MORE THAN GOLD

A call to prayer for our communities and the Nations

A TIME TO SHINE

Prayer Guide

Getting your church praying for the 2012 Games

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Resources

1: Introduction

The 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games have been awarded to London. This gives UK churches a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

In recent years, when major sporting events like this have come to a nation, churches have responded with extensive programmes of community outreach, hospitality and service. And now the baton has been passed to us.

Beyond the walls of our churches, most people see us as irrelevant. Now, the Games give us an opportunity to tell a very different story. They offer every church the way to –

> ***Be the hosts of the biggest party*** the UK has ever seen
>
> ***Shine out with the light of Jesus Christ*** like never before

The Games will not just affect London. In the same way as the Royal Wedding last year touched every street, so with the 2012 Games.

- There will be enormous media coverage from mid-May onwards, when the Olympic Torch starts its run, with a growing crescendo of media fever
- The Torch Relay will bring a cavalcade through over 1,000 communities and within only ten miles of almost everyone in the UK
- Teams of competitors will arrive to train in almost every corner of the British Isles in the months before the Opening Ceremony
- Almost everyone will watch on television, with millions, of all ages, avidly following every huff, puff, spill and saga
- Events will take place way beyond London - as far north as Glasgow and as far south as Weymouth and Portland

And in the midst of it all, your church has the wonderful opportunity to make Jesus known through your words and actions. To be Jesus:

- To guests visiting from around the globe – whether athletes, athletes' families, trainers, support teams or spectators
- To people of all ages and walks of life in your own local community

Mission and prayer go hand in hand. So our aim is to encourage churches to put prayer at the heart of everything they do as they seize the moment. *1 Timothy 2:1-4.*

This booklet gives you accessible, creative and meaningful ways to pray for every aspect of the 2012 Games as it touches your community and the nations. It is also just a sample of the many resources available in the prayer section of our website. Just visit www.morethangold.org/prayer

2: Biblical perspectives – What does the Bible say about praying for a national sporting event?

When it comes to praying for a sporting event, all kinds of questions bubble up –

- How are we supposed to pray?
- Are we praying that our favourite team will win?
- Whose side is God on anyway?
- And is this really an event we should be praying for at all, when famine, war and natural disaster stalk our world? Isn't this just sport?

The Bible has some perspectives which are helpful as we consider how to pray for the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

1. A nation in celebration
Leviticus 23, 2 Chronicles 15:10-15, Ezra 6:16-22, Joel 2:12-18, John 7:37-39

God instructed his people to hold national gatherings. They were times of worship, prayer and sacrifice, they were times of celebration and joy, and they were often the times when God would speak.

The most significant events in Biblical history happened when people were gathered for celebration: the exodus from Egypt, the consecration of the temple, the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, to name but a few.

The 2012 Games may not look anything like these Biblical celebrations. But it will be a time when the whole nation has its gaze on one particular event. We may not gather physically, but we will gather through the marvels of modern technology, to experience a significant moment in our history.

The Scriptures listed above give you some idea of what God wanted national gatherings to look like. What stands out, in all of these passages, is that God intended gatherings to be moments of encounter with himself. The partying and even the religious activities were secondary to the important business of meeting with him, hearing from him and recommitting to him.

Whether the 2012 Games turn out to be this kind of God-encounter for Britain rather depends on us, his Church. We get to shape this celebration in prayer, so let's be expectant in our faith and specific in our requests (Matthew 21:21-22).

2. The kind of winning that matters
1 Corinthians 9:24-27, Galatians 5:7-10, Philippians 3:12-16, 1 Timothy 4:7-8, 2 Timothy 4:7-8

The arrival of the Games signals an increased interest in all things sporting. In school PE lessons, in sports clubs, in training gyms up and down the land, the Games will provide the motivation to spur people on to greater heights of physical stamina. Whether it's just about healthy living and getting fit, or competing to win at something, more and more emphasis will be put on sport and recreation over the coming months.

This global event we're about to experience was very familiar to the writers of the New Testament. The Greeks had hosted the first ever Games in 776 BC, so they were something of a fixture by the time Jesus was alive.

Paul made several references to athletics competitions in his teachings on discipleship (see Scriptures above). So, we can assume people have long since found spiritual inspiration in an event which, on the face of it, seems so physical.

Though Paul uses the illustration of sport to teach on discipline and stamina, his main purpose for using it is to teach about persevering to win. He speaks of prizes and trophies – all things which seem rather worldly and irrelevant to us in our daily walk with God.

Yet Paul is challenging his readers to think about what kind of winning matters to them. As they watch the races between world-class athletes, as they hone their own bodies to be fit and healthy, what goal are they really pursuing? What prize do they most want to win? Is it man's or is it God's?

As the nation goes 'sport crazy', we, as the Church have the responsibility of challenging people to think about the eternal score-board. And of praying that the Games will cause people to ask deeper questions about their lives.

3. Welcoming visitors from other nations
Genesis 12:1-3, Deuteronomy 10:14-21, Isaiah 60:1-7, Matthew 25:31-46, Acts 2:5-12, Hebrews 13:1-3

Thousands will visit our shores for the Games; not just the competitors, but their trainers, their support teams, their families, the dignitaries from their nations, and, of course, the spectators. We have the privilege of being hosts for the biggest party in years!

Throughout the Old Testament we find God instructing the Israelites to be hospitable. He makes it clear that, having chosen them out of the nations to be his own, he expects them to extend his welcome and kindness to those around them.

The New Testament continues the same command. *We are to welcome foreigners, shelter strangers, feed the hungry, clothe the naked… all as if we were welcoming Christ himself.*

There is much talk of how the increase in tourism in 2012 will boost our economy. And how proud we will be to have the eyes of the world on us. But will we really be hospitable? Will we welcome people like we'd welcome Jesus, or will we just see them as a source of income?

Let's start the welcome by praying for them regularly, even before they've set foot in our land.

4. The Body of Christ… working together and getting involved
Matthew 5:13-16, John 17:20-23, Acts 2:42-47, 1 Corinthians 12:12-31, Philippians 2:12-16

Big occasions create big opportunities and, as occasions go, they don't get much bigger than the Olympic and Paralympic Games. So what is the big opportunity? And how can we make the most of it?

