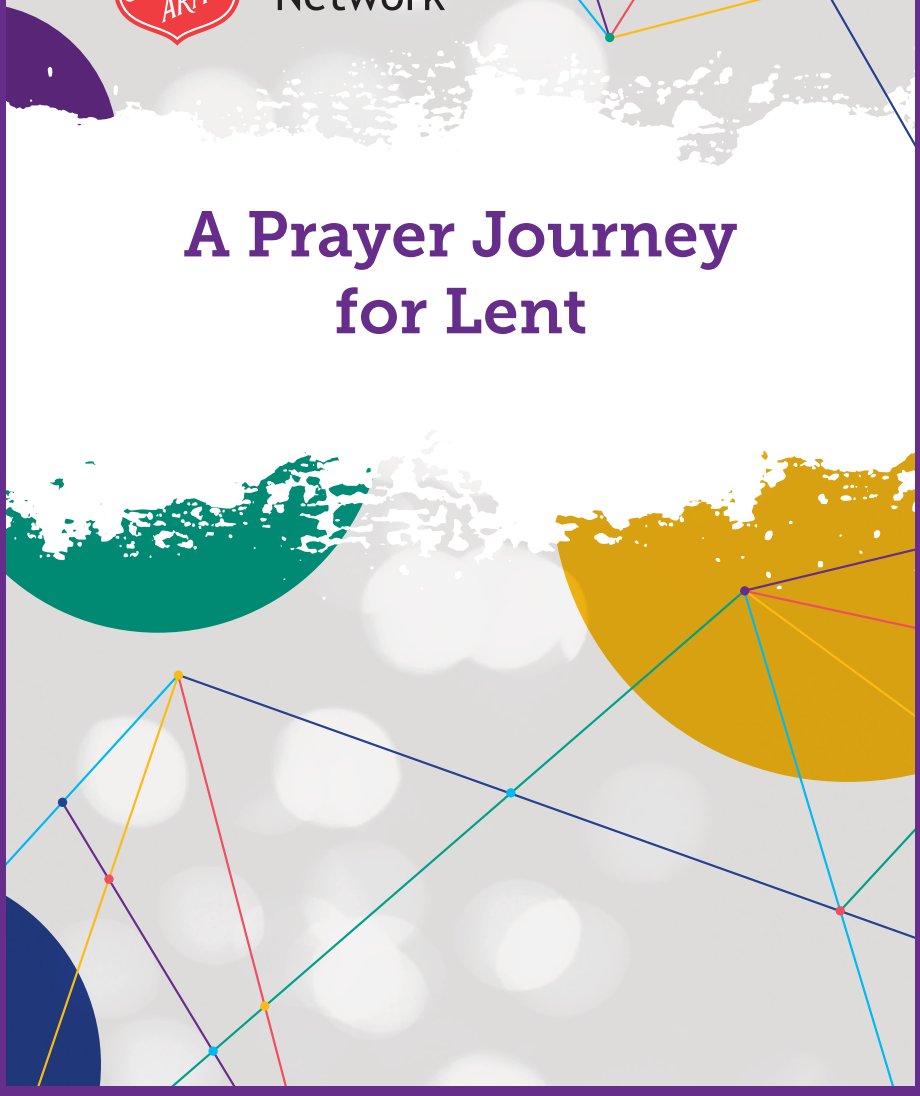




Prayer
Network

A Prayer Journey for Lent



LIVING LIMITLESS LOVE

 **LYNDALL BYWATER (PRAYER NETWORK - THQ)**

SETTING THE SCENE

'Paul boils it all down for the believers in Corinth. Religious people often spend their time practising rituals, projecting dogma, and going through routines that might look like Christianity on the outside but that lack the essential ingredient that brings all of it together – love! It is a loving God who birthed creation and now pursues a broken people in the most spectacular way. That same love must guide believers, so faith doesn't appear to be meaningless noise.' (Note on 1 Corinthians 13 *The Voice*)

This prayer journey is all about the limitless love of God. Based on 1 Corinthians 13:4-7, it is designed to help us reflect on that love: what it's like, how we can experience it more deeply, how it can transform our relationships and how it can ignite mission in our corps. Each day has a thought, a question, a prayer request or a prayer, and we hope you will find time to reflect, pray and listen to God as you work your way through. Every Saturday there is a local mission prayer focus written by guest writers, according to the theme of the week. May this dive into limitless love refresh your walk with God and your heart for his world.

