

# MY PANDEMIC EXPERIENCE

The pandemic has impacted us all. This guide helps you to reflect on your personal experience. Try to find a quiet place, and around 30 minutes, to use the questions and underlined [links](#) to explore what has been going on for you, and where God has been in the midst of it. You may like to start by praying the Lord's prayer, or lighting a candle. You can either print the sheet off, or type in the white areas by clicking in them.

## THANKSGIVING

**What are you thankful for?** Think about small daily things, such as food, as well as bigger wider things, such as frontline workers.

Thanksgiving is embedded in Christian practice as a way of recognising all that God has given to us. Paul writes 'Give thanks in all circumstances' (1 Thessalonians 5:18). We don't give thanks for everything, but we do seek things to give thanks for in any situation. Interestingly, neuroscience shows that the brain is like velcro with negative experiences (they stick and are hard to release) and teflon with positive experiences (they slip off too easily). Taking time to give thanks helps them to stick.

### PRACTICES

- Keep a gratitude list. Write down three things each night you are grateful for from the day.
- Use the [prayer of Examen](#), a simple way to end the day.

## LAMENT

Lament is woven through the Christian tradition, rooted in the Psalms of lament, for example [Psalm 42](#). It involves honest recollection of how we are feeling, and a passionate expression to God of the pain and difficulty that we are experiencing.

To understand more about lament take a look at this [article](#), listen to Justin Welby talk about [learning to lament](#), read this [guide to lament](#), or listen to this [song](#) of lament.

### PRACTICES

- Pray aloud the Psalms of lament (e.g. 3, 6, 7, 13, 17, 22, 28, 31, 32, 35, 42, 43, 51, 52, 54). Allow these prayers to become your own.
- Write your own prayer of lament, and pray it daily.

**What are you missing, longing for?** This may be people or things you have lost, hopes that have been dashed or longings for a better future.

## LEARNING

**What have you learned?** What does God want you to learn through this experience that perhaps you can only learn at a time like this: about God, about life, about yourself? What will you do differently as a result of the pandemic?

God specialises in redemption. Out of difficult times, hard places, struggles and suffering, God longs to lead us to greater dependence on him, and deepening Christ-likeness (Romans 5:1-5, 2 Corinthians 12:7-10).

This brief [video](#) from Amy Orr Ewing, and longer [podcasts](#) from Tom Wright, explore suffering and what we can learn through difficulties.

### PRACTICES

- Journal to aid [reflection](#). It doesn't have to be done everyday, or even written; take a look at this [guide](#).
- Talk through your experience of the pandemic with someone, inviting them to ask questions and to listen carefully.

In prayer we bring all of who we are to all of who God is. We also bring all that is going on in our lives and the world around us to the one who is creator and sustainer of all things.

For resources to help you pray try [learning to pray](#) or [simple ways to pray](#), a toolshed of [30 ways to pray](#), and Justin Welby's short [video](#) based course. You could also try the [Lectio 365 App](#).

### PRACTICES

- Take 15 minutes a day to read some of the Bible and pray. This can be done almost anywhere: in a quiet place, during your commute, out walking the dog.
- Try [Bible in a year](#) as a great way to structure your Bible reading.

## PRAYER

**What would it be good to think about in your praying over the coming weeks?** People, situations, and concerns - local and global.

### FURTHER RESOURCES

- If you have experienced the death of a loved one through this time you may find this informative online booklet on [Death, Grief and Hope](#) helpful, or these resources from [MIND](#) on bereavement.
- Download and read a verse each day of the month on the theme of [hope](#) or [praise](#).
- If you would like further help, contact your church using the details below or find a [Church near you](#).

### CHURCH CONTACT: