

HELPING HAND 2021 - FEEDING HOPE: ALL GENERATIONS SUPPORTING ALL GENERATIONS

PRAYER DIARY

WHAT IS FOOD SECURITY?

Food security, as defined by the United Nations' Committee on World Food Security, means that all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their food preferences and dietary needs for an active and healthy life.

WHAT IS FOOD INSECURITY?

You probably guessed right! Food insecurity is opposite to food security. It is the state of being without reliable access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food.

INTRODUCTION

Food insecurity is a huge problem. Hunger has plagued generations for ages, and it continues to haunt us, affecting 690 million people or 8.9 per cent of the world population. Hunger is the world's leading health risk and affects children significantly. Currently 21.3 per cent (144.0 million) of children under 5 years of age are estimated to lack adequate food while at least 340 million suffer from severe malnutrition.¹

The effects of climate change resulting in occurrence of frequent floods, prolonged droughts and variability of rainfall have made it harder for small-scale farmers to produce enough food to feed their families and communities. The 2020 COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the unprecedented desert locust outbreak in many parts of Africa, has escalated the hunger problem. This has obscured the 2030 global vision of eradicating hunger as spelled out in the Sustainable Development Goal 2.²

Just because hunger has persisted does not mean it has escaped God's notice. He wants us to journey with him to feed the current and future generations so that no one goes to bed hungry. God inspires hope in making this a possibility, '*God always keeps his word. He gives justice to the poor and food to the hungry*' (Psalm 146:6-7 CEV). His expectation of his people is that they will transform compassion and good intention into actions to serve the poor globally. God's concern for those who are physically hungry is emphasised in the Bible. God gave Moses the law for his people: '*When you harvest your land, don't harvest right up to the edges of your field or gather the gleanings from the harvest. Don't strip your vineyard bare or go back and pick up the fallen grapes. Leave them for the poor and the foreigner*' (Leviticus 19:9-10 MSG). In Matthew 25:35 (NIV) Jesus says, '*For I was hungry, and you gave me something to eat. I was thirsty, and you gave me something to drink. I was a stranger and you invited me in.*' For us people of faith, this is our moral imperative, to feed the hungry and the vulnerable.

God attaches a great promise as we work to inspire hope and support those who are experiencing hunger: '*Feed the hungry, and help those in trouble. Then your light will shine out from the darkness, and the darkness around you will be as bright as noon*' (Isaiah 58:10 NLT).

¹<http://www.fao.org/3/ca9692en/CA9692EN.pdf>

²<https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/hunger/>

PRAYER FOCUS

2

Give thanks for the provision of daily food.

'...giving thanks to God the Father at all times and for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ' (Ephesians 5:20 NRSV).

We thank you, Lord, for your daily provision. We thank you for those who labour to produce food and we pray for a special blessing on the work of their hands.

Bless us at the tables we share with family and friends, and make us good companions at meal times and beyond. Increase in us the spirit of hospitality to strangers and those who are hungry. Teach us to live and to eat more simply, so that there may be more to share with those facing hunger in our communities.

Pray for those who face hunger.

'He upholds the cause of the oppressed and gives food to the hungry' (Psalm 146:7 NIV).

Lord, it is unacceptable that, in a world that produces enough food to feed its entire population, that over three billion people cannot even afford the cheapest healthy diet. Many children suffer from hunger.

Feggie Mwanyongo is a 44-year-old mother of six children. She lives in a rural village, Mwentanga in Karonga district in Northern Malawi. Long spells of drought and constant floods are familiar to the Mwentanga community. Feggie and her community have had to learn how to cope with this unnatural disruption of their food production.

Pictured right: Feggie Mwanyongo demonstrates how she pounds her cassava to make flour during times of drought.



She said to me, 'Now we can easily predict when drought is approaching, we start harvesting cassava and drying it in the sun because most other crops fail. When we are at the height of drought, we start pounding our cassava to provide at least a meal a day for our children.' With the support of The Salvation Army's Malawi project, she and her community are trained in how to grow crops that can resist drought and how to grow vegetables using minimal water.

Lord, we pray that in your own wisdom and strength, you will continue providing food for the hungry. Use us to be a channel of this blessing to those in need of food in different countries.

God of justice, we pray for the feeding of the world. Give wisdom to those who face hunger.

PRAYER FOCUS (CONTINUED)

3

Pray that all people will have knowledge about and access to affordable, nutritious food.

'The crops failed, and there was no food anywhere in the land' Genesis 12:10 CEV).

We praise you for all the wisdom you have continued to reveal to enable man to produce enough food.