Doubtless there are many people asking this question:

- Businesses wondering how they can make the most of 'Olympic fever' to sell their products
- Charities wondering how they can capitalise to highlight the good causes

they support
- Traffickers wondering how they can exploit the predicted rise in demand for prostitutes

The question is not whether the Games will be big, but who will they be big for?

On this one, the Biblical message seems very simple. Over and over again, God commands His people to be involved. We are not to sit on the sidelines as spectators, but to throw ourselves in. Whatever is going on, whatever the world's 'big event' is, we are to be in the thick of it, shining the light of Jesus into every corner.

But we are to get involved together, rather than presenting the world with a fragmented, divisive Church. We have the privilege to 'be Jesus' at this big occasion, but we will only truly reflect him if we work and pray together.

5. A global perspective
Psalm 24:1-2, Joel 2:20-32, Matthew 24:13-14, Acts 1:6-8, Revelation 7:9-12

An event can truly be called 'global' when over 90 per cent of the nations of the world take part. In summer 2012, the UK really will play host to the world.

From Genesis to Revelation, the Bible continually challenges us to have a global perspective. We are never permitted to shrink our world view down to our own interests and our own borders. God the Father created the world, God the Son died and was raised to life to redeem the world, and God the Holy Spirit is pouring himself out across the whole world.

When the world's inhabitants step over our threshold, we have the perfect opportunity to introduce them to the God who made them and loves them.

More than that, we have the privilege of influencing the world beyond our borders. The Church gets to share in the work of bringing freedom, justice and hope to the whole of creation.

Let's pray for the Games, that they will not just be a global event, but that they will have a long-lasting legacy of blessing for the whole world.

3: Building regular prayer for the Games into the life of your church

The only way the Church will truly be able to make an impact on the 2012 Games is if we start praying early. If we wait till the starting gun then we will be way too late. So, we are asking you to consider building two different 'levels' of prayer for the Games into your church programme.

1. A Rhythm of Prayer

Every aspect of planning and preparation for the Games needs covering in prayer. That means churches praying regularly together for all that is going on. You will find links to up-to-the-minute prayer needs in the prayer section of the More Than Gold website. Go to morethangold.org.uk/prayer

Here are some suggestions for building the Games into your prayer rhythm:

- Find out what Games-related mission activities your church and other churches are planning, and pray for them regularly.
- Regularly include the Games in the intercession/prayer part of your Sunday service (see Section 4, Section 5 and Section 6 of this booklet).
- Make sure your church prayer group is kept up-to-date with prayer topics for the Games (see Section 4 and Section 5).
- Encourage your church's small groups to find a creative way of keeping the Games on their prayer agenda. They could 'adopt' in prayer a member of Team GB and their family, perhaps one who comes from your area, or they could choose a competing nation, find out about its culture and history and pray regularly for its Olympic team. They could also find out about the needs of the Church in that nation by visiting www.operationworld.org
- Regularly include prayer for the Games in any inter-church prayer meetings you have.

2. Seasons of Prayer

There are distinct 'seasons' in 2012 when we will be asking churches to make a special focus to pray for the 2012 Games:

- 'Shine as the Flame travels': a cascade of prayer for 70 days during the Olympic Torch Relay (18th May – 27th July); prayer events in main flame lighting cities and 24 hour prayer relay during the Paralympic Torch Relay (24th – 29th August)
  Find out when the torches will be nearest to you at www.london2012.com
- 'Shine at the Games': prayer throughout both Olympic and Paralympic Games, 27th July – 9th September
- 'Shine forever': celebrating what God has done and praying that the light of Christ will shine even brighter across this nation in the years to come

Please note these seasons and include them in your regular prayer for the Games. And if you'd like other ideas for special prayer events to mark these seasons, see Section 7 Planning a Games prayer meeting.

4: Prayer topics - what are we praying for?

The prayer points in this section are by no means exhaustive. So, please use them to get you going and feel free to add to them. For more up-to-the-minute subjects for prayer, visit www.morethangold.org.uk/prayer There is also a more detailed list of topics in Section 8.

1. Planning

Pray for the planning and delivery of the Games

- For LOCOG (London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games); ODA (Olympic Delivery Authority)
- For More Than Gold as it equips churches across the UK for mission, service and hospitality
- For all staff and volunteers working to make the Games happen
- For security at and before the Games: for the police, the intelligence services and venue security staff
- For safety and smooth running of all transport networks
- For chaplains and Games Pastors serving with More Than Gold, seeking to be the presence of Jesus in the athletes villages, on the streets, in venues and at transport hubs

For a wider perspective on the organisation of the Games visit www.london2012.com

2. Places

Pray that the places touched by the Games will be places where people find the presence of God.

- For every Games venue and training site (especially those near you)
- For places where people will gather to watch the Games on big screens
- For the places near you where the Olympic and Paralympic Torch Relays will pass through
- For the whole nation to be filled with Christ's light, as churches pray and witness wherever the Torch goes

For a list of Games venues go to www.2012olympicgames.co.uk/london-2012-olympic-venues

For the route where the Torch Relay will pass go to www.morethangold.org.uk/torchrelay/route

3. Participants

Pray for those participating in the 2012 Games, that they will compete honourably, and encounter the living God in a powerful way.

- For those from nations closed to the Gospel to hear the good news of Jesus while they're here
- For the Athlete Family Homestay Programme: church families providing hospitality for families of athletes who are unable to afford to come and watch their loved-ones compete
- For Great Britain's own team - Team GB - and their families
- For the Games to be fair and free from corruption
- For the many international mission teams who will come to work with churches and witness for Jesus on our streets

For more on the Athlete Family Homestay programme go to www.morethangold.org.uk/homestay

4. Power

Pray that the UK Church will seize the opportunity to get involved in the celebrations, speaking and living the love of Jesus, and standing together as one united body.

- For all that churches in your community will be doing to get involved
- For churches to make good use of the resources available to help them run holiday clubs, host festivals and do mission through sport
- For More Than Gold to be effective in helping churches make the most of the Games
- For the More Than Gold Social Justice Teams, helping the Church to act on issues of Fair Trade, homelessness, the environment, and human trafficking and prostitution
- For the More Than Gold Prayer Team to be able to encourage and connect the many different prayer initiatives taking place throughout 2012, so that the Games are covered in passionate prayer

For more on churches reaching out go to www.morethangold.org.uk/outreach

5. Purpose

Pray that 'your kingdom come, your will be done' will relate to every aspect of the 2012 Games.

