

**Prayer**

Travelling Lord,

You called your disciples to follow in your way:

you are the Way, the Truth and the Life,

and so we come, seeking to follow in your footsteps.

Creator of the earth, as we journey, help us to walk lightly,

treasuring the world you have given us and cherishing each other.

And grant, we pray, that our daily walk may be part of your plan,

to care for creation seeking justice

and the coming of your Kingdom

on earth as it is in heaven.

*Adapted Prayer from [www.prayandfastfortheclimate.com](http://www.prayandfastfortheclimate.com)*

‘Journeying’ has been much on my mind of late. With so much in the news of refugees walking to find safety and shelter, pilgrims walking to Paris, the powerful image of the shoes left on the pavement in the Place de Republique because of the ban on the march in Paris, and the journey we are all making in this world that is changing fast.

**1<sup>st</sup> story- A past journey**

I’d like to start by asking you to talk to each other in pairs, of a momentous journey you have made. What were the obstacles and the joys? I’m not going to ask you to share these with everyone but consider what you learnt from the journey.

**Music**

Play an appropriate piece of music here. I suggest ‘Moses I know you are the Man’ by Estelle White. You will need to find this in a hymn book as it is copyrighted

**2<sup>nd</sup> Story - A present journey**

Give out Bible verses and in small groups (no more than three) think about how the Bible passage relates to any physical, spiritual or personal development journeys you have encountered in your work or life.

Matthew 4: 18-25, Hebrews 11:8, Jeremiah 6:16, Leviticus 19: 34, Luke 9:3

Share just one thought with the other groups.

**Story 3 - A future journey**

In pairs share something you would like to do over the next year, a goal you have set yourself or a change that is coming. This can be a personal, professional or spiritual goal. What do you need to do to achieve it? Who can help you? What will you need?

Read story from Elizabeth Perry about her journey/pilgrimage to Paris, December 2015 to the UN climate change meeting.

***"Walk with me, for the journey is long"***

*When you're walking, it's a long way from London to Paris. It takes around two weeks – or at least that's what it took me (Elizabeth) and the other pilgrims on our [Pilgrimage2Paris](#).*

*This might sound like a statement of the obvious, but I'd never really thought about long journeys in terms of walking before – I'm more used to thinking about anything more than a few miles or so in terms of cars, trains or planes.*

*We all had good equipment – robust walking boots, warm clothing, waterproof coats and trousers. Each night we knew where we would be staying and were welcomed with warmth. We received wonderful hospitality - food, shelter and the chance to recuperate in safety. Before we crossed the Channel we were given a detailed security briefing; our safety and well-being had been given careful consideration.*

*How often we thought of people journeying in very different circumstances – and especially of those seeking refuge in Europe and the UK. What must it be like to travel with inadequate clothing and poor footwear, not knowing where you would be sleeping, exposed to the rain and cold? How much more difficult must it be with children? Where might your food come from? What if you can't speak the language? And then, having withstood all this, what must it be like to be met with hostility and contempt when you thought you were finally approaching journey's end?*

*None of the pilgrims embarked on our 200-mile journey without careful thought and preparation, and even with all the support and backup we had, the journey was long and hard. So what must it take to drive people from their homes to seek a new life elsewhere and endure such hardship? Knowing what I do now, I find it hard to imagine that the decision to undertake such a journey is made lightly, without a compelling reason. And I shiver as I imagine what that journey might entail.*

*I suspect that this year, it is the journeys in the Christmas story that will resonate most for me: Mary and Joseph travelling to Bethlehem in less than ideal circumstances, the wise men journeying long distances to find Jesus, the shepherds leaving their flocks, the flight of Mary and Joseph into Egypt with the infant Jesus. Our God knows all about long, hard journeys... and, I believe, identifies with migrants and refugees fleeing hardship and persecution.*

*On our Pilgrimage2Paris, the South African song, "Walk with me for the journey is long" became popular (unsurprisingly!). I wonder if, in it, I also hear an echo of God's heart.*

*Music 'Walk with me for the journey is long' – You tube*  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PCB6uGFYYzk>  
*Permission given to reproduce*

## **Final Prayer**

*As the leader reads each line encourage participants to take a step in any direction around the room.*

God who loves us so much,  
We know that we need each other.  
Let us find you in each other,  
Let us find each other in you.  
God, present in every movement of creation,  
Let us be responsible sharers of your garden of life.  
And as the sky in all its mystery and glory points out into the cosmos,  
So may our lives display the mystery and glory of love, you will for life on earth.  
Open our hearts to those who need our solidarity.  
We pray for people facing unpredictable and extreme weather,  
For people throughout the world who struggle to make a living in difficult circumstances.  
Let your will for justice and equity be done,  
That our love for our neighbour,  
Even those far from us,  
may make known our love for you.  
In the name of Christ  
Amen

Christian Aid – Prayers for our world <http://www.christianaid.org.uk/Images/Climate-campaign-prayers-June-2014.pdf>

Compiled by Linda Mead Commitment for Life December 2015