



CINNAMON  
NETWORK

# YOUR CIVIC PRAYER EVENT

Resource Booklet



# INTRODUCTION

**Can you imagine a breakfast gathering where leaders from business, education, health, media, politics, police and community groups come together to build relationships and to pray for your village, town or city?**

All that the local church does to serve its community is made better by the quality of its relationships with civic and community organisations.

- Projects addressing anti-social behaviour in town and city centres and keeping ex-offenders out of prison are made possible or better by the church's relationship with the local police.
- Projects keeping children engaged in mainstream education or providing meals for them during the school holidays are made possible or better by the church's relationship with the local school.
- Projects housing the homeless, feeding the hungry and welcoming refugees are made possible or better by the church's relationship with the local authority.
- Projects addressing mental health, the isolated elderly and expectant mothers with no support networks are made possible by the church's relationship with local health professionals.

The increased need for efficient and effective use of limited resources in this age of austerity is driving greater partnership working. Together we are pooling our resources, co-ordinating our efforts and creating new solutions to help those in our communities who need it most.

The Cinnamon Faith Action Audits showed that 38% of community projects work in partnership to deliver community change and transformation. That leaves a huge 62% of community projects who could increase their impact by working in partnership with other organisations.



# THE INVITATION

**Cinnamon Network is passionate about helping local churches to reinvigorate their communities by building life-giving relationships. Jesus provides the perfect example of sacrificial love and service for us to follow. We are what I call 'faith-based but not faith-biased' – Jesus inspires us to do what we do in the community but we do it indiscriminately, for people of all faiths and none.**

At the heart of our relationship with Jesus Christ is the practice of prayer. We believe that through prayer Jesus changes both those who pray and those they pray for.

As we make prayer a focus of our Jesus-inspired community action, we simply ask that God use us to improve the lives of others.

To encourage stronger civic and community relationships and establish Jesus-centred prayer-based social action, Cinnamon Network would like to invite churches around the UK to host a Civic Prayer Event. The events will kick start a new level of prayer for, and in partnership with, our communities.

- Imagine asking leaders within business, education, health, media, government and policing about the big goal they are currently working towards so that the church can pray for them.
- Imagine inviting those leaders and others across your local community to a Civic Prayer Event where prayer for the local community is accessible to everyone.
- Imagine the relationships that will be established and strengthened as you commit to pray for transformation in your community.
- Imagine what will happen when you place Jesus and prayer publicly at the centre of everything that the churches in your village, town and city are involved in.
- Imagine inviting local churches to adopt a rhythm of prayer for community transformation.



Personally, I draw much from the Monastic Christian tradition, which talks about the 'work of prayer' and encourages a daily pattern and discipline of prayer called a 'daily office'. In my own daily prayer I have adopted a rhythm of praying for the transformation of community by focusing on a different sector of society each day of the week.

Monday:	<b>Business and Finance</b>
Tuesday:	<b>Education and Learning</b>
Wednesday:	<b>Health and Wellbeing</b>
Thursday:	<b>Media, Arts and Entertainment</b>
Friday:	<b>Politics and Government</b>
Saturday:	<b>Policing and Security</b>
Sunday:	<b>Family and Community</b>

# WILL YOU JOIN US?

**We would love to see 100-200 Civic Prayer Events held in villages, towns and cities the length and breadth of the UK. Could you host one in your area?**

We have talked with churches already running Civic Prayer Events in their communities to gather learning and best practice. This booklet captures lots of practical ideas, tips and advice to make it as easy as possible for you to organise your own event.

Please join with us to pray for our communities and our partnership with them. We believe that when our prayers go hand-in-hand with our action, we will see God do even greater things in our communities – and ourselves!



Come and be part of the difference.

**Matt Bird**  
Founder of Cinnamon Network

[mattbird@cinnamonnetwork.co.uk](mailto:mattbird@cinnamonnetwork.co.uk)

“The civic prayer gatherings have taken our partnership with the city to a different level.”

**Chris Cullwick**  
One Voice York

“Prayer for and with those in authority and leadership is one of the catalysts that makes for change and authentic transformation. It is indeed true to say, “Through the blessing of the upright a city is exalted!”