WEEK 1: LOVE TAKES TIME

DAY 1 - KNOWING LIMITLESS LOVE

'And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge – that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God' (Ephesians 3:17–19).

Lord, as we embark on this Lenten journey, we make Paul's prayer our own: by your power, may we know your limitless love. Amen.

 **DAY 2 - LIFE-LONG LOVE**

'You have been my hope, Sovereign Lord, my confidence since my youth' (Psalm 71:5).

Father God, you have been a constant companion on my road through life, lighting my way and holding my hand. You have walked with me through good times and bad and you have been unfailingly patient with me. Today I say 'thank you', and take time to remember those moments when I've experienced your limitless love. Amen.

 **DAY 3 - TAKING TIME, MAKING TIME**

'Love is patient' (1 Corinthians 13:4). Relationships take time. Is there a friendship you've been neglecting because of busyness or avoiding because of unresolved conflict?

Why not get in touch with the person today and make time to meet up. Pray that God will guide your conversation; that he'll help you make peace where there's tension, and find new rhythms that make your friendship sustainable in the midst of busy lives.

 **DAY 4 - STRAWBERRY FIELD: BUILDING COMMUNITY TOGETHER**

I'm Captain Louise Brown, the Fresh Expressions leader at Strawberry Field, a unique project bringing together a 'steps to work' programme for young people, a visitor experience and a fresh expression of Salvation Army church. I see love shown in so many ways: by the young people we work with and by the volunteers who give their time so generously and patiently.

Pray that God will continue to move by the power of his Spirit to build connections and community, so that many more lives will be transformed over the coming years.'



 **DAY 5 - IN IT FOR THE LONG HAUL**

'Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage – with great patience and careful instruction' (2 Timothy 4:2). Mission takes time.

Pray today for the outreach activities your corps or centre is involved in, that the limitless love of Christ will be the motive and the energy behind all that happens, giving you patience to keep on sharing the good news of Jesus in every season.

WEEK 2: LOVE IS KIND

 **DAY 6 - ENCOUNTERING KINDNESS**

'I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with unfailing kindness' (Jeremiah 31:3). When we think of God as mighty, holy and just, it is easy to forget that he is also unfailingly kind. No matter what you may think of yourself today, the Father of all compassion longs to draw you into his arms and wrap you in tender love.

How might today look and feel different if you go into it remembering that God is kind?

 **DAY 7 - LIVING KINDNESS**

'Love is kind' (1 Corinthians 13:4).

Loving God, forgive me for those times when I am unkind. I confess that my need to protect myself and my desire to have my own way often make me mean and ungracious. Teach me your ways, Lord, for I would be one who is kind. Help me make kindness a habit, a way of being that comes naturally to me in all my dealings. Amen.

 **DAY 8 - BEING KIND TO YOURSELF**

'But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control' (Galatians 5:22–23 *ESV*).

We often think about being kind to others, but how kind are we to ourselves? God is gentle with us in our weakness, but are we gentle with ourselves, or do we beat ourselves up when we don't do as well as we'd like? How can you be kinder to yourself today?

 **DAY 9 - REKINDLING KINDNESS**

'Anyone who withholds kindness from a friend forsakes the fear of the Almighty' (Job 6:14). Is there someone you're finding it hard to be kind to at the moment? Prayer is the place where love comes to life again, so take time to pray for that person today. Think about what they're facing and what they might need. *Pray kind prayers for them, and ask God to overwhelm them with his limitless love.*

 **DAY 10 - ACTS OF KINDNESS**

'Therefore, as God's chosen people... clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience' (Colossians 3:12). Kindness isn't just an attitude, it's an action. *What can you do today to show kindness to your family, friends, work colleagues or the strangers you meet? As you go about your day, look out for opportunities for random acts of kindness: a smile, a kind word or something practical that will brighten someone's day.*


 **DAY 11 - CROYDON CITADEL: GOD'S LOVE AT WORK**

I'm Gill McCredie, a cadet at William Booth College. I was blessed to spend my summer placement at Croydon Citadel Corps where I saw God's love at work through volunteers and staff who come alongside vulnerable people, treating them with care and dignity, and helping empower them to be all they can be.