- For all involved in evangelism and follow-up during and after the Games
- For the legacy the Games will leave; that communities will be changed for the better
- For there to be a new passion for justice in this nation
- For the Church in the UK to emerge from the other side of the Games a more united, more active and more prayerful body of people

5: Praying for issues of social justice

Experience shows that a vast event like the 2012 Games is likely to create significant social issues. As the result of consultation, More Than Gold's Social Justice Team has highlighted the following as significant issues -

- Homelessness
- Human Trafficking and Prostitution
- Fair Trade
- The Environment
- 100 days of peace

Where there are major social issues at stake, there are also major opportunities for God's Spirit to intervene. When so many nations gather for an event like the Games, we have an unparalleled opportunity to impact global issues and change the world, if only we are ready and active in prayer.

While the Games will last a matter of weeks, these issues can impact the lives of individuals and nations for years. This makes our investment of prayer even more important than our investment of prayer into the Games.

However, one look at the list above could leave us daunted. Each issue merits hours and hours of prayer all by itself. So here are some useful tips for tackling the social justice agenda in prayer:

- ***Start where you are***. Does your church already have a particular heart for/connection with any of these issues? It would be better to pray more thoroughly for one issue than to try and cover all five at surface level.

- ***Rotate your praying:*** If there isn't one issue which is an obvious starting point for your church, why not plan to pray for one issue each month leading up to the Games? Find five people/groups, one to research each of these topics, and present it to your church or prayer meeting.

- ***Focus on the issues most relevant to the mission activities planned by churches in your area***. Make sure your congregation is well informed about those issues, and that people know how to pray into them.

You will find valuable background on the issues of social justice and the Games at www.morethangold.org.uk/service/social-justice.html

There are also excellent prayer resources on the issues of human trafficking and prostitution to download at www.morethangold.org.uk/free-resources and www.journeyofprayer.com

Section 6: Ways to pray for the Games in a church service

1. Intercessions/Formal prayer time

Use the prayer topics in Section 4 of this guide to create four or five separate prayers. The topics are arranged in five categories, with about five points in each.

- Take the introductory sentence from each of the five main categories and build a prayer around it.
- Focus on just one of the categories, using the bullet points to build four or five prayers.

Intersperse your prayers with a call and response, such as one of the following:

> Leader – God of the nations; All – May your Kingdom come.
> Leader – Jesus, Light of the World; All – Let your light shine in our land.

If praying through all five categories, you may wish to change the response each time, for instance:

> Planning: Let your light shine on the Games
> Places: Let your light shine in our community
> Participants: Let your light shine out to the nations
> Power: Let your light shine through your church
> Purpose: Let your light shine in this land

There are also some written and responsive prayers in Section 10 of this guide which you may find helpful to include.

2. Small groups prayer time

Create a handout or PowerPoint slide with prayer topics on it and invite people to pray together in groups of four or five. Prayer topics can be found in Section 4 and Section 5 of this guide.

- Create one slide with the headings and introductory sentences from all five main categories on it.
- Create one slide just focusing on one category, showing the heading, the introductory sentence and the bullet points

3. All-age prayer time

If you are praying for the Games with people of all ages, it is helpful to use a visual aid or multi-sensory prayer activity. These can be as simple or complex as you choose.

For some initial ideas, see section 7, on planning a Games prayer meeting, and Section 9 on resources for children, young people and sports groups.

4. Service outlines

Section 3, 'Biblical Perspectives' may prove useful in planning a sermon/talk.

Section 7: Planning a Games prayer meeting

This section begins with an outline for a Games prayer meeting lasting approximately 100 minutes. It includes a variety of prayer activities, all designed to make praying for the Games inspiring, engaging and accessible for people of all types.

- Please don't feel you have to use everything in one meeting
- Lift some ideas out to use in church services and other settings
- Feel free to amend or add to these ideas as you need to

The second part of the section gives ideas for holding longer Games prayer events.

Prayer Meeting Outline - 100 mins approx

1. Welcoming the Light of Christ **5 mins**

Begin the meeting with a time of silence. As people still themselves and wait on God, have someone carry a large lit candle into the room and place it at the front or centre of the room (alternatively simply light it in situ).

After several further minutes of silence, pray a prayer out loud, inviting the light of Jesus to fill your prayer time, and to flood this land in 2012.

NB. If unable to use a candle, start by switching the lights off or drawing the curtain. Then switch them on/open them as people welcome the light of Christ.

An idea for later in the meeting, if you're praying before or during the Olympic or Paralympic Torch Relays, is:

> Pass the candle round the group, inviting each person to pray for the places nearest you where the Torch will visit. *If people don't want to pray aloud, invite them to pray silently, before passing the candle on to the next person.*

2. Praise Relay **10 mins**

Invite all who are able to stand. Hand one person a baton (a pen or wooden spoon will do nicely). They pray a brief prayer of praise, then choose someone to pass the baton to.

Whoever they pass it to prays a prayer of praise and then passes it to someone else... and so the relay goes on, either until everyone has held the baton or until time is up. *Those who don't want to pray out loud can pray silently before passing on the baton.*

If they need some inspiration to get going, invite them first to take a look at Psalm 23 and 103.

For more energetic groups, substitute passing a baton with throwing a beach ball around the room. Whoever catches it prays a prayer of praise, before throwing it on to someone else.

3. Scripture Pictures **15 mins**

Choose a Scripture which relates to sport in some way, such as running the race or winning the prize, (ideas can be found in number 2 of Section 2, 'Biblical Perspectives'. Read the Scripture out, preferably in two or three different versions of the Bible.

Then play some music for about five minutes, to give people space to reflect on God's Word. You might like to show a PowerPoint with relevant Scripture verses and images related to sport. (Free to use at www.office.com).

Then ask people to get into pairs and share their reflections on the Scripture passage and to pray.

4. Ask the Experts **20 mins**

Invite those in your church who have an interest in a particular sport - either as a competitor or a fan - to share briefly about their sport, and to give pointers on how people can pray for Olympic and Paralympic competitors as they prepare for the Games.

Invite people to get into small groups and pray for athletes. If there is a particular national team training in your area, pray for them specifically. It may also be appropriate to pray for the person who has shared – and those like them, that God will use them to be a witness in their chosen sport.

5. Local Focus **10 mins**

Find/create a large map of your area and mark on it where there are sports and recreation centres, particularly those which are Olympic training venues. Invite people to stand (or put a hand) on a place, and to pray for the presence and power of God to be known there.

