in the moment of worship, sung or spoken as the Spirit moves.

*O boundless salvation! deep ocean of love,
O fulness of mercy, Christ brought from above,
The whole world redeeming, so rich and so free...*

— **General William Booth**. “O Boundless Salvation,” *The Song Book of The Salvation Army* (1986), no. 298.

15.1 Music and prophecy in Scripture

Music and prophecy are closely linked in the Bible. Elisha asked for a minstrel, and as the musician played, the word of the Lord came (2 Kings 3:15). David appointed musicians “who should prophesy with harps, with psalteries, and with cymbals” (1 Chronicles 25:1, KJV). Zephaniah pictures God himself rejoicing over his people with singing (Zephaniah 3:17).

15.2 The “new song”

Scripture repeatedly calls for a “new song” (Psalm 96:1; Isaiah 42:10; Revelation 5:9). A new song is fresh praise for fresh mercies. In

intercession, it can mean singing a spontaneous prayer over a person, place or need during worship.

15.3 Practising spontaneous poetry

1. **Start with Scripture.** Sing a psalm verse slowly, then let new lines grow from it.
2. **Use simple patterns.** A repeated refrain gives structure; verses can change.
3. **Take turns in a group.** One person sings a line; others echo or answer.
4. **Record or write down** what emerges, then test and refine it later.
5. **Don't aim for perfection.** Spontaneous prayer values sincerity over polish.

15.4 Leading worship-based intercession

- ◆ Choose a simple chord progression or a repeated musical phrase.
- ◆ Name the focus clearly: "We're singing over our city's schools."
- ◆ Invite short sung or spoken prayers between choruses.
- ◆ Return to a shared refrain to hold the group together.
- ◆ Close with a declaration or blessing.

15.5 A refrain for group worship

Refrain:

*Come, Lord, come to this place;
pour out your mercy, show us your face.*

Verse (spontaneous examples):

*Over the classrooms, over the halls,
let wisdom and kindness be written on walls.
Over the hospital, over the ward,
be healer and comfort, our beautiful Lord.*

15.6 Reflection

- ◆ Sing Psalm 96:1 aloud, then add one line of your own.
- ◆ Try a sung prayer with a friend using the refrain above.

15.7 Activation Moment: Singing a New Song

This activation moves from spoken declaration into song. You don't need musical training. A simple tune, or even a chant, is enough.

Scripture declarations

- ◆ *Sing unto the Lord a new song; sing unto the Lord, all the earth (Psalm 96:1). I lift a new song today.*
- ◆ *The Lord your God rejoices over you with singing (Zephaniah 3:17). Heaven is singing over the ones I pray for.*
- ◆ *He has put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God; many shall see it and trust in the Lord (Psalm 40:3). My song will lead others to trust.*
- ◆ *At midnight Paul and Silas prayed and sang praises, and the doors were opened (Acts 16:25–26). I sing, and doors will open.*

Poem declaration: a song to sing

*Sing a new song, sing it now,
over the ones we love;
God is singing over them
from his throne above.
Midnight prison, open wide;
chains, fall to the floor;
we will sing until we see
him open every door.*

Activate

1. Read Zephaniah 3:17 aloud, then sing it on a single note or simple tune.
2. Choose one person or place. Sing the poem declaration over them.
3. Add one spontaneous line of your own, sung, not spoken.

4. Record it on your phone if you like, and listen back later to note what the Spirit highlighted.

Praying Poems Together

Poems are made for many voices. Praying them together multiplies faith and binds a community in one cry.

“A Christian fellowship lives and exists by the intercession of its members for one another, or it collapses. I can no longer condemn or hate a brother for whom I pray, no matter how much trouble he causes me.”

— Dietrich Bonhoeffer, pastor. *Life Together*, trans. John W. Doberstein (New York: Harper & Row, 1954), ch. 3, “The Day Alone,” p. 86.

16.1 The power of agreement

Jesus promised that “if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them” (Matthew 18:19, KJV). The Psalms were sung by the whole congregation. The early church “lifted up their voice to God with one accord” (Acts 4:24, KJV) using words from Psalm 2.

16.2 Ways to pray poems as a group

- ◆ **Responsive reading.** A leader reads one line; the group answers with the next.
- ◆ **Antiphonal reading.** Two halves of the room alternate stanzas.
- ◆ **Refrain prayer.** One voice reads verses; everyone joins the refrain.

- ◆ **Circle composition.** Each person adds a line to a shared poem.
- ◆ **Pause and pray.** Read a stanza, then leave silence for spontaneous prayer.

16.3 Running an intercessory poetry gathering

1. **Open in worship** for 10–15 minutes.
2. **Name the focus** and share any relevant information.
3. **Read a Scripture** tied to the focus.
4. **Pray a prepared poem** together.
5. **Wait and write** for 10 minutes in silence.
6. **Share and pray** what people received, with humility.
7. **Weigh together.** Leaders help discern what to keep.
8. **Close with blessing.**

16.4 A responsive prayer

Leader: *For the ones who wake in fear tonight,*

All: *Lord, be their shelter and their light.*

Leader: *For the ones who walk the streets alone,*

All: *Lord, lead them safely to a home.*

Leader: *For the ones who carry grief unseen,*

All: *Lord, make their broken places clean.*

Leader: *For all of us who gather here,*

All: *Lord, make us one, and draw us near.*

16.5 Reflection

- ◆ Who could you invite to pray poems with you once a month?
- ◆ Try leading the responsive prayer above in a small group.