Pray for Croydon Citadel as they explore new opportunities for mission; and for me, that I continue to build on my learning in order to show God's love by feeding the hungry, clothing the naked and loving the unloved.'

 **DAY 12 - KNOWN FOR KINDNESS**

'Do you realise that all the wealth of his extravagant kindness is meant to melt your heart and lead you into repentance?' (Romans 2:4 TPT).



Pray for your corps or centre, that kindness will be a hallmark of your life together. Pray that all those who come into your building or take part in your activities will find a warm, compassionate welcome that helps them open their hearts to the kindness of God.

WEEK 3: LOVE FORGIVES

DAY 13 - RADICALLY FORGIVEN

'Love... is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs' (1 Corinthians 13:4-5). Human love tends to be conditional. It changes over time and it can fade away altogether if it is regularly spurned or taken for granted. The love of God is unconditional, unchanging and endlessly forgiving.

Have you taken that knowledge to heart? Spend time today reflecting on the truth that God keeps no record of your wrongs.

DAY 14 - FORGIVEN AND FREE

'You will again have compassion on us; you will tread our sins underfoot and hurl all our iniquities into the depths of the sea' (Micah 7:19).

Do you know someone who feels like they can never put the mistakes of the past behind them? Pray for them, as you reflect on this beautiful picture of God casting sins into the sea, that they will come to know the deep release of absolute forgiveness.

DAY 15 - GRACE INSTEAD OF BITTERNESS

'See to it that no one falls short of the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up...' (Hebrews 12:15). Forgiving people takes trust: trust that God will heal the wounds they've caused us; trust that he will work justice; trust that he will help us move forward and not get stuck in bitterness.

Ask God to help you trust him and take a step along the road of forgiveness.

DAY 16 - FORGIVENESS INSTEAD OF POLARISATION

'Make a clean break with all cutting, backbiting, profane talk. Be gentle with one another, sensitive. Forgive one another as



quickly and thoroughly as God in Christ forgave you' (Ephesians 4:31–32 *MSG*).

Forgive us, Lord, when we criticise instead of seeking to understand. Help us to grow in grace, not resenting others for holding different opinions or having different priorities from us. May your Church be an example of loving unity in a polarised world. Amen.

DAY 17 – CONVICTED, NOT CONDEMNED

'Christ sacrificed his life's blood to set us free, which means our sins are now forgiven' (Ephesians 1:7 *CEV*). There's a difference between conviction and condemnation. Condemnation is that overwhelming sense that you've messed everything up, and it doesn't come from God, whereas conviction is the Holy Spirit pin-pointing something specific you've done wrong.

Is he showing you something today? If so, confess it to God and receive the forgiveness Jesus bought for you.

DAY 18 – LIMERICK: LIVING JESUS' WAY

I'm Major Imogen Stewart and I'm Involved in pioneering the work of The Salvation Army in Limerick. St Mary's Park is the most deprived estate in the Republic of Ireland, with a high record of drugs, crime and gang family warfare. It is so important that the people who live here see that the Church is not cruel or authoritarian, that forgiveness is freely available and that love is all about change and transformation.'

Pray that we will be able to demonstrate the new way of living that Jesus taught: love, respect and tolerance to the whosoever, without judging or discrimination.

DAY 19 – PEACEMAKERS

'In Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation' (2 Corinthians 5:19 *ESV*).

Father God, may our corps and centres be communities

which build bridges instead of walls, working for peace and reconciliation. Help us reach out to those who have been left feeling condemned and ostracised by past experiences of church. Amen.

WEEK 4: LOVE DELIGHTS IN TRUTH

📅 DAY 20 - TRUTH IN MIND

'Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable... think about such things' (Philippians 4:8).

Loving God, teach me how to fix my thoughts on truth. When worry and negativity dominate my thinking, help me to change my perspective, focusing instead on the many good things you have given me. May the truth of your love for me fill my mind completely. Amen.

