

## A Prayer on Christmas Day

God of joy, we celebrate the birth of your Son!

Today, in churches throughout the world, people are gathering.

We are glad that we can celebrate together.

but when we come to pray, we soon remember that there are many people who are not able to be joyful today: survivors from war and disaster, who have lost almost everything, loved ones of those killed by violence and accident, refugees – herded together behind wire, youngsters and older people sleeping rough.

Loving God, we ask for your compassion on who cannot celebrate.

Help us to know how to help and how to show mercy.

Dear Lord, how deeply we pray that the nations of the earth would respond to the gospel of peace, the goodwill your angels announced to the shepherds at Bethlehem. We pray for the people of Bethlehem today—help them to find a way to peace.

We pray for the church. May it truly represent the good news of Jesus in the world today. As the church throughout the world worships the Christ-child, by the power of your Spirit give new love where there is dispute, new hope where there is struggle and setback, and new faith in your power and goodness.

Lord Jesus, you were born as a vulnerable child into an ordinary family, to experience the ups and downs of family life. Often, we feel are vulnerable at Christmas time. Be with those who find loneliness is hard to bear, who experience hurt or disappointment. Be close to those for whom Christmas is a reminder of tragedy or bereavement. We give thanks for the happiness of Christmas, but we ask that you help us when we feel sadness or distress.

Heal, we pray, all who need restoration in body soul and spirit. As the holidays begin, we ask for rest and safety for those who are taking a break and encouragement for those who need to work.

We thank you, Lord, for that the angels' proclamation of peace and goodwill to all. May your kingdom come and your will be done. We thank you in the name of Jesus whose birth we celebrate.

Amen.

— Brian McKinlay

*Acknowledgement:* Some of the ideas in this prayer come from *Prayers for today's world*, edited by Dick Williams (Eastbourne: Kingsway, 1993), p. 117.