16.6 Activation Moment: Declaring in One Accord

This activation is for groups of two or more. It uses call-and-response so every voice joins the declaration.

Scripture declarations

- ◆ *Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst (Matthew 18:20). Jesus is here among us now.*
- ◆ *If two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it shall be done (Matthew 18:19). We agree together in this prayer.*
- ◆ *They lifted up their voice to God with one accord (Acts 4:24). We lift one voice.*
- ◆ *Behold, how good and pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity; there the Lord commands the blessing (Psalm 133:1, 3). We declare the blessing that comes with unity.*

Poem declaration: call and response

Leader: *Lord, you are here among us.*

All: *We are gathered in your name.*

Leader: *We lift one voice before you.*

All: *We agree, and we proclaim:*

Leader: *Your kingdom come in this place.*

All: *Your will be done, as in heaven.*

Leader: *Where there is unity,*

All: *there you command the blessing. Amen.*

Activate

1. Choose one shared prayer focus for the group.
2. Read Acts 4:24–31 together, taking turns verse by verse.
3. Pray the call-and-response declaration, then pause for two minutes of silence.
4. Invite each person to speak one short declaration of Scripture over the focus.
5. Close by declaring Psalm 133 together.

PART FOUR

Finishing Well

Seasons of Waiting, Fasting and Weariness

Intercession is a long road. Answers can take years, and intercessors grow tired. Poetry can sustain the heart through waiting, fasting and weariness.

“The sense of our impotence is the soul of intercession. The simplest, feeblest Christian can pray down blessing from an Almighty God.”

— **Andrew Murray**, pastor in South Africa. *The Ministry of Intercession: A Plea for More Prayer* (1897), ch. 3, “A Model of Intercession.”

17.1 Waiting

Abraham waited twenty-five years for Isaac. Joseph waited in prison. Simeon and Anna waited a lifetime to see the Messiah (Luke 2:25–38). Scripture treats waiting as active trust: “They that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength” (Isaiah 40:31, KJV). Habakkuk was told, “Though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come” (Habakkuk 2:3, KJV).

17.2 Fasting

Fasting often accompanied intercession: Esther before approaching the king (Esther 4:16), Daniel for his people (Daniel 9:3), the church at

Antioch before sending out missionaries (Acts 13:2–3). Fasting sharpens attention and expresses urgency. It should always be done wisely, with care for health, and never as a way to earn God's favour (Isaiah 58). Anyone with medical conditions should seek advice before fasting from food, or choose another kind of fast.

17.3 Weariness

Elijah collapsed under a tree and asked to die (1 Kings 19:4). God's response was not a rebuke but sleep, food and gentle presence. Weary intercessors need rest, not more effort. Jesus invites the weary to come to him (Matthew 11:28).

Signs you may need rest:

- ◆ Prayer feels only like duty or dread.
- ◆ You carry burdens that feel crushing rather than shared with God.
- ◆ You are neglecting sleep, relationships or health.

17.4 A poem for the long wait

*I've prayed this prayer a thousand times,
the words worn smooth as stone;
I've watched the seasons come and go
and still the seed's not grown.*

*Yet Simeon waited all his years
and held the Child at last;
so I will keep my lamp alight
and trust you with the past,*

*the present and the unseen day
when every prayer is known.*

*Till then, Lord, give me daily bread,
and let me rest, your own.*

17.5 Reflection

- ◆ What prayer have you carried the longest? Write a poem about the waiting itself.
- ◆ What would healthy rest look like for you this week?

17.6 Activation Moment: Renewed Strength for the Long Wait

This activation is for tired intercessors. Speak it slowly, and let it be restful rather than strenuous.

Scripture declarations

- ◆ *They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles (Isaiah 40:31). My strength is being renewed.*
- ◆ *Though it tarry, wait for it; it will surely come (Habakkuk 2:3). What God has promised is on its way.*
- ◆ *Come unto me, all you that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest (Matthew 11:28). I come, and I receive rest.*
- ◆ *Let us not be weary in well doing, for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not (Galatians 6:9). A harvest is coming in its season.*
- ◆ *He gives his beloved sleep (Psalm 127:2). I can rest without guilt.*

Poem declaration

*I lay my burden at your feet,
the prayer I've carried long;
you give me rest, you give me strength,
you give me back my song.
Though it tarries, it will come;
in season I will reap;
I'll rise on eagle wings at dawn,
but first, Lord, let me sleep.*

Activate

1. Write the prayer you have carried longest on a slip of paper.

2. Speak Matthew 11:28 and physically set the paper down, as a sign of giving it to God.
3. Declare Habakkuk 2:3 and Galatians 6:9 over it.
4. Plan one practical act of rest this week: an early night, a walk, a day without screens.

