

# Prayer toolkit

## Bread making prayer

### AIMS

To explore how bread making can be a prayerful activity

### Let me tell you....

About a church in a city centre, a room or two above some shops, that began to open its doors each day and invite people in to make bread. At first only a few came but each day the activity of bread making included everyone and a lovely smell filled the rooms. Whilst the bread was proving and baking they would have a cup of tea and talk. Some would choose to spend time in the quiet room next door. Each day, when the bread was ready, the group of bread makers would decide who to take the bread to that day. They would spread out across the city taking the bread with them.

*You can read more about the bread making church in Barbara Glasson's book (see reading list at the end of this document).*

### INTRODUCTION

Making bread by hand is practical, satisfying and sociable. Combining simple raw ingredients, offering up a time of patient waiting and then savouring the outcome is a deep and rich experience enjoyed by people the world over.

This description is also true of prayer, so why not combine them? Here are two ways to do so.

When a group of people meet to work through an issue or concern, try inviting them to gather round a table for bread making. With a mixture of uncertainty and enthusiasm, people will focus on the messiness of mixing, enjoy the physicality of kneading, choose what shape their product will take, and then reflect patiently while the dough rises.

In this way the things we can pray for a sense of fellowship, of respect for each other and freedom from distractions.

Later, as the bread bakes, its aroma may prompt conversation, silence and spoken prayers. When the meeting closes the group may break and share the bread they have made together. The bread they eat is a tangible fruit of their work and commitment.

The second suggestion could work for a conference, group weekend away, reunion, community celebration or annual church meeting. The 'master bread maker' (or 'cake maker') identifies particular elements in the group with certain ingredients. The flour might be the faithful bulk of the congregation, the oil those who enable smooth running and the herbs or spices those who help us to savour new things. These combined elements are celebrated in making and sharing the bread, perhaps within communion.

Where time is limited a recipe which does not need to rise works best, like unleavened pitta breads, biscuits, cakes or pancakes. For an adventurous group a portable camping stove allows the making, cooking and eating to be part of the event.

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### A simple bread recipe

Mix 750g of strong white, brown or wholemeal flour (or a mixture of these) with 1 tspn of salt and a sachet of fast acting dried yeast.

Mix in 1 tbspn of olive oil and enough warm water or milk (about 150ml) to make a dough that is moist but not sloppy.

Knead the dough on a floured surface for at least 10 minutes as roughly as you can - noise and laughter help the process.

Divide the dough to half-fill greased loaf tins or shape and place it on a greased baking tray.

Cover with a tea towel and leave in a warm place until doubled in size.

Bake in a hot oven for about 30minutes for a loaf – less for smaller creations. To test your loaf, knock it on the bottom – a baked loaf will sound hollow.

### Prayer

There are many ways you could conclude your session with prayer. In Bible Year we offered an activity called Kennings and Cookies (this is still available on the Bible Year part of the website). You could try Kennings with Bread making as it goes very well, and use these phrases to begin your prayer:

Bread maker

Flour sifter

Dough riser

Loaf breaker

Feast preparer

And so on...

### Further reading

Barbara Glasson (2006) *I am Somewhere Else: Gospel Reflections from an Emerging Church*. London: Darton, Longman and Todd

### EVALUATION

Please try to answer these questions for yourself and for others who will use this material:

1. What was the most helpful thing?
2. What was the least helpful thing?
3. What would you like to try now?

### THE NEXT STEP

If you want more items from the toolkit please revisit the website. This activity is suitable for any time of the year but if you want more seasonal items please revisit the website.  
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