

# ST TEES PRAYER ADVENT CALENDAR



A PRAYER IDEA FOR  
EACH DAY OF ADVENT

# INTRODUCTION

“IS PRAYER YOUR STEERING WHEEL OR YOUR  
SPARE TYRE?” CORRIE TEN BOOM

When you drive a car you need to steer, or you could end up anywhere! This advent we will be devoting a few minutes each day to spending time with God; bringing Him our prayers but also letting Him speak to us. By spending time each day with God we offer Him the chance to take the steering wheel of our lives and He is a much better driver than any of us!

The prayer suggestions which follow can be done on your own, with a partner or small group and there are family friendly suggestions too. Let us know how you get on, and if you feel God speaks to you in a way which would be good to share with the church email [advent@st.tees.org.uk](mailto:advent@st.tees.org.uk)

We suggest that you book at least one visit to the Church prayer room during this period if you can, either alone or with others. It will be special decorated for Advent.

You can book by using this link: <https://signup.24-7prayer.com/signup/e1404e/>, scanning the QR code or phoning 07486 985357.



# WEEK ONE: INTRODUCTION

## SUNDAY 1ST DECEMBER

“PRAYER MUST NOT BE REGARDED AS A DUTY TO BE PERFORMED BUT RATHER AS A PRIVILEGE TO BE ENJOYED.” E M BOUNDS



Spend a few minutes coming into God's presence. Be aware that he looks at you with love and acceptance. Be honest with Him about how you feel your spiritual life is going just now. Think for a few minutes about the Bible verse John 3 :16 but use your name so it reads:

God so loved ME that he gave His only Son so that I should believe in Him and have eternal life.

Pray prayers of thanks to God for how much He loves you.

**Family friendly: speak the verse over each person using their name in the Bible verse; you can do this for each other. Pray prayers of thanks to God for each other and for how much He loves you.**

## MONDAY 2ND DECEMBER

“PRAYER IS EXHALING THE SPIRIT OF MAN AND INHALING THE SPIRIT OF GOD.” E.K. THOMSON



Become quiet before God. Let Him look at you with love. Listen to your breathing and ask God to breathe His Spirit into you, just as He breathed life into Adam. When you exhale, breathe out your worries and fears. Bring the things you must do today (or tomorrow) to God and ask for His love to be shared through you.

**Family friendly: You might like to use a fragrance the children enjoy; perhaps a citrus fruit such as an orange or lemon, to help understand the idea of breathing in the fragrance of God's love and breathing out our worries and fears.**

## TUESDAY 3RD DECEMBER

“GIVE THANKS WITH A GRATEFUL HEART” HENRY SMITH



What are you grateful for? What blessings had God given you today? These could be food, shelter, family and friends or an answered prayer or blessing in a particular situation. Spend a few minutes just thanking God for all He's done to show His love to you recently.

Family friendly: children could draw or make a collection of pictures/photos to show the things (and people) they want to thank God for. Then help them to pray their prayer of thanks.

## WEDNESDAY 4TH DECEMBER

“IF YOU’LL SPEND TIME PRAYING FOR PEOPLE INSTEAD OF TALKING ABOUT THEM YOU’LL GET BETTER RESULTS!” JOEL OSTEEN



Think of someone you care about who needs the touch of God. They could be unwell, bereaved, having a tough time at work, worried about something, or maybe they don't know God and you want to pray about that. Spend a few minutes bringing that person before God and then be quiet before Him and see if He leads you to something practical or encouraging you can do to help.

Family friendly: help children to think of someone to pray for and maybe they could also help in a practical way; perhaps make a get-well card or help to bake a cake for them.

## THURSDAY 5TH DECEMBER

“PRAYER IS THE KEY THAT UNLOCKS ALL THE STOREHOUSES OF GOD’S INFINITE GRACE.”



Think of something in Creation that really speaks to you of God’s creative love; maybe a place you love or a particular view. Thank God for this and what it means to you, especially if you have special memories there. Pray for those who make laws and policies which protect the environment and God’s great gift to us in creation.