📅 DAY 21 - THE LIGHT OF TRUTH

'Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth' (1 Corinthians 13:6). Where do you see evil at work in your local community? What form does it take? Whose lives are most affected by it? What would need to happen for it to be stopped? *Turn those thoughts into prayers, asking God to shine light into the darkness, exposing evil, rescuing its victims and bringing its perpetrators to justice and redemption.*

📅 DAY 22 - TRUTH SETS US FREE

'Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free' (John 8:32). Love delights in truth because truth brings freedom. Knowing the truth of how God sees us really does set us free. *Is there a lie about yourself which you find difficult to shake off? Ask God to point you to a Bible verse which affirms the truth he wants you to believe. Why not memorise it?*

📅 DAY 23 - TRUTH IN THE MEDIA

'Walk straight, act right, tell the truth' (Psalm 15:2 MSG). *Pray today for all those working in the media – TV, radio, print and online – that they will value truth in all they do. Pray for*

investigative journalists working to uncover lies and injustice. Pray for those reporting on politics, for wisdom to know how to commentate without bias. Pray that love, truth and respect will always characterise the way stories are reported.

DAY 24 - TRUTHFUL CONFRONTATION

'But instead we will remain strong and always sincere in our love as we express the truth' (Ephesians 4:15 *TPT*).

Is there someone you need to speak some uncomfortable truths to? Take some time to pray about the conversation you need to have: that you'll know how to speak love as well as truth; that you'll resist the temptation to try and score points; that the love between you will be strengthened.

DAY 25 - SHIREMOOR: TRUTH BRINGING NEW LIFE

'I am Faith, and my husband Keith and I are officers at Shiremoor in the North East Division. We recently asked God to show us his will for how we should reach out to the housing estate where we're based. In response to this, the doors burst open – 250 people joined us for a community fun day. Just eight weeks later, over 100 people joined us for Messy Church and four new families are regularly worshipping on a Sunday!

Please pray that we will continue to see lives won, and that people will go deeper in their relationship with Jesus.'

DAY 26 - TRUTHFUL COMMUNITIES

'Now that you've cleaned up your lives by following the truth, love one another as if your lives depended on it' (1 Peter 1:22 *MSG*). In a world where truth is often sacrificed for the sake of popularity and power, communities of loving integrity are desperately needed.

Pray that your corps or centre will be a community where honesty matters as much as good reputation, humility as much as influence and compassion as much as success.

WEEK 5: LOVE IS A SAFE PLACE

📅 DAY 27 – A SAFE PLACE ALONG THE WAY

'God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble' (Psalm 46:1). Have you ever found yourself saying: 'If God really loved me, this wouldn't be happening'? God is a refuge, his love is a safe place, but it's a mobile sanctuary which travels with us through every season. God's love is ever-present in every situation.

What does it mean to you to know that God's love is right there with you today?

📅 DAY 28 – A SAFE PLACE OF FREEDOM

'Love is a safe place of shelter, for it never stops believing the best for others' (1 Corinthians 13:7 TPT).

Pray today for parents who are struggling to find the balance between protective love and releasing love – between keeping their children safe and giving them freedom to take risks. Pray that God will calm their fears and give them courage to believe the best, releasing their children into all he has for them.

📅 DAY 29 – A SAFE PLACE OF RESPECT

'Love does not traffic in shame and disrespect, nor selfishly seek its own honour' (1 Corinthians 13:5 TPT).

Gracious God, forgive me when I fail to be a safe place for people; when I belittle or disrespect them instead of honouring them. I want to be a living example of sheltering love. Help me to see people for who they are, to value them and to treat them with dignity.

📅 DAY 30 – A SAFE PLACE OF HEALING

'You have been a refuge for the poor, a refuge for the needy in their distress, a shelter from the storm and a shade from the heat' (Isaiah 25:4).

Pray for those you know who have experienced violence, abuse or trauma and who don't feel safe anywhere, that God will help them find safety in his limitless love, calming their fears, lifting their shame, healing their wounds and giving them new hope.