**Margaret Clarke**  
Transformations Ireland

“The Bible tells us to pray for those in authority and we are delighted to do that formally at the National Parliamentary Prayer Breakfast every year in Westminster Hall. It is also a wonderful opportunity to commend the personal and public relevance of the Christian Faith to all those who attend.”

**Mark Harris**  
Christians in Parliament,  
National Parliamentary Prayer Breakfast

“Our annual civic prayer breakfast is one of the most strategic things we do in the city. It builds on our on-going intentional relationship engagement with the public, private and voluntary sectors.”

**Lloyd Cooke**  
CEO Saltbox, Stoke-on-Trent

“I am passionate about greater unity and understanding within the Church. Prayer Breakfasts bring people together from different churches and traditions but also different racial communities and geographies.”

**Kevin McKenna**  
Manchester Prayer Breakfast

“Our engagement with those is civic leadership is so important. In Swansea, we have sought to build positive relationships with community leaders. We have hosted prayer breakfasts and sought to serve our City practically and humbly.”

**Dave Ward**  
Chairman, Swansea HOPE

“Prayer and civic engagement go hand in glove. Jesus taught, ‘pray God’s Kingdom comes, his will be done on earth’. This covers all communities, towns and city regions.”

**Doug Flett**  
National Prayer Breakfast for Scotland

“We have been greatly encouraged that the Bolton Prayer Breakfast is regularly attended by between 70 and 90 people. We host it with the full cooperation from all political parties and the chief executive of the town. It has become a place where all church leaders know that they can network with civic, voluntary sector and business people.”

**Susan Edmondson**  
Bolton Prayer Breakfast

“Our prayer breakfasts are significant and have demonstrated how the Christian faith cares about and contributes to the welfare of local communities.”

**Arthur Cornell**  
Eastbourne Prayer Breakfast

# PREPARATION FOR YOUR EVENT

Write a guest list of senior leaders from the seven sectors of your local community. Consider including:

- 1. Business and Finance** Business owners and business leaders, local Chamber of Commerce
- 2. Education and Learning** Leaders from Schools, Colleges, Universities, Local Authority Education departments
- 3. Health and Wellbeing** Director of Public Health, Clinical Commissioning Groups, Health and Wellbeing Board members
- 4. Media, Arts and Entertainment** Local newspaper editor, Radio station managers
- 5. Politics and Government** MPs, Lord Mayor, local councillors, council executives and officers
- 6. Policing and Security** Police and Crime Commissioners, Chief Constables and police officers, Fire and Rescue officials
- 7. Community and Family** Leaders of local voluntary sector organisations

Compile a list of all leaders of churches, Christian organisations and representatives of other faith groups in your community.



## Meet with Leaders

Arrange to meet with a leader who represents each of the seven sectors you will pray for. Ask these leaders to identify one goal they are working towards that the Church can pray for. Invite them to attend your prayer event and leave them with a personal invitation.

## Distribute Community Goals

Design and print a leaflet or postcard with the goals you collected from each of the leaders. Print these to distribute at the event.

## Venue

We suggest a neutral venue, like the Town Hall or possibly a centrally located hotel, which is unthreatening to guests.

## Time

Prayer breakfasts work well, from 7.30-9.30am. Alternatively, you could try a lunchtime or evening event.

## Host

Having an influential host can help to ignite interest in your event. Invitations sent from the Mayor, Leader or Chief Executive of the Local Authority would be ideal. Some Civic Prayer Events use wording which states that the event will take place 'In the Presence of the Lord Mayor'.

## Catering

Building relationship as you eat and drink together has proved to be a very important part of a successful event. We suggest food is served to seated guests, rather than a buffet style, to ensure your guests have plenty of time to talk.

## Ticketing

You'll need to know how many people to cater for, so it's important the event is ticketed. Typically prices range from £8-£18 per person depending on event costs. In order to keep the event costs to a minimum, local churches may wish to subsidise the ticket prices. Alternatively, you could find a suitable sponsor. Don't forget to reserve a number of seats at 'your expense' for the civic leaders and other guests you really want to attend.