Family friendly: take an apple or other fruit share it together. Show everyone the secret seeds it contains and talk about what those seeds need to grow and their potential to make lots more beautiful trees and grow lots of fruit for us to enjoy. Pray about looking after the earth so this can happen. You may want to plant the seeds!

## FRIDAY 6TH DECEMBER

“IF WE CONFESS OUR SINS GOD IS FAITHFUL AND JUST AND WILL FORGIVE US” 1 JOHN 1:9



Is there something you need to bring to God for His forgiveness today? Or is there something from your past that you can’t believe God would forgive you for or haven’t forgiven yourself for? Come before God today and bring these things into the light of His presence. Receive forgiveness. If you don’t identify with this for yourself maybe you can pray for someone else who you felt this applies to.

Family Friendly: Children can be helped to confess and receive forgiveness by writing things down and then tearing up the paper and putting the scraps in the bin or the shredder, if you have one.

## SATURDAY 7TH DECEMBER

“TO FORGIVE IS TO SET A PRISONER FREE AND DISCOVER THAT THE PRISONER WAS YOU.”



Yesterday we were confessing our sins to God and asking for His forgiveness; today we are thinking about forgiving others. Bearing a grudge is carrying around a heavy weight. When you forgive someone else you can be relieved of a burden as well as the person you are forgiving. If there is someone you need to forgive bring the person or people before God in prayer now. Ask God to help you to forgive them, even if they're not sorry, even if the offence was a long time ago, even if they have since died. (If this is something very big then today is only a first step; it may be a longer process and you may need help, support and counselling. Please seek that help as soon as you can.)

**Family friendly:** Talk about what it's like when you fall out with a sibling or a friend. How does it feel, and if they hurt you, how can you make peace with them by forgiving them? Pray for each other to be able to forgive and pray God's peace on each other.

## WEEK TWO: WAYS TO PRAY

### SUNDAY 8TH DECEMBER: SILENCE

“I THINK THAT SOME OF THE GREATEST PRAYER IS PRAYER WHERE YOU DON'T SAY ONE SINGLE WORD OR ASK FOR ANYTHING.” A W TOZER



Today try a short period of silence before God. Just come quietly before Him and allow yourself to become aware of His presence with you. This may be in a favourite chair, out in your garden or in the countryside or in the prayer room at Church. Out of the silence see what your heart wants to say to God and listen to what He wants to say to you. If you are indoors it might be helpful to light a candle to focus on.

**Family friendly:** If you can safely light a candle you may want to do that and sit with the family watching the flame in silence for a minute or two. Explain that many people like to look at a candle as a reminder of God's presence because Jesus is the light of the world. If you don't feel it is safe to have a lit candle you can find suitable video on YouTube. Search 'candle flame no sound.' After a while quietly ask if anyone has any thoughts or prayers they want to share.

## MONDAY 9TH DECEMBER: ADORATION

“WHEN YOU FOCUS ON HOW WONDERFUL GOD IS AND ALL THE GREAT THINGS HE'S DONE... YOUR NATURAL RESPONSE WILL BE PRAISE, ADORATION AND AWE. DON'T LET YOURSELF EVER GET USED TO IT- STAY AMAZED!” JOYCE MEYER



Remind yourself who God is and what a privilege it is to be able to know Him. You might find it helpful to read and meditate on Psalm 8 and let it lead you into prayers of adoration for who God is. You can read the whole Psalm but here are verses 3 and 4.

“When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have set in place...what is mankind that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them?”

Family friendly: read a simpler version of verses 3 and 4 in the ERV: “I look at the heavens that you made with your hands; I see the moon and stars you created. And I wonder, why are people so important to you? Why do you even notice them?” You might look at pictures of the moon and stars or of sunrise and sunset and talk about God’s amazing power. Yet He cares for each of us. Pray prayers of thanks and adoration.

## TUESDAY 10TH DECEMBER: THANKS

“EVERY GOOD AND PERFECT GIFT IS FROM ABOVE.” JAMES 1 :17



What are you grateful to God for? Are there ways He has blessed you recently or things He has done in the past which you want to remember and thank Him for? Try to be specific. In what ways has God blessed you personally? Spend some time thanking Him.