 **DAY 31 - SAFETY AND SECURITY**

'The Lord turn his face towards you and give you peace' (Numbers 6:26). Give thanks today for the various emergency services – police, fire, ambulance, lifeboats, coastguards and mountain rescue – whose diligence makes our communities safer places to live.

Pray they'll have the stamina to work long hours in difficult conditions and the wisdom to know how to handle potentially life-threatening situations. Pray they'll know that God smiles on them as they do their work.

 **DAY 32 - ANTI-TRAFFICKING: FROM SLAVERY TO SAFETY**

'I am Major Kathy Betteridge, the Territorial Director for Anti-Trafficking and Modern Slavery. Please pray for those we work with, as they leave places of danger and come to places of safety, that they will have hope, even when they struggle to believe they will ever escape from slavery.

Pray that, in their recovery, they will come to know God's love and freedom. Pray for our staff and volunteers, that their care, their words and their actions will help many more people find the way to a better life and to a deep experience of God's rescuing, restoring, overshadowing love.'

 **DAY 33 - A SAFE PLACE OF WELCOME**

'The stranger who dwells among you shall be to you as one born among you, and you shall love him as yourself' (Leviticus 19:34 NKJV).

Pray for projects aimed at making your local community a safer, more welcoming place for people who have arrived there from other countries, whether as refugees or immigrants. Pray that your corps will find ways to partner with other churches, charities and agencies in this vitally important work.

WEEK 6: LOVE KEEPS ON GOING

DAY 34 - LOVE NEVER LETS GO

'Love bears all things [regardless of what comes], believes all things [looking for the best in each one], hopes all things [remaining steadfast during difficult times], endures all things [without weakening]' (1 Corinthians 13:7 AMP).

Spend time meditating on this beautiful paraphrase.

How have you seen this love at work in your own life? Which of the four promises do you most need to hold on to at the moment?

DAY 35 - LOVE NEVER RUNS OUT

'Love knows no limit to its endurance... It is, in fact, the one thing that still stands when all else has fallen' (1 Corinthians 13:7,8 JBP).

Pray today for communities around the world which are affected by war or natural disaster, that God's enduring love will come to life amidst the brokenness. Give thanks for every glimmer of love: for every person rescued, for every act of generosity, for every moment of solidarity.

DAY 36 - LOVE NEVER GIVES UP

'Love never takes failure as defeat, for it never gives up' (1 Corinthians 13:7 TPT). Are you grieving over something that feels like failure – something you'd put a lot of hope in, and now it seems to have come to nothing?

Take courage today in the knowledge that God hasn't been defeated and he hasn't given up. Keep trusting in his love – the love that can even bring new life out of death.

DAY 37 - LOVE DOES ITS BEST

'Love is always supportive, loyal, hopeful and trusting' (1 Corinthians 13:7 CEV).

Holy Spirit, search me. Show me the truth about my relationships with family and friends. Where have I offered support, but only on my own terms? Where have I fallen short of loyalty? Where have I lost hope? Where have I become too scared to trust? Ignite your endless, limitless love in me again. Amen.



DAY 38 - LOVE KEEPS MOVING FORWARD

'(Love) never looks back, but keeps going to the end' (1 Corinthians 13:7 *MSG*). As we come to the end of this 'Living Limitless Love' prayer focus, what have you learnt about the way God loves you and the way you love others?

Give thanks for the journey so far, and put aside any sense of failure or inadequacy. God's love doesn't dwell on the past; it propels us into the future.



DAY 39 - COMPELLED BY LOVE

'Love will never become obsolete' (1 Corinthians 13:8 *Voice*). *Faithful God, whose limitless love brought The Salvation Army into being, inspired its Founders and has kindled a fire in the hearts of its members for many generations, ignite in us again today the love that only you can give. May your unquenchable love be our motive and our mission, our strength and our song. Amen.*



DAY 40 -AMAZING LOVE

'Amazing love, o what sacrifice, the Son of God given for me. My debt he pays, and my death he dies, that I might live' (Graham Kendrick). At the end of this Lenten period consider what God has been speaking to you about his amazing, sacrificial love. *Thank you, Lord for sending Jesus so that despite our weaknesses and failings, we may have life!*



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