

HOPE FOR THE COUNTRYSIDE

Seeds of Prayer

The seasons

Creation is witness to God's abundant provision. Everything that grows calls out praise to its maker, inviting a response from thankful hearts. As we observe the beauty of autumn, *may we give thanks to God, and seek forgiveness for the times when we have taken for granted what the Lord has so graciously given us.*

"Yet He did not leave Himself without witness, for He did good by giving you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness."
(Acts 17:14).

Farming and the land

In the midst of Brexit uncertainty, farmers are fearful for the future. They are likely to be most affected by a no-deal scenario, as 65% of UK agricultural exports head for the EU (and 70% of our imports originate there). The free movement of EU workers will come to an end - many farmers currently rely on this labour pool. The European farm payments will also cease, and their replacements are not guaranteed (tinyurl.com/sabrexit). *Pray for farmers who are worried about their livelihoods, and that, whatever happens politically, opportunities for growth and improvement might be realised and made available to agriculture across the country. Pray that many farmers will call on the Lord as a result of the shaking in the industry (Psalm 46).*

Current issue

'If the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?' (Psalm 11:3). Beneath the turmoil and conflict in nation and church is a crumbling of the biblical foundations that have supported both through many centuries. As we teeter on the edge of an abyss, pray that believers will be able to see beyond the news and understand the times from the Lord's perspective. Pray that the Lord will call out a faithful remnant characterised by radical discipleship, loving fellowship and humble service. Pray for rural believers to understand their calling to light beacons of prayer and make places of sanctuary.

Rural life

Britain's 'green and pleasant land' has a dark side, and it is getting darker (tinyurl.com/unherdrural). While overall crime rates are lower, drug crime is increasing in small towns and villages as it falls in urban areas (tinyurl.com/bbcruraldrugs). According to NFU Mutual, rural crime hit a seven-year high in 2018, with farmers bearing the brunt of this (tinyurl.com/gdnruralcrime). *Pray to the Father to 'deliver us from evil' (Matthew 6:13; Psalm 140), and for His peace to reign in the countryside. Pray for believers to shine as lights in the darkness (Philippians 2:15), to know God's protection (Psalm 91), and to 'watch and pray'.*

Church and mission

Small rural churches are often tempted to feel the poor relations of their larger, better-resourced urban counterparts, but they have much to celebrate. They are closer to God's creation and, in many cases, more embedded in the local community. Church attendance and church buildings per caput are still higher in rural than in urban areas. In some villages, new housing development is an opportunity for mission (tinyurl.com/vl191). *Pray for rural churches to be thankful for the special blessings they have received and be strengthened to seize the opportunities to reach out and bless others (Revelation 3: 8).*

Hope for the Countryside prayer day

Saturday 16 November, 10am - 3pm
Sutton St James, Church Lane, Sutton,
Macclesfield SK11 0DS

Lunch provided. Free event, but an offering will be taken.

Booking essential, by 29 October, at:
<https://www.hftccheshire.eventbrite.co.uk>
info@villagehope.org.uk 01432 850071

'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.