Family friendly: “Thank you is the best prayer anyone could say.” Alice Walker. Talk about and then draw your favourite things; the things that really make you happy. You could draw people you love and enjoy spending time with, favourite foods, pets, places you like to go or activities you enjoy. These are gifts from God. Thank Him for them now.



## WEDNESDAY 11TH DECEMBER: IN YOUR NORMAL ACTIVITIES

ALL I KNOW IS THAT WHEN I PRAY,  
COINCIDENCES HAPPEN; AND WHEN  
I DON'T PRAY, THEY DON'T HAPPEN."  
DAN HAYES



You probably have Christmas cards to write. Write a few as part of your prayer time today, praying for each person as you write their card.

**Family friendly: children can do this too, as they write cards for their friends or for family members.**

## THURSDAY 12TH DECEMBER: PRAYER WALKING (OR DRIVING!)

“AS IT IS THE BUSINESS OF TAILORS TO  
MAKE CLOTHES AND COBBLERS TO MAKE  
SHOES, SO IT IS THE BUSINESS OF  
CHRISTIANS TO PRAY.” MARTIN LUTHER



As you are out and about today, going to work or to the shops, the gym etc pray for people you see, those whose homes you pass, churches, schools and places you walk or drive past. You might choose to go out for a walk or run specifically to pray or just pray on your route to work or to the shops.

**Family Friendly: On the way to school, pray for the children's friends, teachers, people you know whose house you walk past.**

## FRIDAY 13TH DECEMBER: CHAT AND CATCH

“PRAYER IS THE MOST IMPORTANT CONVERSATION OF THE DAY. TAKE IT TO GOD BEFORE YOU TAKE IT TO ANYONE ELSE.”



What are your personal worries and concerns- or joys and delights- today? Chat to God about them. Tell Him exactly how you are feeling, sharing just as you would with a friend over a cuppa. Then pause and listen for God's reply.

He may put a thought, a word, a Bible verse or a picture into your mind. If you're not sure, ask Him what it means.

**Family Friendly:** What is described above is along the lines of PRF's Parenting for Faith technique "Chat and Catch." If you need more help encouraging your children (or yourself!) to "catch"- that is to hear from God- you can look it up online: <https://www.parentingforfaith.brf.org.uk/tool/chat-and-catch/>

## SATURDAY 14TH DECEMBER: ENTERING INTO THE BIBLE PASSAGE

"I BELIEVE ABOVE THE STORM THE SMALLEST PRAYER WILL STILL BE HEARD." A SONG BY STILLMAN, DRAKE, GRAHAM AND SHIRL AND RECORDED BY MANY ARTISTS



Read Mark 4 v35-41; the account of Jesus calming the storm.

Read it slowly and picture what is happening. Put yourself into the story; maybe as a disciple in the boat. What can you see? Hear and feel the wind and the waves. How do you feel? Can you enter into the emotions of fear and worry and then relief when the storm dies down? How do you feel when Jesus asks why the disciples are still afraid and asks if they have no faith?

Pray about how the story resonates with you today.

**Family friendly;** you might like to find a Children's Bible or story book with a picture of this event to help the children to visualize it and talk through the sights, sounds and feelings with them. What do they think is the most important part of the story? Then help them to pray about their fears or whatever comes out of the story for them.

## WEEK THREE: HEARTFELT PRAYER

### SUNDAY 15TH DECEMBER

“PRAYER CAUSES THINGS TO HAPPEN THAT WOULDN'T HAPPEN IF WE DIDN'T PRAY” JOHN PIPER



Is there a big concern for someone in your heart just now? Someone you love who is going through illness or another problem? Read the story of the friends bringing the paralysed man to Jesus through the roof Mark 2 v1-12. You, by your prayers can bring your friend or loved one to the Lord and ask for His touch on their life. It takes a bit of effort to cry out to God for them, but it's worth it, even if your prayers aren't answered in quite the way you hoped. Bring that person to God in prayer.

**Family friendly:** talk about the Bible story and the person your child would like to bring to Jesus for his help. They might also like to make a card for the person to let them know they are praying for them.