### Speaker(s)

A great speaker from the local community will help to give your event authority and ensure that community goals remain central to your prayers. We recommend inviting the Chief Executive of the local authority, the Leader of the Council or perhaps the Mayor. Ask them to take about 15-20 minutes to share the joys and challenges of their work and responsibility and their priorities for the local community.

### Alternative Speaker Options

- A well-known celebrity could act as a real draw. Ask him or her to share something of their personal faith and make the link with what they love about the town and how local organisations are working to improve it.
- Invite a local Christian leader to speak. Perhaps he or she can share their vision for a new/existing project in the community highlighting how churches are already working together with local authorities.
- Consider using two speakers. A local Christian leader could speak for about four minutes followed by the main speaker – a local civic leader.



### Preparing the Prayers

There are three types of prayers to consider:

- **Opening and Closing Prayers**  
Approach the individuals you'd like to lead the prayers ahead of time. Brief them about the length and tone that you'd like them to use for the prayers. Remember that the prayers need to be accessible for everyone.
- **Prayer for Community Goals**  
Share the Community Goals with the leaders ahead of time so they can develop prayers that are appropriate and relevant to everyone who'll be attending.
- **Prayers from Leaders**  
Ask a local leader to read one of the pre-written prayers inside this booklet that corresponds with their sector of business or community life.

# RUNNING THE EVENT

## Prepare a team to offer your guests a warm welcome.

Handpick table hosts to facilitate conversation and prayers.

Print badges to help people greet each other and identify the organisations represented.

Follow your running order carefully (we have suggested one on page 12).

It is important to finish on time to respect those who need to return to work or have other commitments (especially for breakfast events).

Use well-known hymns or songs and print the words for guests. On the following page, you'll find an anthem to a well-known tune that has been especially written for the civic prayer events.

## The Prayers

As mentioned earlier, it is important to pre-arrange prayers to avoid any embarrassment or surprises.

You can share the community goals that your civic leaders submitted beforehand with guests. These are the focus of the prayers. You can then provide blank cards and ask guests to write their own goals for prayer. These can then be collected for the leaders to pray over.

Consider having a few minutes to discuss the topic raised by the speaker and conclude with prayer led by the table host. Praying styles vary and are personal, so you need to make sure that those leading prayers are sensitive.

## Bible

Consider a short reading such as a passage from Jeremiah 29 to conclude your event.

*"Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper."* Jeremiah 29:7

# WE SEEK YOUR KINGDOM

## (Civic Society Hymn)

Sung to the tune of 'Abide with me'

**We seek your kingdom throughout every sphere  
We long for heaven's demonstration here  
Jesus, your light shine bright for all to see  
Transform, revive and heal society**

**Before all things, in him all things were made  
Inspiring culture, media and trade  
May all our work serve your economy  
Transform, revive and heal society**

**Peace, truth and justice reigning everywhere  
With us be present in our public square  
Fill all who lead with your integrity  
Transform, revive and heal society**

**Forgive us Lord, when we have not engaged  
Failing to scribe your heart on history's page  
Make us again what we were made to be  
Transform, revive and heal society**

**Faithful to govern ever may we be  
Selfless in service, loving constantly  
In everything may your authority  
Transform, revive and heal society**

Music: Tune - Abide with me (Public Domain) - Henry Francis Lyte  
Lyrics: Noel Robinson, Andy Flannagan, Graham Hunter

### Possible Running Order

07:30	Welcome
07:32	Opening prayer
07:33	Breakfast
08:10	Hymn
08:15	First speaker
08:20	Prayers for community goals
08:30	Main speaker
08:50	Prayers for sectors
09:00	Table host-led prayers or discussion
09:05	Anthem
09:10	Closing remarks
09:13	Closing prayer
09:15	Close

### Options for your Event

- You may like to host an orange juice and coffee reception for VIPs about 30 minutes before the main event.
- Be aware that it may be harder for people to attend an evening or lunchtime event.
- Consider allocating seating to encourage interaction and help table hosts to pray specifically for those they're hosting.
- You may like to consider including a few minutes of open prayer guided by the table host.
- To give extra visual focus, create or show a short film to highlight local social action projects and the power of working in partnership.
- Don't forget to provide small cards and invite guests to write their own prayer goals for the community.
- Broaden the reach and impact of your event by inviting local social action projects to have a stand/exhibition space.