Discernment, Accountability and Pitfalls

Because prophetic poetry claims to carry God’s heart, it must be handled with great care. Healthy practice rests on discernment, accountability and awareness of common pitfalls.

“It [spiritual authority and leadership] is not won by promotion, but by many prayers and tears. It is attained by confession of sin, and much heart-searching and humbling before God...”

— **Commissioner Samuel Logan Brengle**, The Salvation Army. *The Soul-Winner’s Secret* (New York: The Salvation Army, 1903), ch. 5, “Spiritual Leadership.”

18.1 Why discernment matters

Scripture commands both openness and testing: “Despise not prophesyings. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good” (1 Thessalonians 5:20–21, KJV). John warns believers to “try the spirits whether they are of God” (1 John 4:1, KJV). Prophecy in the New Testament is always to be weighed (1 Corinthians 14:29).

18.2 Common pitfalls

PITFALL	WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE	HEALTHIER ALTERNATIVE
Pride	Seeing yourself as specially gifted or above correction	Serve quietly; welcome feedback
Control	Using “God told me” to direct others’ choices	Offer words humbly; leave decisions with them
Accusation	Poems that expose or shame people	Pray privately; speak correction in love
Date-setting	Predicting specific events or timelines	Pray God’s character and promises instead
Isolation	Praying and prophesying with no community	Join a team; submit to leaders
Performance	Writing to impress rather than to pray	Keep most poems between you and God
Burnout	Carrying every burden alone	Rest, share the load, take Sabbath

18.3 Building accountability

- ◆ **Belong to a local church** and pray under its leadership.
- ◆ **Have two or three trusted people** who can weigh your words.
- ◆ **Keep a journal** so you can review what proved true over time.
- ◆ **Be quick to say sorry** if a word was mistaken or hurtful.
- ◆ **Stay in Scripture daily.** It guards against drift.

18.4 A prayer of humility

*Lord, if I’ve spoken what you did not say,
forgive the pride that filled the space;
if I have wounded where I meant to bless,
heal that heart with your own grace.*

*Keep my pen low and my ears high,
my words few and my love wide;
let every line point back to you,
and never to my pride.*

18.5 Reflection

- ◆ Which pitfall do you feel most vulnerable to?
- ◆ Who are the people you could ask to weigh your prophetic words?

18.6 Activation Moment: A Surrendered Voice

This activation places your gift under God's lordship. It is a declaration of humility, not of power.

Scripture declarations

- ◆ *Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and see if there be any wicked way in me (Psalm 139:23–24). I open my heart to your correction.*
- ◆ *Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight (Psalm 19:14). My words belong to you.*
- ◆ *Though I speak with tongues of men and angels, and have not love, I am nothing (1 Corinthians 13:1–2). I choose love above gifting.*
- ◆ *Prove all things; hold fast that which is good (1 Thessalonians 5:21). I welcome testing of what I share.*
- ◆ *God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble (James 4:6). I humble myself to receive grace.*

Poem declaration

*Search me, Lord, and try my heart;
let every word be true.
If I have spoken out of pride,
I bring it back to you.
Let love be louder than my gift,
let grace be all my art;
the words of my mouth are yours, O Lord,
and so is all my heart.*

Activate

1. Pray Psalm 139:23–24 and wait quietly for anything God brings to mind.

2. If you recall a word that caused harm, ask forgiveness, and consider making it right.
3. Name two people you will ask to weigh your prophetic words, and contact them this week.
4. Declare Psalm 19:14 over your journal and your pen.

Poetry for Healing and Comfort

Some of the most precious intercessory poems are written for people who are sick, grieving or broken-hearted. They carry God's comfort where ordinary words fall short.

*"Behold, the Most High has to do with the sick and the sorry,
with the wretched and the wounded! He walks the hospitals as the
good Physician!"*

— **Charles H. Spurgeon**, pastor. *The Treasury of David*, exposition of
Psalm 147:3.

19.1 The God of all comfort

Paul calls God "the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort" who comforts us so we can comfort others (2 Corinthians 1:3–4, KJV). Isaiah describes God binding up the broken-hearted and giving "beauty for ashes" (Isaiah 61:1–3, KJV). Jesus read this passage as his own mission (Luke 4:18–19).

19.2 Praying for the sick

James instructs the church to pray over the sick and anoint them with oil (James 5:14–16). Intercessory poems for healing can:

- ♦ Ask boldly for healing, trusting God's goodness.

- ◆ Declare God's presence in the suffering, whatever the outcome.
- ◆ Pray for doctors, nurses, carers and family.
- ◆ Hold honest questions without forcing answers.

Prayer never replaces medical care. It walks alongside it.

19.3 Writing for the grieving

- ◆ **Be gentle and brief.** Grief has little room for long words.
- ◆ **Avoid easy answers.** Phrases like "everything happens for a reason" can wound.
- ◆ **Honour the person lost.** Name them if appropriate.
- ◆ **Point to hope without rushing it.** Resurrection hope can be held quietly (1 Thessalonians 4:13–14).
- ◆ **Ask before sharing.** Some people welcome a poem; others need silence.