### MONDAY 16TH DECEMBER

“PRAYER IS ALIGNING OURSELVES WITH THE PURPOSES OF GOD.” E STANLEY JONES



Perhaps choose a wider situation that concerns you today; maybe a war, natural disaster, government etc and spend time asking the Holy Spirit to lead you in how to pray about it. Spend some time in quiet and see if God brings a Bible verse or a picture into your mind to help you to pray. Intercede for the situation.

**Family Friendly:** Talk about a wider situation if the child can cope with it. If they are too young for this talk about a problem the child or a friend has. Encourage them to express their thoughts to God. Discuss together; what might God want them to pray for in this situation?

## TUESDAY 17TH DECEMBER

“YOU CAN SEE GOD FROM ANYWHERE IF YOUR MIND IS SET TO LOVE AND OBEY HIM.” A W TOZER



Ask God to speak to you in whatever you're doing today. Look out for it as you go through the day. You might like to start with this version of a very old prayer: O Lord, open my eyes to see what is beautiful, open my heart to know what is good; open my heart to see your hand in my life today. Amen.

At the end of the day think through your day. You might like to use an Examen prayer: <https://www.jesuits.org/spirituality/the-ignatian-examen/>

**Family Friendly:** Explain the way you're going to look for things that God puts into your day. Later talk through the day with the children perhaps over your evening meal or at bedtime.

## WEDNESDAY 18TH DECEMBER

“THE MORE OFTEN WE INVITE GOD INTO OUR ORDINARY MOMENTS, THE MORE OUR EYES AND OUR HEARTS WILL NOTICE HIM WORKING.” ANON



Yesterday's idea about looking for God throughout our day and thinking through the day at the end is worth practicing. You might find it a very helpful habit that you'd like to continue, so once again ask God to show you where He is active in your life all through today and at the end of the day think and pray through those things.

**Family friendly:** Here is an extract of a “letter from Jesus” which you might find helpful: “You awakened late this morning and rushed off for the day. My tears were in the rain. Today you looked so sad, so alone. It makes my heart ache because I understand. I love you. I try to tell you; I whisper it in the leaves and trees and show you in the colour of the flowers. My love for you is deeper than the oceans and bigger than the biggest want or need you could ever have.”

Talk about where you experienced God in your day today.

## THURSDAY 19TH DECEMBER

“THE SWEETEST TIME OF THE DAY IS WHEN YOU PRAY, BECAUSE YOU’RE TALKING WITH THE ONE WHO LOVES YOU THE MOST.” ANON



Sometimes when we have concerns and worries we just need somebody to listen and understand; not to compare difficulties they are going through, not to keep interrupting, just to listen patiently and let us pour out our thoughts and fears. Our Heavenly Father is a great person to go to. Come into His presence for a few minutes, share what is on your heart all the time knowing He is listening and gazing at you with great love, glad that you have come to Him with whatever is on your mind. Sometimes, the Bible says in Romans 8 v26, the Spirit prays within us in wordless groans, so if you run out of words that’s OK. When you have finished expressing your thoughts to God, sit in silence for a while and be attentive to what He might say to you. Know that He understands. He may gently suggest that you might see the situation differently, but He will give you peace.

**Family Friendly:** Talk with children about how Jesus understands all the things we feel because He came to earth as a human being. If children have worries at school, upsets with friends, worries about sick relatives etc Jesus understands because those things happened to Him too. Help the child bring their thoughts to Jesus and pray for Jesus to give them His peace.

# FINAL FEW DAYS: LOOKING FORWARD

## FRIDAY 20TH DECEMBER

“ONE OF THE GREATEST ATTACKS OF THE ENEMY IS TO MAKE YOU BUSY....TO MAKE YOU DISTRACTED.”  
PAUL WASHER



As we come towards Christmas we are probably all very busy. Make it a priority to spend time with God each day and to find messages from Him in the preparations, the parties and the presents.

Today take some time to sit quietly and thank God for the things you enjoy at this time of year. Pray for friends who may find it a difficult time because of loneliness or recent bereavement. God may lead you to make a call, a visit or send a message to them.