### Other Considerations

Below you'll find some additional tips from experienced organisers of Civic Prayer Events:

- Assemble a good team who can reach across the village/town/city with their contacts and influence (not just administrators).
- Make sure the venue has good catering.
- Secure the involvement of the Mayor, Leader or Chief Executive of your council at the outset.
- Promote the event widely and invite plenty of people. Start inviting people early to ensure good attendance.
- Invite and involve local businesses and their business network(s).
- Meet with a key civic leader/Mayor a week before the event to brief them.
- Ask your key guest(s) "Is there anything we can pray for you personally?"
- Use social media to build awareness.
- A local Christian business or key donors may like to sponsor the event or underwrite the cost. However, be aware that people are more likely to come if they've paid at least a small amount.



# LEADERS PRAYERS

To help make prayer accessible for people with and without faith, Cinnamon Network have invited local leaders from the different sectors of society to write a prayer that can be used by you and your guests.

## Monday: Business & Finance



Lord God,

Thank you for the role that business plays in our local communities and for the wider benefit of the economy.

Thank you for the employment opportunities they create to enable people to flourish, for the many opportunities they have to give back, using their unique position to positively impact society.

Enable businesses to create a sense of community where people are valued and encouraged to achieve their life's potential. Show us how to model and demonstrate generosity at every opportunity.

Please direct our business leaders to lead with courage and conviction, upholding ethical values and reputation before all else to enable us to build sustainable businesses that give back as much as they take, leaving our planet fit to pass on to the next generation.

Thank you Lord, you have given our leaders the skills and talents to lead and the heart to balance economics and compassion.

Amen.

**Gary Grant**

Business Owner, The Entertainer.

## Tuesday: Education & Learning



Lord God,

We thank you for our education system, for the teachers and support workers who give of themselves to this work.

Thank you for the privilege of education that we have in this nation.

We ask you to give grace to teachers so that they can teach effectively and support young people, and grace to learners so that they can learn and become the people that you want them to be.

We also ask for strength for parents and carers of our young people and wisdom for school leaders and education policy makers so that they can lead effectively.

We thank you and ask you these things in the name of your Holy Son, Jesus our Lord.

Amen.

**Vivienne Royal**

Teacher, Swanshurst School, Birmingham.

# LEADERS PRAYERS

## Wednesday: Health & Wellbeing



Lord God,

We thank you that we have a healthcare system which is free at the point of access and, although it has its challenges, provides a great service based on need. Thank you for dedicated professionals who work tirelessly in our NHS.

As health leaders, Clinical Commissioning Groups and Trusts try to meet the high demands and daily pressures, we ask that you would give them wisdom to tackle the decisions they face.

Particularly thinking of the most vulnerable and elderly, may their health needs be met and their dignity be upheld. We pray for a smoother interface between primary, secondary and social care and for continued voluntary sector and community inputs.

We ask that innovation and advances would continue and that all sectors of society would have improvements in their health, wellbeing and quality of life.

Amen.

**Dr Jane Saffu**

GP at Barking, Havering and Redbridge Health Trust

## Thursday: Media, Arts & Entertainment



Lord God,

We thank you for everyone who works in the media industry, from the people on air to the people behind the scenes. Thank you for their passion, and their desire to entertain and inform. Thank you for the ways they make us laugh, and cry, and question.

Please bless them and inspire them with joy, creativity and new ideas. Please give them courage and wisdom as they seek out truth in difficult places. Please comfort and protect them when they cover hard stories in tough environments. Please give them energy to keep going when things are a struggle. And please bless them with a deep satisfaction and joy as they work.

In the name of Jesus, Amen.

**Vicki Sparks**

Sports Journalist

# LEADERS PRAYERS

## Friday: Government & Politics



Lord God,

As we pray together as a wide and diverse community, we lift to you those engaged in politics and activism.

We trust your call on their lives, and that you give them freedom to work within that calling.

We pray that you help them to be gracious as your presence and influence are raised in political debate, to pray for wisdom and integrity, and the wise explanation of your truth in the public square.

We look for your path as we seek to support those engaged in policymaking at all levels, that they might flourish and know that they make a positive contribution in your name, as they serve our communities with grace, love and diligence.