6. Covering the details **10 mins**

Create a PowerPoint slide or handout with a list of prayer points relating to the planning and delivery of the Games and the work of More Than Gold (see prayer topics in Section 4 and Section 5). If your list has five items, get people into groups of five, designating one person to pray for each point on the list. Encourage people to make their prayers as specific as possible.

7. Dreaming for justice **15 mins**

Put on a screen or flipchart the five social issues which More Than Gold are asking the church to respond to during the 2012 Games (homelessness, prostitution/human trafficking, Fair trade, the environment and 100 days of peace).

Then read aloud Revelation 21. Give everyone a piece of paper, and ask them to write their own version of Revelation 21, imagining a world where those five social issues look exactly as God would want them to look. Encourage people to use phrases like 'then I saw a city where…', 'and there was no more…' etc.

You may like to invite people to read out their dreams for the rest of the group/congregation to share.

8. Welcoming the nations **10 mins**

Divide those present in half down the middle. If you have musicians present, invite them to play a song of worship/proclamation, and ask one half of the room to sing the first verse, while the other half pray out as loudly as possible for all those who will visit our shores from other nations in 2012.

Then ask the halves to swap, so the praying half are now singing the second verse, while the singing half are praying for our international guests. Continue through the song, alternating this rhythm of prayer and worship.

If you don't have musicians present, you can do the same with a CD, or simply invite the whole group to stand together and pray out loud, all at once, for those who will visit the UK in 2012.

At the end of the meeting, give everyone a chocolate gold coin with a national flag stuck to it. Invite them to eat the chocolate (or give it away). Then encourage them to keep the casing with the flag in their handbag/wallet, as a reminder to pray regularly for that nation between now and the Games.

9. Closing Prayer **5 mins**

Use one of the prayers in Section 10, 'Written and Responsive Prayers', as a closing prayer. You could get one person to simply read it aloud, or you could display it on a projector or give it as a handout, so everyone can join in praying it together.

Extended Times of Prayer – half nights, nights, day or week of prayer

The Games will capture people's imagination, no matter what age they are or what background they come from. As such, they provide the perfect opportunity to gather the whole church in prayer.

So often we're praying for things which are only relevant to a few people in the church, or only to the adults for instance, but here we have a subject for prayer which anyone and everyone can relate to in some way.

A prayer meeting lasting an hour or two may only draw some of your congregation, but an extended time of prayer - a half-night, a full night, a day or even a week of non-stop prayer – allows more people to take part, simply because they don't all have to be free at the same time.

These events are usually 'one-off', but they can be an excellent focal point for people in your church, and from all over your area, to join together in prayer.

Extended prayer models

Different churches are comfortable with different styles of prayer. Your extended time of prayer may simply involve everyone worshipping and praying all together, or it may look more varied. These are some suggested models you might like to use; others prayer ideas for children can be found in Section 9.

Half-night of prayer - 4-6 hours: 20-minute chunks of prayer interspersed with musical worship, focusing on various different Games-related subjects; using multi-sensory prayer activities if appropriate.

Night of prayer - 8-12 hours night-time: 30-minute prayer slots interspersed with musical worship; alternatively, breaking the night down into hour-long chunks, some of which to be spent in private prayer, some all together, some in small groups, some around creative prayer stations etc.

Day of prayer – 8-12 hours daytime: breaking the day into 2-hour chunks and using a variety of prayer activities such as prayer walks, children's prayer times, periods of quiet reflection, creative prayer stations etc.

24-7 prayer week/weekend: setting aside a room, kitting it out with a variety of Games-related creative prayer activities and inviting people to sign up for at least one hour of prayer there. See www.uk.24-7prayer.com for ideas on setting up a prayer room. If a week seems too long, plan for a weekend instead.

Outline for an extended time of prayer

The following five topics form the building blocks for an extended time of prayer focused around the 2012 Games.

Using a mixture of worship, bible reading, prayer alone, prayer in groups, active prayer times, interactive prayer stations and responsive prayers, it is possible to structure a half night, a day or even a week of prayer around these five areas.

Before you begin:

- Read through the resources given in the rest of this prayer guide and pick and mix what you do in your prayer event – have breaks, worship, silence and creative sections throughout the time frame.
- Do include some active praying from Section 9, as many of these exercises bring sport and prayer together in a creative way.
- Use websites to get up-to-date information to use in the prayer times including www.morethangold.org.uk and www.london2012.com
- Carefully choose what fits the time frame you have – choose one or two activities from each topic.

Start in worship and set the scene

- Use some of the Olympic facts and stats to be found at www.morethangold.org.uk/free-resources
- Share about a nation in celebration – Section 3

Our aim in praying is: that the presence of Jesus will fill every community; that the power of the gospel will be released so that many people will discover the truth about Jesus Christ; that God's purpose for our nations will be fulfilled through the Church working in unity in each community.

TOPIC 1: PLANNING

London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games (LOCOG) –

- Check out www.london2012.com for the latest news ahead of your prayer meeting. Print off press releases and use cuttings from newspapers.
- What issues need praying for in terms of all the preparation that must happen – e.g. finishing building, organising test events, recruiting all the volunteers to carry the torches, work on the site, staff at the office etc.
- Who are the people leading LOCOG and the ODA (Olympic Delivery Authority)? List their names and pray for them.

- Pray also for governmental leaders, the Minister of Sport, London Mayor etc.
- Listen for how the Holy Spirit wants you to pray about these things.

More Than Gold

- Pray for the staff, Executive, Programme Groups, Working Groups and the Board of Trustees.
- Go to www.morethangold.org.uk/resources and under 'Printed Resources' download the various pdf sheets on outreach, hospitality, community festivals etc. Use these as a basis for praying for all the different mission that will take place.
- Pray for some of the different initiatives mentioned on the More Than Gold website.

Specific and up-to-date subjects for prayer will be on the website under 'Prayer'.

Your area/community/parish

- Find out what is being planned in your area: are there any local mission initiatives planned; is there a particular Olympic or Paralympic team which is to train in your area; how will the Games impact where you live?
- Invite someone from the local council or other local organisation to come and talk about how your village/town/city will be engaging with the Olympic and Paralympic Torch Relays or the Games themselves.
- Then take time to pray for them (if they are willing), and for those in authority locally

Security of the Games

- Group work: brainstorm areas that need to be covered in prayer, e.g. all venues, training sites, transport hubs (airports, rail stations, ferry terminals etc.)
- Identify different groups to pray for, e.g. police, intelligence services, disaster response teams, street pastors etc.
- Pray for those in your area, and for London and across the UK.

