

HOPE FOR THE COUNTRYSIDE



Seeds of Prayer



The seasons

While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease. (Genesis 8:22).

After the flood, the Lord promised never again to “curse the ground for man’s sake”, but to bless the earth with the seasons, with sunshine and rain, so that all people can work the land and produce food (Genesis 8:21-22; Psalm 104; Matthew 5:45). Give thanks that He keeps His promises and blesses our endeavours when we work in harmony with His creation.

The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness (Lamentations 3:22-23).

Church and mission

By September, most churches will have resumed meeting for worship, but under strict rules. Give thanks that many village churches with small congregations will find the rules less restrictive than will larger churches. *Pray for all who find the experience distressing, that those enforcing the rules will do so with gentleness and respect (and humour), and that church leaders will have great wisdom and courage in responding to the sometimes contradictory messages coming from the state authorities (bit.ly/cccvrules).* As Covid continues, *pray that we will continue to respond to the call to seek the Lord in the ‘wilderness’ and to do so even more diligently (Hosea 2:14-23; bit.ly/vhhope).*

Farming and the land

By September, most crops will have been harvested. But yields are very depressed, and many farmers will feel they have “sown much, but reaped little” (Haggai 1:6). Yet, given the weather conditions earlier this year, farmers are glad to have a crop at all, while many fruit trees have yielded well this year, and many hedgerows are laden with fruit. Give thanks for these signs of the Lord’s continuing mercy and faithfulness. *Pray for better conditions this autumn and next spring, so that crops can make a good start and yield well next year. Pray for farmers to recognise their dependence on the One who causes the crops to grow (Psalm 104:14; Psalm 64:9-13) and reach out to seek and know Him as their Saviour and Lord.*

The 9th of September is ‘Back British Farming Day’, when the NFU invites farmers to promote their “commitment to high production standards” and MPs to “show their support for British farming” (bit.ly/nfubbf20). As Parliament resumes at the beginning of September, the Agriculture Bill will continue its progress towards royal assent (bit.ly/hopagbill). *Pray for government, the NFU, and for all involved in shaping the future of farming and food production (1 Timothy 2:1-2): that they will “decree what is just” (Proverbs 8:15-16) for producers, consumers, livestock and the land.*

Rural life

Lockdown has prompted a significant increase in domestic abuse. This is often worse in rural areas. Rural domestic abuse victims are one of the hardest to reach groups and abuse lasts, on average, 25% longer in the most rural areas (bit.ly/ruralabuse). *Pray for exposure of incidences of domestic abuse, for greater local community awareness and willingness to intervene, for much needed resources to be made available, and for freedom and healing in the name of Jesus of both victims and perpetrators (Luke 4:18).*

Covid-19 has continued to prompt many to visit and holiday in the British countryside, but it has also prompted a wave of antisocial behaviour. Fly tipping has reached unprecedented levels. With campsites full, people have been camping randomly on farmland. Cars parked in lanes have hindered harvest operations. Illegal raves have been taking place in many rural locations. *Pray for farmers, landowners, rural residents and all affected, and for the police as they seek to enforce the law with limited resources. Pray that the Lord will constrain lawlessness and bring peace to our countryside (Psalm 125).*

‘Hope for the Countryside’ is a partnership between Agricultural Christian Fellowship, Village Hope, the World Prayer Centre and Top Barn Trust. Our aim is to mobilise and resource prayer for rural Britain. Our vision is of beacons of prayer lighting up across our countryside. Our prayer is for a fresh move of the Holy Spirit across the countryside of our nation.

‘Seeds of prayer’ is a resource for prayer for individuals, groups, church services and other meetings. If this is helpful and inspiring or you would like to feed back your own insights and prayers then we would be very happy to hear from you.

