

Call to worship

Use one or two of the following scriptures to preface the opening call to worship:

When God first met with Moses he said:

I am the Lord; I will rescue you and set you free from your slavery to the Egyptians ... I will make you my own people and I will be your God. (Exodus 6.6–7)

Paul's Letter to the Galatians reminds us:

It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. (Galatians 5.1)

Paul's Letter to the Romans speaks of the enduring hope

... that creation itself would one day be set free from its slavery to decay and would share the glorious freedom of the children of God. (Romans 8.21)

A responsive call to worship (light type for the leader, bold type for all):

Come let us meet today with the glorious Lord

Who made us, redeemed us, and is setting us free.

Let us open our ears to learn from his Word,

Lift our voices to worship and celebrate our God

Open our hearts to receive Christ's love

And our beings to be empowered by the Spirit's freedom.

In Jesus' name. Amen.

[These prayers may be used as printed, or adapted or used to stimulate similar prayers in your own words]

Adoration and confession

The leader says the light type; everyone responds in bold

Lord and Father of Jesus, our great Saviour and liberator.

Thank you for the freedoms you lavish on us:

The freedom to be called your children

The freedom to meet as your people, drawn from many backgrounds, ages and races

The freedom to hear your Word in our language and grasp what it means to know and follow you

The open door your forgiveness gives us to start again when we fall short of all you want us to be.

In a moment of quiet, invite worshippers to reflect quietly on times when we have misused the freedom God gives us, to follow our ways rather than his.

Say together:

Forgive us Lord for the times we have misused our freedom.

Forgive us where we have hurt others rather than set them free.

Forgive us where, through fear or laziness, we have held back from freely serving you.

Forgive us where we have turned aside to things that promise much, but only enslave us.

By your Spirit of freedom, help us to turn from all those things that are wrong and mar your image in us.

Set us free to know what true freedom means and to live fully in the glorious freedom of the children of God.

In Jesus' name. Amen.

Prayers of thanks and intercession

Freeing the Word

Almighty God, we thank you that when you spoke in creation, you released the universe into being.

We thank you that your written Word continues to liberate us, showing us who you are, how you love us, how we should live and what we can be.

So often we take it for granted that we can read and hear your Word and forget the millions who still hunger for its message in a language they can understand.

We pray for translation teams who set your Word free for people to hear and study it for the first time in their language.

We thank you for the patient dedication of these translators and for the enthusiasm of local people who help by advising and checking and who grow in their grasp of the Bible and their passion to pass it on.

Lord, enable all these people to break your Word open in the language of those who wait, and as new languages receive the Bible, we pray for them to be distributed to all who long for them.

Especially we give thanks with the Kikagulu (pronounced Kikaguru) speakers of Tanzania, for Josephine and thousands of other Kikagulu people like her who can now read or hear the Bible read and taught in their language.

May they discover more and more the freedom of knowing and living for you in the daily challenges and opportunities they face.

Captives

Lord, as we think of the power of your Word to set captives free, we pray too for those who are chained in whatever way – by situations beyond their control, by sickness in body, spirit or mind [you might mention individuals known to the congregation here]. Lord, give them a glimpse of your love and power and turn the key so that they can take new steps into freedom.

We think of all in prison, and pray for prisoners of faith, of conscience, and also for those in prison for their own actions. We pray for prison chaplains and visitors and for Bible Society Scriptures given to prison inmates in this country and elsewhere.

Lord, who sets captives free, help people turn from destructive lifestyles, release them from addictions, help them resist pressures that bring them to these situations, and set them free to follow you.

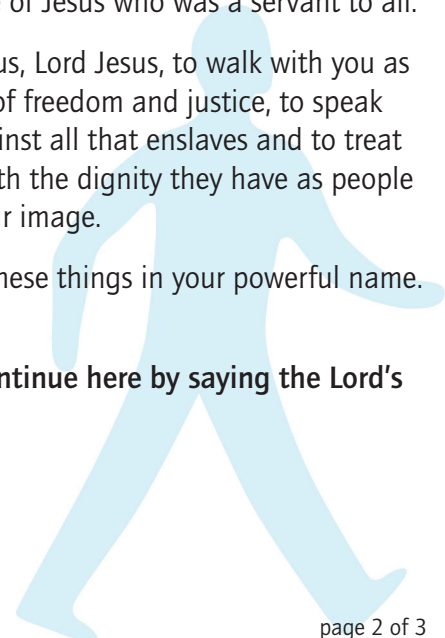
Justice and freedom

God of freedom who breaks the chains of injustice, we pray against all injustice in our world today [you might mention current examples here]. We pray for our leaders in government, in business, in media and every other area of influence. Give them humility and wisdom to act justly and fairly and to follow the example of Jesus who was a servant to all.

Strengthen us, Lord Jesus, to walk with you as champions of freedom and justice, to speak and act against all that enslaves and to treat everyone with the dignity they have as people made in your image.

We ask all these things in your powerful name. Amen.

You may continue here by saying the Lord's Prayer.



A closing benediction

Leader: May God, the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, go with us.

Response: It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. May we go free. May we embrace true freedom in Christ, and may we share it by life and word with all we meet.

In Jesus' name. Amen.

These prayers are written by **Lindsay Shaw**, Bible Society Creative Resources Officer