Multi-sensory prayer

Create displays either on walls or the floor, using images and text from the websites of LOCOG and More Than Gold. Invite people to walk around them, praying for the various people and prayer needs listed above.

Also provide some blank paper and pens where people can write their own prayers for these things.

Encourage them to stop and listen to God as they make their way round, and ask them to write/drawer anything they hear from God, so that others who come after them can be inspired by their prayers and insights.

TOPIC 2: PLACES

If every believer were to pray over their street, workplace, school, business etc, we would be able to see every place across our nations blessed in prayer.

Start national and work back to local areas or vice versa:

- Get a map of the Olympic Park, write the names of all the different buildings on small pieces of paper and put them in a bowl. Ask people to draw out a name, place it on the map with a pin and pray for God's presence and power to fill all that it is used for.
- Get a map of Greater London. Write the names of all the Olympic and Paralympic venues and live sites on small pieces of paper and put them in a bowl. Ask people to draw out a venue, place it on the map with a pin and pray blessing on that place as they do so.
- Do the same with the whole of UK, writing the names of all the Olympic and Paralympic venues and live sites on small pieces of paper and putting them in a bowl. Ask people to draw out a venue, place it on the map with a pin and pray blessing on that place as they do so.
- You can add the names of where different nations are coming to train as this information is made available throughout spring 2012.

Multi-sensory prayer

Create a large map of your community, either on a wall or on the floor, marking on it places like sports and leisure centres, schools, police station, fire station, hospitals etc. Invite each person to write a prayer for your community and stick it to the map.

Afterwards, invite people to 'adopt a place' in the community – somewhere they already spend a lot of time, or somewhere they would like to commit to visiting on a regular basis – and ask them to prayer walk that place at least once a week between now and the Games.

You might even like to add their names to the map, and keep it on display as a reminder and an encouragement that you are blessing the streets, homes and businesses of your community in prayer. That way, those not present can adopt a place and add themselves to the map later on.

Plan to have seasons of prayer walking in and around your community over the next few months – see Section 8.

TOPIC 3: POWER

Share about the importance of the body of Christ working together – found in Section 3.

Choose some of the scriptures and invite volunteers to read them aloud. Then take time to respond in humility and repentance for where unity has been compromised.

The Church in your area:

- Provide people with a list of all the churches and Christian groups in your community, along with the names of their leaders, either as a handout or on a Powerpoint slide.
- Ask people to spend time thanking God for his Body in your community, thinking of at least one thing about each church/group which they want to say thank you for.
- Ask people to pray for each church/group, its leaders, its mission, its role in the community etc.

- Inform people of specific evangelistic/social action initiatives coming up in the next few months, and invite them to pray for them.

The Church across the nation:

Our prayer is that the Church will be active not only during the Games, but also in every place where the Olympic and Paralympic torches pass through.

- Provide a UK map with both Olympic Torch routes marked on it, and pray blessing on the church in each of those places. You can find the routes at www.morethangold.org.uk/torchrelay/route There is also a wonderful video animation of the route that you could show at http://www.london2012.com/videos/2011/olympic-torch-relay-route-animation.php

Pray that God will raise up leaders among the churches in each place, to co-ordinate prayer and mission there.

More Than Gold's Social Justice agenda:

Different churches, agencies and organisations have been gathered together to address the following issues: the environment, Fair trade, homelessness, human trafficking and prostitution. Resources will be available by spring 2011.

More Than Gold's Social Justice Team has highlighted the following as being significant issues for prayer –

- Homelessness
- Human Trafficking and Prostitution
- Fair Trade
- Environment
- 100 days of peace

You will find valuable background on the issues of social justice and the Games at www.morethangold.org.uk/service/social-justice.html

There are also excellent prayer resources on the issues of human trafficking and prostitution to download at www.morethangold.org.uk/free-resources and www.journeyofprayer.com

Prayer:

Our aim is to have prayer in place at the centre of all mission that is undertaken during this season.

- Please pray that many churches, groups and organisations will explore creative ways to pray for all that will take place in the months leading up to, during and after the Games - praying locally but linking nationally.
- Pray for More Than Gold's seasons of prayer: 'A Time to Shine' – a call to pray for the Games and for the nations – that many churches will respond:

Shine as the Flame travels – taking part in a 70 day cascade of prayer as the Olympic Torch Relay comes your way between 19th May and 27th July

Shine during the Games – Joining with prayer events around the UK during the Olympic and Paralympic Games, especially the Opening and Closing

Ceremonies

Shine forever – continuing to pray, care and share the Good News and have a time of thanksgiving in autumn of 2012

- Pray for all churches and organisations working towards making 2012 a year of prayer, justice and mission

Multi-sensory prayer:

Get a game of Jenga or a box of children's building bricks. Label each block or brick with the name of a church or Christian group in your area and give them out to those present. Invite people to come one at a time, to add their block to the structure being built, and to say a prayer for the church/group on their label.

Inspired by Ephesians 2 and 1 Peter 2, God's people being built into a spiritual temple

Create a map of the UK on the floor or on a table, and mark on it the relay routes for both torches. Invite people to come and light a tealight, place it on a location on the map, and pray that the light of Christ will shine brighter than any other light in that place.

TOPIC 4: PARTICIPANTS

Share about welcoming visitors from other nations – found in Section 3.

In this section, pray for Team GB, teams from other nations, hospitality for athletes families, mission teams from other nations and visitors coming from all over the world.

Pray for Team GB: for their training, their relationships with one another, and for grace to handle living in the spotlight of public interest for the next year or so.

Encourage everyone to adopt a Team GB member and their family in prayer when the team is announced. Note particularly those who come from your area.

Athlete Family Homestay is one of the programmes More Than Gold will run, offering to provide homes for family members of athletes who could not otherwise afford to be here. Pray for all those putting this programme together, for enough homes to be offered, for the right match and for many to be touched by the practical care offered.

Maybe someone from the meeting could offer to put someone up?

Mission teams will be coming to work with local churches right across the UK. More Than Gold is running a programme to link overseas teams with local churches. Pray for all involved, for the finance, and for good partnerships between all the organisations that will be working together to make this possible.