We pray for farmers everywhere in the world who must labour tirelessly to produce food for their family and communities, and to earn some income to pay for school fees and medical needs for their children.



Pictured above: Tayengwa Chigombe.

Tayengwa Chigombe is a 60-year-old father of nine children and lives in Shamva village in rural Zimbabwe. For many years, Chigombe's maize crops had failed because of drought. He joined an agriculture project that The Salvation Army in Zimbabwe was supporting. He and his community were trained in how to improve the health of their soils to enable them produce crops all year round.

Tayengwa applied all that he had learnt, and he has continued to increase his yields year by year. He said: '*With the bumper harvest I got during the previous season, I kept some aside to provide food for my family and extended family. I also sold part of it, and with the money I paid school fees for my children and purchased three oxen which I am breeding for sale. I am now able to get manure from the oxen. I am applying this to continue improving my soil and crop productivity.'*

PRAYER FOCUS (CONTINUED)

4

Lord, we pray for rains at the right time and good conditions for families to grow food for their survival. We pray for the protection of soils to continue supporting production of food. We pray for an end of conflict so your children will no longer go to bed hungry each night. We pray for bountiful harvest for all who grow crops and raise livestock. We pray that your love will guide our steps as we continue on the path to eradicating hunger.

Pray that all nations will unite to reduce the environmental damage of land, water and air which is a result of changing climate.

'I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another in what you say and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly united in mind and thought' (1 Corinthians 1:10 NIV).

Loving God, we pray that our world leaders will find new, just and radical agreements that will protect our world and the generations yet to come. Throughout history you have moved people to do amazing things for the sake of their neighbours. Inspire us now to work together as your people, to change priorities in the way that we love, so that we build a fair and safe world for all your creation – a world where your will is done as it is in Heaven.

Pray for innovations and will to reduce food wastage.

'Then Jesus took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated; so also the fish, as much as they wanted. When they were satisfied, he told his disciples, "Gather up the fragments left over, so that nothing may be lost." So, they gathered them up, and from the fragments of the five barley loaves, left by those who had eaten, they filled twelve baskets.' John 6:11-13 NRSV.

Lord, help us not to waste food, be it in on our plates or in the food production chain. Raise up a passion in people to act so that food surplus or wastage is used wisely.

Pray for Salvation Army officers and project staff who labour to feed the hungry.

'...and if you spend yourselves on behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday' (Isaiah 58:10 NIV).

Sustainer God, we pray you will bless and protect your servants who encounter people suffering from food insecurity. Give them strength and sustain them as they provide food, skills, a listening ear, love and other practical support in your name.

Pray for people to discover the Bread of Life.

'Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty" (John 6:35 NIV).

Lord, we ask that women and men, girls and boys, will come to know you as the Bread of Life that sustains them in their lives. We pray for the fullness of salvation to be ongoingly revealed in all our works. For those who already walk with you but are food insecure, we ask you draw near to them in a special way too.

PRAYER FOCUS (CONTINUED)

5

Pray for The Salvation Army Feeding Hope projects:

1. Zimbabwe – Pray for the 1,000 farmers who are being trained in conservation agriculture to be able to train others in their communities. Pray for the corps officers as they build relationship with their communities through modelling new farming methods within the corps compounds. Pray for the Government of Zimbabwe, that the Ministry of Agriculture will avail agricultural extension workers to support farmers in their communities.
2. Mali – Pray for discernment for those who will make decisions on how to implement projects that affect people's food security. Pray that there will be continued peace to enable farmers to produce food and sell their surplus.
3. Burkina Faso – Pray for the 100 farmers who are being trained in new techniques so they can increase crop yield, feed their families and sell to the market. Pray that the trained farmers will in turn train others in their communities.
4. Malawi – Pray for communities in Karonga district in northern Malawi where farmers are being trained in how to use conservation agriculture. Pray that they will embrace the new methods which enable them to overcome the effects of changing climate. Pray for the Government of Malawi, that the agriculture policies will be well resourced so that farmers will be rewarded for their labour.
5. Kenya – Pray for farmers in the eastern and northern parts of Kenya where they are being taught how to preserve their harvest to reduce post-harvest losses. Pray for the establishment of demonstration farms where farmers can visit and learn. Pray that the farmers will be quick to learn and adapt to different farming methods. Pray for the trainers, that they will be patient and will pass on the right information.
6. Angola – Pray for exciting new agricultural projects embedded in the network of corps to bear fruit and improve people's lives. Pray for continued peace so that the avocado farmers can produce and sell their products in local and national markets.



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