

INTERVARSITY

Four Laments for Suffering and Spiritual Formation

#1 Lament Liturgy for the Poor

by InterVarsity's Global Urban Trek Leadership Core

Call to Worship

Leader: Let us pray

L: The God of love opens our eyes to see the suffering of the poor People: And we will see

L: The God of justice opens our ears to hear those who cry out P: And we will hear

L: In the power of the Spirit we will know the truth P: and the truth will set us free

L: Let us pray together

All: O God, you who moved into our neighborhood, open our eyes to see our neighbors at this time, those who lie beside the roadside of our lives, like unnoticed stones. Open our eyes to see who our neighbors really are.

Cloth of Compassion

L: The Cloth of Compassion streams toward our lives from the cross. Let us name our wounded neighbors. (Michael Brown, Kajieme Powell, Vonderrit Myers...)

Time of Confession

L: Let us join in a time of confessing our sins before the Lord. Respond together by saying, "Forgive us, O Lord."

L: As we have seen our neighbors, we have been afraid of those we have learned to dismiss.

A: Forgive us, O Lord

L: As we have walked past our neighbors, too often we have been afraid to stop in case they asked too much of us.

A: Forgive us, O Lord

L: As we have walked past our neighbors, we have been afraid to stop because people might think we are like them.

A: Forgive us, O Lord

L: As we have walked past our neighbors, we have chosen to protect ourselves rather than trusting in your ability to love us as we love our neighbor.

A: Forgive us, O Lord

L: As we have walked past our neighbors we have not believed in your abundance but looked at our own resources as though they were scarce.

A: Forgive us, O Lord

L: As we have walked past our neighbor, we have not stopped to connect our destiny to the benefit our neighbor's. We have chosen what is easy, fast, and could allow us to stay in control.

A: Forgive us, O Lord

L: As we walked past our neighbors, we have not believed that they could have great good within them.

A: Forgive us, O Lord

L: As we walked past our neighbors we have not believed they have love for us, and so we have not received their love.

A: Forgive us, O Lord

L: As we have mired ourselves in wrongdoings, self-doubt, and self-hate, not seeing or recognizing your image in ourselves or our neighbors

A: Forgive us, O Lord

L: As we have looked at ourselves and been overwhelmed by our sin instead of your grace A:
Forgive us, O Lord

L: As we have held on to our wrongful deeds and not extended the forgiveness to self that you have extended to us

A: Your peace be with us, O Lord

Prayer of Lamentation

L: Great God of love, your creation weeps. Hear the cry of the voiceless. See the pain and injustice perpetrated on your children. Bless those who grieve and mourn the broken kingdom on Earth.

#2 Time of Lament

(adapted from Richard Rohr's Rites of Passage material)

1. A large outer circle of students simply walk around the circle, saying nothing, but banging a couple of items together or otherwise making noise without opening their mouths. This gives students an easy onramp into simply expressing their frustration at the awful things they have seen by banging sticks, empty plastic bottles, or some other noise-making item
2. Inside the circle students are invited to get on their knees, or faces and wail loudly.
3. Another station off to the side allows students to beat a large sack of rice (or something similar) with a pvc pipe (or something similar).

L: O Gracious and Compassionate God, as we dip our fingers in this salty water, may you connect our hearts with those whose tears of grieving are shed in isolation and injustice.

L: "It's the Holy Spirit's role to convict, God's role to judge, and ours to love."

A: We pledge ourselves to love.

L: We release the resentment and bitterness we hold towards people who have hurt us and our friends.

A: We pledge ourselves to love.

L: We release the resentment and bitterness we hold toward the broken systems that have marginalized our friends' voices.

A: We pledge ourselves to love.

We pledge to call wrongdoers and broken systems back to God's right purposes.

A: We pledge ourselves to love.

L: Jesus Christ is our living water, pouring forth grace towards us who grieve. The wounds of our wrongdoing and the wrongdoing of others are bathed and forgiven in God's healing love.

A: Lord, we receive your forgiveness.

Let us pray

A: Oh God, make us neighbors to all who need neighbors. And give us humble souls to recognize in others the gift of being neighbors to us.

Amen

Benediction

L: Now may the God of all grace, who called us into his eternal glory in Christ—after we have suffered a little while—may he himself restore us, and make us strong, firm and steadfast. Amen.

#3 LITANY FOR PERSECUTED CHRISTIANS

(adapted from www.diohuron.org)

(Plain text for leader; *bold* for everyone)

PRAYER OF PRAISE

O God the Father,

Creator of heaven and earth, have mercy upon us.

O God the Son,

Redeemer of the world, have mercy upon us.

O God the Holy Spirit,

Sanctifier of the Faithful, have mercy upon us.

PRAYER OF REMEMBRANCE

Lest we forget those who gave us life, physical and spiritual,

In your mercy remind us, O Lord.

Lest we forget your own persecution and death upon the cross for the redemption of your servants,

In your mercy remind us, O Lord.