Maybe a church in your area could welcome a mission team?

Welcoming the nations:

Provide a list of the 205 nations taking part in the Olympic Games, and a list of the 147 nations taking part in the Paralympic Games.

Does your church have links with any of those nations? If so, pray for those nations. If not, choose a few nations to focus on, find out up-to-date information for prayer from the 'Operation World' book/website www.operationworld.org or from personal links within your church, and pray for them.

Many of the nations represented at the Olympics will be places where Christians are routinely persecuted. Pray for those nations in particular, that those who come to compete or spectate at the Games will find God in the freedom of this nation.

For information on countries where the churches are under pressure see the websites of Open Doors and Release International.

Multi-sensory prayer:

Construct a prayer tree upon which to hang the prayers for these nations

Use a large world map on the floor or the wall, to prompt people as they pray for different nations.

Ask someone to prepare a 'journey round the world' in music, featuring recordings of different types of music perhaps with a PowerPoint of images to accompany it. Find images free of charge at www.office.com

Ask people to pray for the nations that come to their minds as they hear each type of music and see the images.

Base this section of the event around a coffee/meal break, and use food and drink from different nations as an introduction to this section.

TOPIC 5: PURPOSE

Share from the kind of winning that matters found in Section 3 of this guide.

Jesus talked about 'fruit that will last' *John 15:16* and the Games speak about 'legacy'. Let's pray for all that is being planned as legacy, which it will line up with God's purposes.

Pray for blessing for friends, neighbours and work colleagues you know who do not yet follow Jesus Christ as Lord.

B – for body, health issues

L - for labour, work, finance issues

E – for emotional and relational issues

S – for social, family issues

S – for spiritual issues

Pray blessing on the Games too:

B – Body: for physical fitness and safety for all involved

L – Labour: for those who have been and will be employed in this huge event, that they will find work afterwards

E – Emotions: that the atmosphere of the Olympic village (where athletes

will live) will be healthy, joyful and wholesome

S – Social: that every place where the Games take place will benefit as a result of the investment received

S – Spiritual: that the Games will be marked and defined by righteousness, integrity, truth and light, and that their legacy will be more of God's glory revealed in this land.

Learn to pray from scripture for all those participating in the Games. For examples visit www.waymakers.org

As people leave, encourage them to have their eyes and ears open to notice when the Games are mentioned in the media, and to develop the practice of praying 'Your Kingdom come' each time they hear or see reference to the Games.

Multi-sensory prayer:

Fill a large seed-tray with earth, and give each person present a seed and a plant label (or just a cocktail stick with a sticky label attached to it). Invite them to write a short prayer on the label, then plant their seed in the earth and stick the label in next to it, as a sign of trusting God for what will grow out of the 2012 Games.

Create a wall frieze with the words 'YOUR KINGDOM COME' in very large letters on it. Then invite people to write their 'legacy' prayers in the gaps in and around the letters. (A legacy prayer is the prayer expressing what you want God to do in this nation/your community through the 2012 Games).

Section 8: Planning a Games prayer walk to bless your neighbourhood

As we prepare for our communities to get out and about, doing all kinds of sport and leisure activities, we, as the Church, want to get out and about, sowing the good things of God into our communities. The easiest way is to go for a walk, and the best way to sow good things is to pray. So hold a Games Prayer Walk.

This section gives you practical tips on planning a prayer walk, as well as some of the theology of blessing which we would encourage you to draw on as you go out into your community.

1. What is a prayer walk and why is it a good thing to do?

'How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of the messenger bringing good news, breaking the news that all's well, proclaiming good times, announcing salvation, telling Zion, "Your God reigns!"' *Isaiah 52:7, The Message*

A prayer walk is exactly what it sounds like: a walk filled with prayer. Prayer walking has been woven through the history of the British Church for centuries. People would walk from Cathedral city to Cathedral city on pilgrimage, and these pilgrimages were all about prayer.

Still today, many Anglican churches mark Rogation Sunday with a prayer walk around their parish boundaries. This tradition, called 'beating the bounds', is an act of claiming the ground for God in prayer.

Prayer walking simply involves walking around your community, alone or in a group, praying for the places and people you see around you. You may plan to stop at specific locations, or you may just walk and see where the Spirit leads – either way, it's an exciting and engaging way to pray.

God told Joshua: 'I will give you every place where you set your foot' - *Joshua 1:3, NIV* - and there is something powerful and significant about making our prayers physical: expressing our longings for places by going and standing there to pray.

Blessed to be a blessing

As children of God, adopted into his family (Romans 8:14-16) and included in the cause of His Kingdom (Ephesians 1:3-14), we know we are blessed. It is this amazing privilege of blessing which we want to invite you to use as you walk around your community.

This walk isn't about praying complicated prayers, tackling spiritual forces or solving social problems. It's about blessing your community with God's life, love and power. It's standing in your identity as a child of God, and speaking the good things of your Father's Kingdom into being in your local neighbourhood.

From the very earliest stories of God's interaction with humankind, we see a particular pattern of blessing emerging –

- God blessed Abraham in order that he might give that blessing away to others - *Genesis 12:1-3*
- God blessed his people in Israel and expected them to extend His

blessings to the foreigners in their midst - *Leviticus 19:33-34* -

- Having won freedom and salvation for them on the cross, Jesus promptly sent the first disciples out to carry this ultimate blessing to the very ends of the earth - *Matthew 28:18-20, Acts 1:8*

The moment we open our hands to receive blessing from God we are nudged by the Holy Spirit to go out and give it away.

This business of blessing is not just some well-intentioned positive thinking though. God's blessings are powerful and life-changing -

- They can unlock the strangle-hold of death in desert places, and cause life to spring up *Isaiah 55:12-13*

- They can reverse the effects of sickness *Matthew 8:8*

- They can bring impossible peace in the midst of impossible pain *John 14:27*

When God speaks in blessing, the world is changed. And we, His children, are given the privilege of accessing those same blessings. We get to experience them in our own lives, but we're also given the privilege of speaking them into being for the people and places around us.

Jesus gave his disciples authority to reverse the works of the enemy, and to cause life to spring up - *Luke 10:19, Mark 16:17-18*. He intended us not only to be present where there is pain and sin, but to speak out the blessings which will turn those situations around.

As we walk the streets of our communities, whether on our own or on a church prayer walk, let's resolve to be good news, to be those who carry the blessings of God in our thoughts, words and actions.

