

HOPE FOR THE COUNTRYSIDE



Seeds of Prayer

The seasons

'Oh to be in England now that April's there,' says Robert Browning. The bulbs are in full bloom, the lambs are in the fields, and from time to time the sky is blue. Yet you don't need to come from England to understand the call of home, and to imagine it at its most beautiful. As God's people we are called to pray for the peace of the place we find ourselves in, but let us also *praise His name that He calls us to an eternal country that outshines even the most perfect day in our earthly home (1 Cor 2: 9).*

For the beauty of the earth,
For the glory of the skies,
For the Love which from our birth
Over and around us lies:
Christ, our God, to Thee we raise
This our sacrifice of praise.

Folliott S. Pierpoint

Current issue

As Brexit grinds on, rural affairs are not high on the political agenda. Nevertheless, rural areas continue to present deep-seated policy challenges, prompting recent calls for a new post-Brexit comprehensive rural strategy to address issues such as infrastructure, labour shortage, housing and health care (<https://tinyurl.com/y3lboxztv>). *Pray for wisdom for those in government and NGOs who are shaping policies and programmes for rural renewal after Brexit. Pray for rural Christians to contribute to this, and especially to bring the hope of the (eternal) Gospel to all feeling fearful for their (temporal) future.*

'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.

Farming and the land

Once again, Spring displays the beauty of creation and reveals the Creator (**Romans 1:20**), who "has made everything beautiful in its time" (**Ecclesiastes 3:11**). As custodians of the land, farmers have been given the awesome responsibility of sharing in and caring for what God has made (**Genesis 2:15**). Yet we live in a fallen world. *Pray for those who, due to financial pressures, manage the land in a way contrary to their conscience. Pray for God-given wisdom for land managers, land agents, scientists, and all involved in working and stewarding the land. And above all pray for a revelation of Jesus who will one day return to judge how we have done.*

Rural life

In the Bible, we see how the Lord is deeply concerned about and committed to the peace of the land, even driving out those who deny the land its sabbaths (**Leviticus 26**). The righteousness and faithfulness of leaders and people are directly linked to the peace and prosperity of the land (eg "King Asa did what was right in the sight of the Lord... and the land had rest. So they built and prospered." (**2 Chronicles 14:2-7**). *Pray that the Lord will raise up righteous leaders in church and society, who will respect and encourage Godly integrity and creativity and establish righteous rest and working of the land, carrying out business in ways that honour the Lord and bless the people.*

Church and mission

Christians throughout the countryside will be celebrating the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus this Easter. *Pray that the God of hope will fill them with all joy and peace as they trust in Him, so that they may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit (Romans 15: 13). Pray too that many people will be drawn into the celebration through various services and activities held across this special time, and that they too might come to know the hope of the good news about Jesus Christ (Luke 9: 6).*

Comment and contribute

It is a year since we launched Seeds of Prayer. We trust that these monthly prayer prompts are helping inform and strengthen your prayers for rural Britain. As we head into another year, we would very much like to know how you are using and how we might improve Seeds. And, especially, we would value your contributions. So, please contact us at info@villagehope.org.uk with your feedback and to offer your own 'seeds of prayer' for rural matters.