19.4 A poem at a hospital bed

*The machines keep their slow music,
the corridor lights hum low;
I hold your hand and cannot fix
the things I do not know.*

*But he who touched the leper's skin
is present in this room;
he walks the ward at midnight
and he is not afraid of gloom.*

*So rest, beloved, in his care;
he holds what we cannot.
Whatever comes, you are not lost;
you are not forgot.*

The second stanza draws on Mark 1:40–41 and the final line echoes Isaiah 49:15.

19.5 Reflection

- ◆ Who do you know who is suffering or grieving right now?
- ◆ Write a short, gentle poem for them and pray it before deciding whether to share it.

19.6 Activation Moment: Releasing Comfort and Healing

This activation speaks God's comfort and healing over someone who is sick or grieving. Pray it gently, and if you are with the person, ask their permission first.

Scripture declarations

- ◆ *He heals the broken in heart and binds up their wounds (Psalm 147:3). I declare God's binding love over [name]'s wounds.*
- ◆ *By his stripes we are healed (Isaiah 53:5). I ask for healing for [name] in body, mind and spirit.*
- ◆ *Blessed be the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation (2 Corinthians 1:3–4). I declare comfort over [name] today.*
- ◆ *He gives beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning (Isaiah 61:3). I declare that grief will not have the last word.*
- ◆ *I will never leave you nor forsake you (Hebrews 13:5). [Name] is not alone.*

Poem declaration

*God of all comfort, draw near to [name];
bind up what is torn;
by your stripes, bring healing here,
and joy for those who mourn.
Beauty for ashes, oil for grief,
a garment made of praise;
you will not leave, you will not forsake
through all their nights and days.*

Activate

1. Name one person who is sick or grieving. Write their name and need.

2. Pray Psalm 147:3 and Isaiah 53:5 over them, following James 5:14–16 if you are in a church setting.
3. Speak Hebrews 13:5 as a word of presence, whatever the outcome.
4. Do one practical act of comfort this week: a meal, a card, a visit or a call.

A Lifelong Practice and Legacy

Intercessory prophetic poetry is not a technique for a season. It is a way of life: a steady habit of listening, carrying and speaking that can bear fruit for generations.

“God shapes the world by prayer. Prayers are deathless. The lips that uttered them may be closed in death, the heart that felt them may have ceased to beat, but the prayers live before God...”

— E. M. Bounds, Methodist pastor. *Purpose in Prayer* (1920), ch. 1.

20.1 Prayers that outlive us

The prayers of the saints are kept before God like incense (Revelation 5:8; 8:3–4). The psalms of David are still prayed three thousand years later. Your poems, too, may be prayed by children and grandchildren long after you have gone. Faithful prayer is never wasted.

20.2 Building a sustainable rhythm

RHYTHM	PRACTICE
Daily	Read a psalm; pray one short poem for someone
Weekly	Write one new poem; pray with a friend or group
Monthly	Focus on one city, nation or cause; take a prayer walk
Yearly	Review your journal; record answered prayers; take a retreat

20.3 Keeping a prayer-poetry journal

- ◆ Date every entry and name its focus.
- ◆ Note the Scripture or image that sparked it.
- ◆ Leave space to record answers and outcomes.
- ◆ Mark words that proved true, and learn from those that did not.
- ◆ Consider gathering your best poems into a collection for family or church.

20.4 Passing it on

Paul told Timothy to entrust what he had learned “to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also” (2 Timothy 2:2, KJV). Teach children to write simple prayer poems. Mentor younger intercessors. Share this practice in your church. A single watchman can raise many more.

20.5 A benediction for the intercessor-poet

*May your ear be tuned to heaven
and your heart be tuned to earth;
may you weep with those who sorrow
and rejoice at every birth.*

*May your words be few and faithful,
may your love be deep and wide;
may you stand upon the wall for years
with Jesus at your side.*

*And when your final prayer is prayed
and your pen is laid to rest,
may the ones you carried rise and say,
“Through their prayers, we were blessed.”*

20.6 Reflection

- ◆ Which rhythm from the table will you begin this week?
- ◆ Who could you teach or invite into this practice?

20.7 Activation Moment: Commissioning for a Lifetime

This final activation is a commissioning. Pray it alone as a personal dedication, or have a leader or friend speak it over you.

Scripture declarations

- ◆ *I have set watchmen on your walls who shall never hold their peace day nor night (Isaiah 62:6). I accept this call for the rest of my life.*
- ◆ *The things you have heard from me, commit to faithful people who will teach others also (2 Timothy 2:2). I will pass this on.*
- ◆ *One generation shall praise your works to another (Psalm 145:4). My prayers will bless those who come after me.*
- ◆ *I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith (2 Timothy 4:7). By grace, I will finish well.*
- ◆ *Let us run with patience the race set before us, looking unto Jesus (Hebrews 12:1–2). My eyes are fixed on him.*

Poem declaration: a commissioning

*Go now, watchman, take your post;
the wall is yours to keep.
Pray for the ones who cannot pray,
and weep for those who weep.
Write what you hear, and speak it true,
and pass the flame along;
and when your final watch is done,
may heaven hear your song.*

Activate

1. Write a one-sentence commitment describing the intercessory rhythm you will keep (see 20.2).
2. Speak Isaiah 62:6 and 2 Timothy 2:2 as your personal commissioning.
3. If possible, ask a trusted leader or friend to lay a hand on your shoulder and pray the poem declaration over you.
4. Date this page. Return to it each year to renew your commitment.