2. **Planning your prayer walk**

Planning a prayer walk is simple:

- Before you gather people, work out the route or general area you're going to walk, cycle or drive. For the main 2012 Games cities, there are some valuable resources created by YWAM's Forever initiative at http://bit.ly/JskM27

- Create a route-map for people to follow. Or tell them to go wherever God leads them, but to stay within a certain geographical area.

- Make sure those who have difficulty walking can still take part in the event, either by praying at base, or by having a short route to walk, with plenty of stopping points.

- Have a wet-weather plan: ensure that people are happy to walk in the rain, or else use maps of the area and pray together somewhere under cover.

- Prepare some ideas of locations or subjects people can pray for while out walking. Since this is a Games prayer walk, suggest places in your local area which are relevant to that theme: sports/leisure centres, big screen site, schools, Police station, council buildings etc.

- Do some research, finding out from the local council and from other churches exactly what activities will be going on during the Torch Relays and the Games, and where they will be happening.

For Games-related prayer topics, see Sections 4, 5 and 7.

3. Getting ready to go out

Since this is a walk of blessing, it is crucial to take time together to receive God's blessing in your own lives before you start walking. We all put barriers up from time to time, not allowing ourselves to truly absorb God's blessings into our own lives. Before we can truly bless others, we need to remove those barriers.

Ask the group to get into twos and pray Aaron's Blessing - *Numbers 6:24-27* - over each other. As they are prayed for, encourage them to consciously welcome into their lives all that this ancient blessing contains.

Also encourage them to invite God's cleansing and empowering in their own lives before they go out, and remind them to put on the full armour of God as they pray together *Ephesians 6:11*.

4. Practicalities of prayer walking

Send people out in twos or small groups, so no-one is walking alone. Groups should only be a maximum of four, so it is easy to hear one another when they stop to pray.

Remind the walkers they need to be sensitive while they're out praying – not trespassing, not standing where they will cause an obstruction, and being considerate to those around them in the way they pray.

5. What to pray for

Remind people to pray with open eyes and ears. Someone once said that prayer walking is 'praying on site with insight'.

The fact of walking or standing in a particular place brings an immediacy to our prayers. We're not just imagining that place from the comfort of our prayer room, we're actually there, seeing it, hearing it, experiencing it, and that means God can speak to us through the things we see and hear there.

Make sure people take a Bible or handout of Bible verses. Our prayers should be informed by our surroundings, but rooted in the word. This is a walk of blessing, but we don't want to just make up the blessings we speak over our communities, we find them in God's Word. Those involved need to know what God's blessings are before they can speak them out.

Get the group to spend time practising turning Scripture into blessing prayers – i.e. 'The Lord is your Shepherd, Castle Street, you shall not be in want' (based on Psalm 23); or 'I speak over this hospital and say blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted' (based on Matthew 5). Other useful Scriptures for this would be: Deuteronomy 28, Ephesians 1:3-14, 3:14-20, Psalm 103.

It's vital to be attentive to the Spirit: God is lavish in His blessing, but He is also strategic. He knows which particular blessings are needed in each place we will go to. So encourage the group to listen to him as they walk, praying the prayers of blessing which He is prompting them to pray.

6. Physical symbols

It can be helpful to have a physical symbol of blessing to use as you walk. For instance, you could take with you some water and sprinkle a little bit on the pavement or brickwork of the places you bless.

7. Finishing the prayer walk

It's always good to debrief after a prayer walk and to share what you've heard God saying. So agree a rendezvous, back at base or elsewhere along the route, and gather about 15 minutes before the end of your time together. Give everyone in the group the opportunity to share, and pray for one another before you go your separate ways.

8. Making it more than a one-off:

Once you've completed the walk, encourage those present to make a habit of walking and blessing the places where they live and work. Perhaps challenge them to adopt a place, to walk it at least once a week and to keep speaking blessing over it.

Section 9: Involving everyone – resources for children and sports groups

Prayer ideas for use with children

The Holy Spirit has been doing amazing work in our generation in inspiring children to pray. Throughout the nations, God is giving groups of children a passion to pray and He is using them mightily. We feel it is extremely important that, as we prepare for the 2012 Games, children should feel that they are part of the Body of Christ and that their prayers matter.

These ideas are for use by those who lead children's groups on either a Sunday or in mid-week groups. They encourage children to pray for the 2012 Games in a fun way and, at the same time, grow in their relationship with the Father.

They can be used for running a one-off prayer event for children specifically based on the Games or over a period of weeks. Or be included in the prayer time of regular weekly sessions.

Training Camp – get fit not just physically but spiritually, and come to know about the Kingdom of God. Warm up exercises and a time of forgiveness in getting rid of the rubbish from their lives - perhaps use dumb bells/weights putting them down, shaping up/in training.

- Listening games/being still and resting in God's presence. Then play soft worship music and ask the Holy Spirit to come and be with the children. Afterwards ask if anyone received words or pictures from God, or ask them to write or paint/draw what God showed them. Link this in with how athletes need not only training but to rest adequately as well. Psalm 46:10 'Be still and know that I am God'.
- Talk about prayer - good and healthy eating - the bible is our spiritual food.
- Have some relevant Bible verses available to help the children in forming their prayers.
- Power of prayer - God hears us and answers us and changes situations. We need to be filled with God's Spirit.
- Getting ready – fitness and prayer changes things
- Triple jump game and relate to Father, Son and Holy Spirit and how all three are linked in our prayers. The Father gives us the desire to pray, we pray in the name of Jesus and through the power of the Holy Spirit who helps us to pray – Ephesians 2:18
- Paper cup telephones to represent the need to spread the message of Jesus through the Games. Pray for all who will be seeking to share Jesus at the Games.
- Protective gear e.g. helmets, gum shields, face masks, shin pads to reflect that we need to wear our spiritual armour each day to ward off attacks from the enemy. Could also relate to sports such as boxing, fencing, wrestling. Psalm 46:1 'God is our protection and our strength. He always helps us in times of trouble'. Ephesians 6:10-18 wear the full armour of God.
- Bring a rucksack, and put various things inside: bottles of water to remind the children that we not only need physical water for our bodies but the living water of the Spirit that Jesus gives us; batteries to represent power and strength from God's Holy Spirit to do the sports and to live our lives; sun tan lotion to cover us up against the rays of the

sun, and to remind that we need God's anointing; First Aid kit re accidents and that we need God's healing in our lives.

