

# HOPE FOR THE COUNTRYSIDE

## Seeds of Prayer

### The seasons

The summer is firmly established and one hot day follows another. Flowers bloom continuously in a race to outdo each other, but water is more vital now than ever in the heat. *Praise God that He is always our shade and shelter, and that He refreshes us with His Spirit when we become weary and burdened.*

"For I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground; I will pour out my Spirit on your offspring, and my blessing on your descendants."

Isaiah 44: 3

### Current issue

The Old Testament reveals a close connection between the attitude of the people and the state of the land. The Lord's first response to the lack of repentance is to withhold the rain. (Amos 4:7) Our own nation and farming community is being tested; firstly by the political disarray over Europe, secondly by the harsh end of winter, now thirdly by drought.

And yet there is expectancy of spiritual awakening. God deprives a people of material blessings in order to prepare us and to increase our dependence on Him, that we might humble ourselves, pray, seek His face, and turn from wickedness.

We, the Lord's people, carry this responsibility. *Pray against our own unbelief and apathy in the church, and cry out to the One who is able to keep us from falling (2 Chr 7: 14).*

### Farming and the land

Farmers are perplexed. The abnormal season has brought on panic, and political uncertainty has produced fear. Uncertainty is leading to anxiety. There are many cases where adverse weather conditions have made it impossible to comply with 'greening' rules that are the basis of payments farmers receive. *Pray for our farming community to trust in the Lord, and to thank Him for our provision. Ask for God's blessing on our land, on those who work it, and on our crops and animals (Jer 17: 7-8).*

### Rural life

Migrant workers play an important part in the economies and communities of many rural areas, but often struggle with social integration. Give thanks for a recent government funded initiative in Cambridgeshire to help rural migrant workers with language skills, understanding legislation and accessing services. *Pray for those seeking to reach them with the Gospel and for new migrant churches (Deut 10: 18).*

Many rural communities are growing, with significant migration of all age groups from urban areas. But there remain constraints on the growth of rural economies, particularly in more remote areas. *Pray that a recently announced House of Lords inquiry will help identify the critical issues. Pray for rural Christians to be prophetic and 'seek the peace' of their communities and 'pray for them' (Jer 29:7).*

### Church and mission

On 15 July, rural churches across the country will celebrate 'Rural Mission Sunday' <http://germinate.net/mission/rural-mission-sunday/rural-mission-sunday-2018/> [or <https://tinyurl.com/yb4cad3u>] with special services and other events. *Pray that these will inspire churches both to deepen their life together in Christ and to strengthen their mission.*

In villages across Britain, there are still remnants of former rivalries between different denominations. Yet, the Lord's Church is not restricted to one or other human institution; there is one flock and one shepherd (John 10:16). *Pray for the Lord to gather His people together in fellowship, prayer and mission whatever their church allegiance, and that those outside will know that they are His disciples by their love for one another (John 13:35).*

'Hope for the Countryside' is a partnership between Agricultural Christian Fellowship, Village Hope, the World Prayer Centre and Top Barn Trust. Our aim is to mobilise and resource prayer for rural Britain. Our vision is of beacons of prayer lighting up across our countryside. Our prayer is for a fresh move of the Holy Spirit across the countryside of our nation.

'Seeds of prayer' is offered as a resource for prayer for individuals and prayer groups and for use in church services and other meetings. If you have found the 'seeds' helpful and inspiring or would like to feed back your own insights and prayers then we would be very happy to hear from you.