Summary

Intercessory prophetic poetry is prayer for others, shaped by what God reveals, and spoken in the compressed, image-rich language of poetry.

Chapter 1 showed that this practice is rooted deep in Scripture. The Psalms pray for kings, cities and the poor. The prophets turned burden into lament and vision. Songs like Hannah's and Mary's declared God's reversals before they were fully seen. Five marks define the form: it carries a burden, listens before it speaks, is anchored in Scripture, holds lament and hope together, and is aimed at a specific need. It must be offered with humility and weighed in community.

Chapter 2 gave a rhythm for practice: wait, receive, shape, pray, release and steward. Poems grow from small seeds such as an image, a verse, a name or a cry. A four-part pattern of lament, remembrance, request and declaration gives them structure. A poem becomes intercession only when it is prayed, and it should be shared wisely, journaled faithfully and tested by Scripture and its fruit.

Chapters 3–8 shaped the intercessor and the craft. The intercessor is a watchman who stands on the wall as child, priest and friend. They learn to hear God and test what they hear. They give voice to honest lament and to confident declaration rooted in God's promises. Hebrew forms such as parallelism, acrostic, chiasm and refrain, along with biblical imagery, give their prayers shape.

Chapters 9–16 widened the circle. Poems can be written for individuals, families and generations, cities, nations, and the church in need of

revival. Spiritual warfare is fought with praise, truth and humility rather than fear. Worship opens room for spontaneous song. Praying poems together multiplies faith through agreement.

Chapters 17–20 addressed endurance and faithfulness. Waiting, fasting and weariness are met with trust, wisdom and rest. Discernment and accountability protect against pride, control and isolation. Gentle poetry carries comfort to the sick and grieving. A sustainable rhythm and a well-kept journal turn this practice into a legacy that can outlive us.

The Activation Moments and appendices turn the book into a practice. Each chapter closes with Scripture and poem declarations to speak aloud. The Scripture Declaration Index gathers them by theme, the 40-Day Plan guides individuals day by day, and the Small-Group Guide leads a group through ten sessions.

The invitation is simple. Take up your watch. Listen. Write what you hear. Pray it until something changes, in the place you carry and in you.

*Set a watchman on the wall,
and give the watchman words;
let every line become a cry
until the cry is heard.*

APPENDIX A

Scripture Declaration Index

This index gathers the book's declarations by theme for quick use in personal prayer and prayer meetings. Each line pairs a Scripture with a declaration to speak aloud. The chapter column points to where the theme is taught.

Calling and identity

SCRIPTURE	DECLARATION	CHAPTER
Ezekiel 22:30	Here I am, Lord. I will stand in the gap.	1
Isaiah 62:6	I take my place as a watchman on the wall.	3, 20
Romans 8:15	I pray as a child of the Father, not as a servant.	3
1 Peter 2:9	I am part of a royal priesthood. I carry people before God.	3
Hebrews 7:25	Jesus intercedes, and I join my prayers to his.	1

Hearing God

SCRIPTURE	DECLARATION	CHAPTER
John 10:27	I am his sheep, and I hear his voice.	4
1 Samuel 3:9	Speak, Lord, your servant is listening.	4
Isaiah 50:4	My ear is awake to you this morning.	4
Habakkuk 2:1	I stand on my watch to see what you will say.	2

Lament and hope

SCRIPTURE	DECLARATION	CHAPTER
Psalms 13:1, 5	I bring my grief, and I choose to trust.	5
Psalms 30:5	Joy is coming in the morning.	5, 7
Lamentations 3:22–23	Your mercies are new every morning.	5
Psalms 42:11	My soul will hope in God. I will yet praise him.	5

Promises and breakthrough

SCRIPTURE	DECLARATION	CHAPTER
Isaiah 55:11	Your word will not return empty.	2, 6
Ezekiel 37:4–5	Dry bones, hear the word of the Lord and live.	6
2 Corinthians 1:20	Every promise of God in Christ is yes and amen.	6
Philippians 1:6	What God began, he will complete.	6
Isaiah 43:19	God is making a way in the wilderness.	8

Individuals

SCRIPTURE	DECLARATION	CHAPTER
Ephesians 1:17	I declare wisdom and revelation over [name].	9
Ephesians 3:16–19	[Name] is strengthened within and rooted in love.	9
Isaiah 42:3	God will not break [name]’s bruised reed.	9
Jeremiah 29:11	God’s plans for [name] are hope and a future.	6

Family and generations

SCRIPTURE	DECLARATION	CHAPTER
Numbers 6:24–26	The Lord bless and keep my household.	10
Psalms 103:17	God’s mercy runs to my children’s children.	10
Joshua 24:15	As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.	10
Isaiah 44:3	God pours his Spirit on the next generation.	10