**Family friendly:** Children will be excited as many will finish school for Christmas today. Encourage them to thank God for the things they enjoyed this week or are looking forward to. You might like to make stars or other shapes to hang on the Christmas tree (you can use gift tags perhaps) with the names of people they want to remember to pray for over Christmas.

## SATURDAY 21ST DECEMBER

“THE PEOPLE THAT WALKED IN DARKNESS HAVE SEEN A GREAT LIGHT.” ISAIAH 9:2



You might like to light a candle as you pray today. Pray for places where there is darkness in the world; areas of conflict and difficulty where Christmas won't be a peaceful time. Pray for peace and understanding. Also bring to God anyone you know who needs peace.

**Family friendly:** Perhaps pick one place or situation that is suitable to pray for. If it is safe you could light a candle while you pray, or use an LED candle or light. You could write another prayer tag with the name of the place or situation to hang on your Christmas tree too.

## SUNDAY 22ND DECEMBER

“WE HAVE TO PRAY WITH OUR EYES  
ON GOD, NOT ON THE DIFFICULTIES.”  
OSWALD CHAMBERS



When the Angel Gabriel came to Mary the task she was given was an amazing privilege but it was clearly not going to be easy. Her response was: ‘I am the Lord’s servant, may your word to me be fulfilled.’ Luke 1 v38. Is there something in your life God is asking you to do but it is not easy? This might not be a new thing; it might be something you have been doing for a long time. Pray about it and ask God for His strength and guidance as you accept His call on your life again.

**Family Friendly:** Talk about the obedience of Mary and how she might have felt when the angel came and then the big and very important job God had chosen her to do. What might she have been worried about? What are some of the things God asks us to do that aren’t easy? Bring them to God and ask for the Holy Spirit’s help to do them.

## MONDAY 23RD DECEMBER

“THERE ARE SOULS IN THIS WORLD  
WHICH HAVE THE GIFT OF FINDING  
JOY EVERYWHERE AND OF LEAVING IT  
BEHIND THEM WHEREVER THEY GO.”  
F W FABER



Ask God to fill your heart with joy today and that you may spread His joy wherever you go. Start with a heart of praise to God for the gifts He has given you and especially the gift of Jesus at Christmas. Spend time praising and thanking God and then go out into your day in an attitude of thanksgiving and joy.

**Family Friendly:** Younger children might like to draw the things they want to thank God for, older ones might write a poem.

## TUESDAY 24TH DECEMBER

“O HOLY CHILD OF BETHLEHEM BE  
BORN IN US TODAY.”



Try to find a few minutes of peace and quiet to marvel at the amazing gift of Jesus and to ask Him to come into your heart again today. It might help to put some quiet, gentle music on to help your mind to stop going over your ‘to-do’ list. Are there things God might be saying to you about how He is leading you forward to a deeper relationship with Him for the future? It would be good to write down a few words about this in a notebook or journal so that you can come back it and pray it through again over the next few months.

**Family Friendly:** Talk about how special it is when a new baby is born, and how family and friends are so happy and excited. Tell children how excited you were when they came along and what a special time it was. You could get out photos of when they were babies to show them. Talk about the baby Jesus, who was such an amazing gift from God. Make a birthday card for Jesus and write a message of love and thanks inside.

WE HOPE YOU HAVE ENJOYED FOLLOWING OUR PRAYER ADVENT CALENDAR. PLEASE PICK OUT THE IDEAS THAT WORKED BEST FOR YOU AND KEEP USING THEM. DON'T FORGET THAT THE PRAYER ROOM AT ST THOMAS CHURCH IS OPEN 24/7 AND CAN BE BOOKED ANY TIME FOR INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP PRAYER IF YOU WOULD FIND THAT HELPFUL. SETTING ASIDE TIME FOR A REGULAR 'RETREAT HOUR OF PRAYER' CAN BE VERY HELPFUL AND YOU CAN SET ASIDE TIME IN YOUR DIARY AND PERHAPS BOOK THE PRAYER ROOM TO HELP YOU TO KEEP PRAYING.





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