Lest we forget all the saints and martyrs who served you faithfully throughout the ages,

In your mercy remind us, O Lord.

(Silence as we remember)

PRAYER OF PURITY

From all thoughts of vengeance,

Savior, deliver us.

From all thoughts and deeds of violence, especially against the weak, the unborn and the defenseless,

Savior, deliver us.

From all thoughts of hatred and malice,

Savior, deliver us.

From all silent and spoken racial discrimination, and from indifference to systems of injustice,

Savior, deliver us.

From all unkindness, uncaring and selfishness,

Savior, deliver us.

From hypocrisy and pride,

Savior, deliver us.

From hardness of heart and greed,

Savior, deliver us.

From neglect of and indifference toward our persecuted brothers and sisters,

Savior, deliver us.

From lack of courage in testifying to your holy Gospel,

Savior, deliver us.

PRAYER FOR OURSELVES

For grace to love the Holy Trinity with all our heart, all our soul, all our mind and with all our strength,

We pray to you, good Lord.

For courage to love our neighbor as ourselves,

We pray to you, good Lord.

For power to sustain your persecuted Church, wherever it is called upon to suffer for you,
We pray to you, good Lord.

For grace to love the enemies of your Church and to pray for their repentance,
We pray to you, good Lord.

For boldness to witness to your truth with genuine voices,
We pray to you, good Lord.

PRAYER FOR THE PERSECUTED

Upon Christian women, widowed and abandoned by acts of persecution and children orphaned by war, disease, and famine,
Have mercy, O Lord.

Upon your people who are sick or starving,
Have mercy, O Lord.

Upon your servants forced into slavery, captivity and exile through the evil of others,
Have mercy, O Lord.

Upon your people turned to anger from witnessing vile acts of violence against their loved ones,
Have mercy, O Lord.

Upon all those who commit grievous sins against the faithful, through hatred, contempt or ignorance,
Have mercy, O Lord.

(Joint, loud cries of lament)

PRAYERS FOR STRENGTHENING FOR THOSE PERSECUTED FOR THEIR FAITH

We ask you, Gracious Father, Fount of all Love, heal and protect your divided and persecuted Church,

We ask you, Gracious Father, Fount of all Love, heal and protect your divided and persecuted Church.

We ask you, Holy Son, to forgive the sins of your poor servants,
We ask you, Holy Son, to forgive the sins of your poor servants.

We ask you, Holy Spirit, Comforter of the afflicted, to assist and strengthen those who are oppressed for their Christian faith,

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(Open, spoken prayers for areas where the church is being persecuted)

PRAYERS OF CLOSING

Lamb of God

Have mercy upon us.

O Christ hear us,

O Christ arise and help us.

We pray the prayer Christ taught us:

Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be your name, Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; And forgive us our sins, As we forgive them that sin against us; And lead us not into temptation, But deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Prayer

Gracious and loving God, we put into your hands all those areas in our world in which your people and your church are persecuted and suffer discrimination. We know that you are present with the people in these areas and that your love will penetrate any distress and will bring change. We know that the Good News of Jesus brings light, love, forgiveness and joy to all. We join with the persecuted in praising you and basking in your love.

Let us go forth in peace.

Thanks be to God.

#4 A Litany of Confession and Hope for Christians and LGBT

(after each paragraph, give time for personal spoken or silent prayer)

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we acknowledge that our hearts are often hard, our minds closed, and our spirits confused. We acknowledge that we are broken people, in our thoughts, in our words, and in our deeds. Today we acknowledge that we are broken sexually, that we have used the good and rich gift you have given us in self centered ways, objectifying others, treating them as less than full persons, imagining things we ought not imagine, and acting selfishly with ourselves and others. Have mercy on us.

We acknowledge that the church has often treated the poor, the neglected, and the broken with disdain rather than compassion; with judgment rather than acceptance, with condescension rather than friendship. We acknowledge that we are part of the church, and have done these same things. Today we acknowledge that we have often mistreated the LGBT community and LGBT people in these ways, by indifference if not by hostility. We are truly sorry and humbly repent. Have mercy on us.

We pray for ourselves, for all of us who struggle with our distorted sexuality; give us courage to trust that your ways are better than ours; that your power can change our lives; that your Presence never leaves us. And today we pray especially for brothers and sisters who are struggling with same sex attraction and its temptations and challenges; for grace that will bring light to the soul and hope to the heart, for truth that will open the eyes and revelation that will dispel confusion.

We pray for those who are bitter and angry, whose families or friends have rejected them, that they may find acceptance and hope in you and the community of your people. Restore to them the assurance of your unfailing mercy; remove from them the fears that beset them; strengthen them in the journey of healing you freely give.

Father, look with compassion on the whole human family; take away the arrogance and hatred which infect our hearts; break down the walls that separate us; unite us in bonds of love; and work through our struggle and confusion to accomplish your purposes on earth; that, in your good time, all nations and races may serve you in harmony around your heavenly throne; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.