City and nation

SCRIPTURE	DECLARATION	CHAPTER
Jeremiah 29:7	I declare peace over my city.	11
Psalms 127:1	Lord, build and keep this city.	11
Isaiah 61:4	God restores every neglected street.	11
Psalms 2:8	Lord, I ask for the nations.	12
2 Chronicles 7:14	We humble ourselves; heal our land.	12
Habakkuk 2:14	The earth will be filled with God's glory.	12
Revelation 22:2	God brings healing to the nations.	12

Church and revival

SCRIPTURE	DECLARATION	CHAPTER
Psalms 85:6	Revive us again, that we may rejoice in you.	13
Habakkuk 3:2	Revive your work in our generation.	13
John 17:21	The churches of this place will be one.	13
Acts 4:31	God's people speak his word with boldness.	13
Joel 2:28	God pours out his Spirit on young and old.	13

Spiritual warfare

SCRIPTURE	DECLARATION	CHAPTER
Ephesians 6:13–18	I stand clothed in the armour of God.	14
Colossians 2:15	Christ has already triumphed over every power.	14
1 John 4:4	Greater is he who is in me.	14
1 Samuel 17:47	The battle is the Lord's.	14
2 Chronicles 20:21–22	I will praise before the battle is won.	14

Worship and unity

SCRIPTURE	DECLARATION	CHAPTER
Psalms 96:1	I sing a new song to the Lord.	15

SCRIPTURE	DECLARATION	CHAPTER
Zephaniah 3:17	God rejoices over us with singing.	15
Acts 16:25–26	We sing, and doors will open.	15
Matthew 18:19–20	We agree together, and Jesus is among us.	16
Psalms 133:1, 3	Where there is unity, God commands the blessing.	16

Endurance and humility

SCRIPTURE	DECLARATION	CHAPTER
Isaiah 40:31	My strength is being renewed.	17
Habakkuk 2:3	Though it tarries, it will surely come.	17
Matthew 11:28	I come to Jesus and receive rest.	17
Galatians 6:9	In due season, I will reap.	17
Psalms 139:23–24	Search me, O God, and know my heart.	18
Psalms 19:14	My words and thoughts belong to you.	18

Healing and comfort

SCRIPTURE	DECLARATION	CHAPTER
Psalms 147:3	God binds up the broken-hearted.	19
Isaiah 53:5	By his stripes we are healed.	19
2 Corinthians 1:3–4	The God of all comfort comforts [name].	19
Isaiah 61:3	God gives beauty for ashes and joy for mourning.	19
Hebrews 13:5	God will never leave or forsake us.	19

Legacy

SCRIPTURE	DECLARATION	CHAPTER
2 Timothy 2:2	I will pass this on to faithful people.	20
Psalms 145:4	One generation will praise God to the next.	20
Revelation 5:8	My prayers rise before God like incense.	1, 20
2 Timothy 4:7	By grace, I will finish well.	20

APPENDIX B

The 40-Day Plan

This plan covers the whole book in 40 days, two days per chapter. On the first day you read the teaching. On the second you practise the Activation Moment. Each day takes 15 to 25 minutes.

Daily pattern

1. **Still (2 min)**. Sit quietly and invite the Holy Spirit.
2. **Read (5–10 min)**. Read the assigned section.
3. **Declare (3 min)**. Speak the day's Scripture declaration aloud.
4. **Write (5 min)**. Respond to the poem prompt in your journal.
5. **Pray (3 min)**. Pray what you wrote over the person or place you carry.

Missing a day is fine. Pick up where you left off.

Days 1–20: Foundations and the inner life

DAY	READ	DECLARE	POEM PROMPT
1	Foreword, Introduction, Chapter 1.1–1.4	Ezekiel 22:30	Write two lines beginning "Here I am, Lord..."
2	Chapter 1.5–1.8	Isaiah 62:1	Name one place you will not stop praying for, in four lines.
3	Chapter 2.1–2.4	Habakkuk 2:1	Wait five minutes, then write the seed you received.
4	Chapter 2.5–2.9	Isaiah 55:11	Turn yesterday's seed into a four-line poem.

DAY	READ	DECLARE	POEM PROMPT
5	Chapter 3.1–3.3	Romans 8:15	Write a poem about being God’s child in prayer.
6	Chapter 3.4–3.6	Isaiah 62:6	Write the names on your “wall” and a line for each.
7	Chapter 4.1–4.3	John 10:27	Describe, in verse, a time you sensed God speak.
8	Chapter 4.4–4.6	1 Samuel 3:9	Listen for a word for someone you love; write it.
9	Chapter 5.1–5.3	Psalms 13:1, 5	Write an honest “How long?” stanza.
10	Chapter 5.4–5.6	Lamentations 3:22–23	Add a stanza that turns your lament to trust.
11	Chapter 6.1–6.3	2 Corinthians 1:20	List three promises; choose one for a declaration.
12	Chapter 6.4–6.6	Ezekiel 37:4–5	Write a “dry bones” poem for a hopeless situation.
13	Chapter 7.1–7.4	Psalms 30:5	Write three pairs of parallel lines.
14	Chapter 7.5–7.7	Psalms 136	Write an acrostic on the name of a person or town.
15	Chapter 8.1–8.3	Isaiah 43:19	Record an image God has shown you.
16	Chapter 8.4–8.7	Ezekiel 47:9	Write a poem where your image moves from broken to redeemed.
17	Chapter 9.1–9.3	Ephesians 1:17	Ask God one word for a friend; write it down.
18	Chapter 9.4–9.6	Ephesians 3:16–19	Write an identity poem for that friend.
19	Chapter 10.1–10.3	Psalms 103:17	Write a blessing for a child in your family.
20	Chapter 10.4–10.6	Numbers 6:24–26	Write a generational psalm naming three generations.

