

The stage was set

The crowd was waiting  
and hope hung in the air

And in you walked, Lord.  
seeking not glory  
but the good in us,  
looking not for wealth  
but for the treasure in us,  
asking to be loved  
not for your sake but for ours.

Thank you, God of the waiting,  
for the promises of prophets  
become real in Jesus.

Thank you, God that the news was good  
and only got better.

Thank you, God  
that you have given us your Word  
for all times and places.

Thank you,  
for the signs and wonders  
of your presence in the world  
that span all time and generations

and allow us to share afresh  
the joy of your coming and staying with us.  
Thank you for sharing with us too,  
your suffering, sacrifice,  
your saving of us.

Lord, like the people  
who gathered around you and asked questions,  
we too ask a simple question

*'What should we do?'*

What should we do in the uncertain, unusual and  
anxious times?

What should we do,  
when there is war in place of peace?

What should we do,  
when there is hatred instead of love?

What should we do  
when there is hurt in place of healing?

What should we do  
when there is abuse instead of justice?

Lord, like the disciples  
who you taught to pray on a hillside  
we too come before you now  
with the questions and the names and the situations  
which occupy our heads and our hearts.  
For we know you are listening even before we speak.

That you are working even before we see it.

That you are present even before we recognise you.

Hear us, Lord, for we know you are always listening

as we pray our hopes and our fears

for our world and one another

in this time of silence...

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20

Lord, help all who struggle this day

with loneliness, with worry,

with despair, with grief,

with injustice, with pain,

with anger, with rejection

to know that they do not wait alone.

You are with them.

Come close to them

as we come closer to the time

when all sorrow will be banished

and your people everywhere

will know life in all its fullness.

The stage is set

the world is waiting, Lord

not just to celebrate the birth of your son once more,

but to celebrate the eternal hope you offer out to each one of us.

These are our prayers today Lord, we ask them in Jesus' name. who taught us when we pray to say together...

Our Father....

in heaven

Hallowed be your name.

Your kingdom come,

Your will be done,

On earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins

As we forgive those

Who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial,

And deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power,

And the glory are yours

Now and forever.

Amen.