

Organising a Prayer Vigil

Why?

The purpose of this prayer vigil is to give people time to stop, reflect, and pray at a time when crucial decisions are being made. We pray that the current crisis will lead people to 'build back better' - not returning to ways that have failed us in the past, but drawing on the best of the old and the best of the new to forge 'a new normal' ... one that will help us keep global warming well below 2 degrees Celsius, with an ambition to keep it to 1.5.

Who?

The prayer vigil is designed to meet the needs of anyone who cares about the future wellbeing of the earth's creatures and the injustice of the changing climate which impacts most severely on the poorest people in the world – people who have virtually no effect themselves on carbon emissions.

Two or three people, ideally from different denominations, should be responsible for running the prayer vigil.

Where?

To hold a prayer vigil all that is needed is a central location, with seating that is protected from the weather. Ideally it should be relatively quiet, but there is also much to recommend holding the vigil somewhere very visible so others will see and join in. There should be no charge and the seating arrangements should enable people to come and go easily. It would be really helpful to have an area in the entrance or at the back with explanations, information, petitions, and a jug of water and glasses.

When?

Select any date that is appropriate for local needs. There is enough prayer material available for as long or short a vigil as required. For example you could begin at 12 noon and end late afternoon ... or a lunchtime vigil of just an hour ... or something in the evening.

People may come in and stay for just 30 minutes, or they may want to stay for the whole time. We suggest that people may want to fast during the prayer vigil. Ending with a shared meal could be a very positive experience, giving people an opportunity to share their responses ... and encouraging community response and action.



Publicise

If possible write a short article or press release and send to the local press. Add in a quote or two from local people if possible. Ring the local radio station asking them to announce the prayer vigil and telling them why it's being held.

Prepare

The prayer vigil needs only very simple preparations. The content provides 80 inputs and assumes a few minutes of reflection time between each input. You may choose to miss out particular sections, add in additional sections relating to local situations or have some periods of open prayer. Content is deliberately very varied and assumes people will come and go. It contains a mix of Bible readings, quotes, facts, poems, positive stories of change, and prayers.

Make arrangements for different people to share the readings - maybe asking people to take responsibility for one hour. In a large or noisy setting you may need to provide amplification.

You may also want to obtain supplies of information (eg campaigning materials, prayers, etc) from relevant organisations for people to take away.

Ready to go

Arrange chairs, provide a jug of water and glasses, light candles and play background music (if the venue permits). Keep an eye on timing, allowing time for meditation or encouraging open prayer as appropriate.

Follow-up

Pray and Fast for the Climate are hosting the prayer vigil materials on their website and are coordinating the events and responses. Please email: info@prayandfastfortheclimate.org.uk

It would be useful to write up a brief description of the event including people's comments and quotes and send it to the local press and radio - with a copy to the email address above.