Days 21–40: Widening the circle and finishing well

DAY	READ	DECLARE	POEM PROMPT
21	Chapter 11.1–11.3	Jeremiah 29:7	Take a short prayer walk; note five places.
22	Chapter 11.4–11.6	Isaiah 61:4	Write a walking litany for your street or town.
23	Chapter 12.1–12.3	2 Chronicles 7:14	Write a humble prayer for your own nation.
24	Chapter 12.4–12.6	Psalms 2:8	Choose another nation; write a four-step poem for it.
25	Chapter 13.1–13.3	John 17:21	Write a poem for unity among local churches.
26	Chapter 13.4–13.6	Habakkuk 3:2	Write a revival cry for your congregation.
27	Chapter 14.1–14.3	Colossians 2:15	Write two lines declaring Christ's victory.
28	Chapter 14.4–14.6	1 Samuel 17:47	Write a praise song for a situation that feels like a battle.
29	Chapter 15.1–15.3	Zephaniah 3:17	Sing a Scripture on a simple tune; write down any new line.
30	Chapter 15.4–15.7	Psalms 96:1	Write a refrain and two verses for group worship.
31	Chapter 16.1–16.3	Matthew 18:19–20	Invite one person to pray with you this week.
32	Chapter 16.4–16.6	Psalms 133	Write a responsive prayer with four call-and-response pairs.
33	Chapter 17.1–17.3	Habakkuk 2:3	Write about the prayer you have carried longest.
34	Chapter 17.4–17.6	Isaiah 40:31	Write a poem of rest. Then rest.
35	Chapter 18.1–18.3	Psalms 139:23–24	Ask God to search your heart; journal what comes.
36	Chapter 18.4–18.6	Psalms 19:14	Write a prayer of humility over your gift.
37	Chapter 19.1–19.3	Psalms 147:3	Write a gentle poem for someone who is grieving.
38	Chapter 19.4–19.6	Isaiah 61:3	Write a healing declaration; do one act of comfort.

DAY	READ	DECLARE	POEM PROMPT
39	Chapter 20.1–20.4	2 Timothy 2:2	Write down who you could teach this practice to.
40	Chapter 20.5–20.7, Summary	Isaiah 62:6	Write your commissioning poem and commitment. Date it.

After the 40 days: Read back through your journal. Mark answered prayers and the words that proved true. Choose your ongoing rhythm from the table in 20.2.

APPENDIX C

Small-Group Guide

This guide takes a group through the book in 10 weekly sessions of about 90 minutes, covering two chapters each week. Each session assigns four days of the 40-Day Plan as home practice, so the group finishes both together.

For leaders

- ◆ **Group size:** 4–12 people works best.
- ◆ **Materials:** a Bible, this book, a journal and a pen for each person.
- ◆ **Tone:** Keep it warm and safe. No one has to share a poem aloud.
- ◆ **Weighing words:** When people share prophetic impressions, receive them kindly and weigh them together (Chapter 18).
- ◆ **Confidentiality:** What is shared about people prayed for stays in the group.

Session format (90 minutes)

TIME	SEGMENT	WHAT HAPPENS
10 min	Welcome	Food, catch-up, one-sentence check-in
15 min	Worship	A song or psalm read aloud together
20 min	Discuss	Big idea and discussion questions
25 min	Activate	Group Activation Moment from the chapters
15 min	Write and share	Silent writing, then optional sharing

TIME	SEGMENT	WHAT HAPPENS
5 min	Send	Declaration, blessing and the week's practice

Session overview

SESSION	CHAPTERS	THEME
1	1–2	Foundations and practice
2	3–4	Watchman identity and hearing God
3	5–6	Lament and declaration
4	7–8	Poetic forms and imagery
5	9–10	Individuals and families
6	11–12	Cities and nations
7	13–14	Revival and spiritual warfare
8	15–16	Worship and praying together
9	17–18	Endurance and discernment
10	19–20	Comfort and legacy

Session 1: Foundations and Practice (Chapters 1–2)

Big idea: Intercessory prophetic poetry is prayer for others, shaped by what God reveals, in the language of poetry.

1. Which of the three streams, intercession, prophecy or poetry, feels most natural to you, and which feels least natural?
2. Which biblical poem-prayer in Chapter 1 speaks to you most, and why?
3. What do you think of the rhythm of wait, receive, shape, pray, release and steward?