Amen.

### **Rt Hon Alistair Burt MP**

Member of Parliament for NE Bedfordshire and Minister of State for Community & Social Care.

## Saturday: Policing & Security



Lord God,

Bless the Police Service, for the men and women who serve their community keeping others safe and protecting people from harm even at risk to themselves.

Keep them safe and give them courage to face the intimidation and danger that they have to deal with every day. Help them to protect the vulnerable, defend the weak and bring to justice those who cause harm to others.

Give them wisdom and discernment and that through them you bring peace where there is hatred and aggression, a sense of hope to those who are in despair and comfort to those who are broken hearted.

I pray that the Police service continues to be a beacon of honesty, goodness and justice in a troubled world and that they feel supported by the communities that they serve.

Amen.

### **Paul Netherton**

Assistant Chief Constable, Devon and Cornwall Police

# LEADERS PRAYERS

## Sunday: Family & Community



Lord God,

We see how important family is to you when we remember how you placed your only Son into the arms of Mary and Joseph.

Jesus we see how important family is when we remember how in your dying breath you placed your mother into the family of John.

May each family member be celebrated and not overlooked; from the first cry of a new born baby to the final breath of an aged grandparent. Help us to remember how precious each life is.

Help us to hold on to love for each other when we are exhausted from looking after children, running a home and going out to work, as well as looking after elderly parents who once looked after us. God, help us to remember how blessed we are.

Lord, we pray that there will be a sense of belonging in our communities where we share what we have and care about each other, communities where we can share our victories and achievements as well as our sorrows.

Help us to love one another as you have loved us.

Amen.

**Deb Fozzard**

Parent



# AFTER THE EVENT

Encourage all guests to continue praying for the leaders, their community goals and their sectors. You can also organise smaller prayer groups and follow up events to maintain momentum. The prayer rhythm can be a really great way for individuals, small groups and whole congregations to focus their prayers.

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## Ongoing Prayer:

- **Touch Point Meetings**  
Arrange a 'touch-point' meeting with the civic leaders to check progress against their prayer goals, around six months later.
- **Personal Prayer**  
Encourage individuals to use the prayer rhythm to remember each of the seven sectors of community life and business in their daily prayers. You could produce prayer cards or bookmarks for people to take away and use.
- **Small Group Prayer**  
Set up regular small group prayer sessions to focus on a different sector each time they meet.
- **Congregational Prayer**  
Involve local churches in regular prayer. Develop a rhythm of interviewing people from different sectors and share their goals for prayer with the local church community.

# ABOUT CINNAMON

**Cinnamon Network began at the end of 2010 in response to growing social need, public sector reform, the economic cuts and an increasing recognition of the role of voluntary organisations.**

Our aim is to help the 50,000 branches of the local church across the UK to serve individuals, families and communities to help them thrive and flourish. We believe that when local churches work with local agencies, such as government, police, health, education and business, then our cities, towns and villages will be transformed.

## Now Launching: The Cinnamon Civic Leadership Forum

If you are a leader who is engaging with civic leaders and authorities, you will probably want to hear from others who are on a similar journey.

You can now benefit from the Cinnamon Civic Leadership Forum, which is designed to provide peer mentoring and encouragement to equip church and community leaders to impact their communities for the better.

Cinnamon is investing in the Forum to connect you with leaders who are on a similar journey of building better relationships across the sectors of your village, town or city with business, health, education, media, government, police and community leaders.

You will benefit from specific events, conference calls, mentoring, access to a Forum Faculty of experienced leaders alongside insight and advice from fellow leaders.

Cost: **£395** per annum.

OR **Free** for leaders who have conducted a Cinnamon Faith Action Audit or who organise a Civic Prayer Event.

If you would like to be invited to join the Forum, email: [MattBird@cinnamonnetwork.co.uk](mailto:MattBird@cinnamonnetwork.co.uk)

# COMMUNITY GOALS



## Business and Finance

Goal



## Education and Learning

Goal



## Health and Wellbeing

Goal



## Media, Arts and Entertainment

Goal



## Government and Politics

Goal



## Policing and Security

Goal



## Family and Community

Goal

# PARTNERS





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NETWORK

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To serve the nation

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