Group activation: Do Activation Moment 2.9 together in 15 minutes.

This week: Days 1–4 of the 40-Day Plan.

Session 2: The Watchman and Hearing God (Chapters 3–4)

Big idea: We pray from identity as children, priests and friends, and we learn to recognise God’s voice.

1. Who has God placed “on your wall”?
2. How have you most often sensed God speaking to you?
3. Which of the five testing questions in 4.3 do you most need to practise?

Group activation: Activation Moment 4.6. Listen in silence for five minutes, then share anything that passes the tests.

This week: Days 5–8.

Session 3: Lament and Declaration (Chapters 5–6)

Big idea: Honest lament and confident declaration belong together.

1. Why do you think lament is often missing from church life?
2. How is biblical declaration different from positive thinking?
3. Share a promise of Scripture that has carried you through a hard time.

Group activation: Pair up. One person speaks a “How long?” line; the other answers with a promise from Scripture. Then swap.

This week: Days 9–12.

Session 4: Poetic Forms and Imagery (Chapters 7–8)

Big idea: Hebrew forms and biblical images give shape and depth to prayer.

1. Which form interests you most: parallelism, acrostic, chiasm or refrain?
2. What image has God given you for a person or place?
3. How do you keep from over-interpreting an image?

Group activation: Pray Activation Moment 7.7. Each person names a prayer need, and the group answers “his mercy endures forever.”

This week: Days 13–16.

Session 5: Individuals and Families (Chapters 9–10)

Big idea: God sees each person and works across generations.

1. How does God see you? How does that change how you pray for others?
2. What blessing would you most like to pass to the next generation?
3. What family pattern would you ask God to end?

Group activation: In threes, each person names someone they carry. The others pray Ephesians 3:16–19 over that person by name.

This week: Days 17–20.

Session 6: Cities and Nations (Chapters 11–12)

Big idea: God cares for places and peoples, and invites us to seek their peace.

1. What do you love about your town? What grieves you?
2. Which sphere in 11.3 is most in need of prayer where you live?
3. How can we pray for our own nation with humility?

Group activation: Go on a 20-minute group prayer walk using the litany in 11.6, or pray over a map indoors.

This week: Days 21–24.

Session 7: Revival and Spiritual Warfare (Chapters 13–14)

Big idea: We pray for a renewed church and stand in Christ's victory, not in fear.

1. What would revival look like in our church?
2. What healthy and unhealthy approaches to spiritual warfare have you seen?
3. Which piece of the armour of God do you most need right now?

Group activation: Speak the armour declarations (14.6) together, then pray John 17:21 over local churches by name.

This week: Days 25–28.

Session 8: Worship and Praying Together (Chapters 15–16)

Big idea: Song and agreement multiply the power of prayer.

1. Have you ever experienced spontaneous prayer or song in worship?
What was it like?
2. What helps you feel safe praying aloud in a group?
3. Why does God value unity in prayer?

Group activation: Sing the refrain from 15.5 and add spontaneous verses. Close with the call-and-response in 16.6.

This week: Days 29–32.

Session 9: Endurance and Discernment (Chapters 17–18)

Big idea: Faithful intercessors wait well, rest well and stay humble and accountable.

1. What prayer have you carried longest? How has waiting shaped you?
2. What does healthy rest look like for an intercessor?
3. Which pitfall in 18.2 are you most vulnerable to?

Group activation: Activation Moment 17.6. Each person writes a long-held prayer, lays it down, and the group declares Habakkuk 2:3 over them.

This week: Days 33–36.

Session 10: Comfort and Legacy (Chapters 19–20)

Big idea: We carry comfort to the hurting and build a practice that outlives us.

1. Who needs comfort from this group right now?
2. What is the most important thing you have learned in these ten weeks?
3. What rhythm of prayer will you keep going forward?

Group activation: Commissioning (20.7). Group members pray the commissioning poem over one another in pairs.

This week: Days 37–40. Consider planning a monthly intercessory poetry night to continue together.

Quotation Sources

Each chapter opens with a quotation from a pastor, Salvation Army leader or prophetic voice. Wording was checked against the original text or a published reproduction. Page numbers are given only where they were confirmed for a named edition. Otherwise the chapter, sermon or dated entry is cited, since those stay the same across editions. Before publishing, check the quotes from works still in copyright (Bonhoeffer, Brueggemann, Grubb, Lewis, Tozer, Wink) against your own copies, and confirm permissions with your publisher if needed.

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About the Author

Rob Davis never liked poetry at school. That changed in March 2025, when the Lord woke him from sleep and gave him a poem. It was a prayer for the leadership of The Salvation Army, from the General down through the officers, soldiers, adherents, staff and all the volunteers.

Since that night, the poems have kept flowing, especially prophetic intercessory poems. Looking back over his Christian life and ministry, Rob has come to see how often God used him in the prophetic, and how much of that came through poetry. He gives all the glory to God.

Rob's passion is to see people trained and activated in poetry, especially prophetic intercessory poetry. This book is part of that calling. It invites every reader to take their place on the wall and let their prayers find words.