Ideas for Activities:

- **Countries taking part –**
  - Making flags of the countries to display as bunting around the room
  - Pictures of children in national dress
  - Paper chains with each country and prayer written on each and linked together
  - Food of the world – taste different foods from around the world and guess which country it is from and say a prayer for that country.
  - Large globe or large floor map of the world and place hands on each of the different countries/continents taking part in the games.
  - Find out where each national team has its training camp and prayer for the towns where they are based at.
  - Design a fabric patchwork wall hanging, with different national flags or national costumes on separate squares and sew together. Fabrics can be obtained through various art and craft magazines/websites.
  - Paper chain people holding hands representing the different nations and write prayers on them.

- **Opening Ceremony** - Decorate a large hall with banners and bunting.
  - Depending on numbers, have the children either in teams or one child representing a country and holding that countries flag.
  - Have all the children process round the hall.
  - Have a time of praise and worship.
  - Have a lighted torch decorated with red, yellow or orange tissue flames walk in, and pretend to light a table top flame lamp, and pray that the light of Jesus might shine brightly at the Games and for God's blessing on the Games and all who take part in them. Pray that the Holy Spirit will come and touch the children as they intercede for the Games.
  - Do something similar for a **Closing Ceremony** but this time have a time of sharing from the children of any words or pictures they have received during the time of prayer and offer prayers of thanks to God, together with a time of worship.

- **Venues –** Large floor map of UK and mark on it all the various locations and what sports are happening there, pray for the local communities living near those venues. What is the nearest venue to where you live? You could arrange a visit and pray for that venue or prayer walk the area with the kids?
- **Athletes**- for their training, that they will resist temptations to cheat or use performance enhancing drugs. Or any hurdles they may have to overcome in relation to obtaining passports, visas, finance and lack of training opportunities. Link with hurdles and jumping games.
- **Olympic Torch –** Carrying the light of Jesus and that Jesus is the Light of the World. Illustrate through glow stick or glow candles stuck on to the top of a kitchen roll and race round a track or course passing it on to another person.
- **Sailing –** make origami boats or boats from junk and write prayers on the sails and then either race the boats across a paddling pool or just float them on the paddling pool.
- **Archery –** target games, use children's dart boards and games, to focus

on targeting our prayers to God. Make paper arrows and throw them.

- **General –**
  - **Parachute prayers** - use a leader to say a prayer and everyone responds as they lift the parachute up by saying: Lord we lift up our prayers to you. Mushroom parachute and pull down behind everyone so that everyone is safely inside the parachute and pray for safety of everyone involved in and at the Games.
  - **Paper plate prayers** – take two paper plates, on the bottom one, stick simple pictures representing six different sports. On the top plate cut out a pie shaped piece, then put the two plates together and secure in the centre with a split pin, so the top plate moves round and reveals the picture underneath for prayer.
  - **Prayers for peace** - at the ancient games there was always a truce during the time of the games. On paper doves write prayers for a peaceful Games, and for peace between all nations.
  - **Security** - God always watches over us. Have pictures of police, police dogs, ambulance, firemen, first aiders, and say thank you prayers for those who will look after us at the Games.
  - **Draw or make a house from building bricks –** pray for the Athletes Homestay Programme and that many families will be blessed through it.
  - **Paper Plane race** - pray for safety for all travelling to and at the Games.
- **Relay prayers –** using a kitchen roll as a baton, stuff prayers inside, then race round a course back to the next person and pass the baton on to them.
- **Ball sports –** cover a football/volleyball/basketball with post-it prayers; or make or purchase a giant size ball and cover with post-it prayers
  - Bounce the Ball, or throw and catch a ball and say a thank you prayer or asking prayer. Link in with how our joyful Father likes to play with us and likes us to have fun.
- **Athletics** – get the children to run on the spot and help them to remember that we are called to run to Jesus with everything. Pray for all athletes taking part that they too might come to know the love of Jesus and that they can run to him with all their worries.
- **Horse jumping –** Have the children pretend to be horses and provide some low obstacles for them to jump over. Sometimes horses pull up short and refuse a jump or knock it down. Sometimes when life gets hard we too might want to stop and not go on. We also, at times, get things wrong and then feel like quitting. Pray that everyone taking part in the Olympics might know strength and stamina to keep going when things get tough. Philippians 4:13 'I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.'
- **Prayer stations –**
  - **Water sports:** Using blue foils/fabrics to represent the water then display objects relating to swimming e.g. goggles, swim hat, or costume, sailing e.g. model sailing boat, pictures of rowing, or pictures of venues where the different events will be held.
  - **Track and field:** Using green foil/fabric to represent the field then display objects relating to the sports e.g. frisbee for discus, box of sand to represent high jump, pole vault, long jump and triple jump, pictures of hammer, shot put and javelin etc
  - **Ball sports**: have various balls on display representing the different ball sports and different bats/rackets used etc.
  - **Prayer dunks/baskets:** Write prayers on a piece of paper, screw it

up into a ball. Attach a hoop to a pole, or use a child's basketball net and dunk your paper ball through the hoop and score a basket!

- **Behind the scenes:** Display lego buildings to represent the different venues, laptop to represent all the administration, police hat to represent security, yellow vests to represent stewards, camera to represent the press and tv coverage, flowers to represent the florists, spanner or hammer to represent the maintenance workers.

- **Gymnastics** – Have a selection of hoops, ribbons and objects to balance on and say prayers around it re co-ordination, agility, balance etc
- **Paralympics** – blindfolded games, and other games e.g. catch with one hand tied behind your back, or hopping races etc to help the children understand and appreciate what it would be like to have a disability e.g. lack of sight, or lack of use of limbs.
- Have the children pair up and either do a three legged race or have one help the other who is blindfolded through an obstacle course. Pray for all the folk who will help the athletes at the games- e.g. trainers, friends, physiotherapists etc.
- Conclude with a time of prayer for the Paralympics and that people will support these games as much as the main Games.
- **More Than Gold** – Remind the children that it is the taking part not the winning that is important! We are all precious in God's eyes. He loves each one of us more than gold. He looks at the heart and not at our abilities or disabilities. Make or purchase 'gold medals' and present one to each child. Isaiah 43:4 'You are precious and honoured in my sight and I love you'.

Sports groups praying for the Games

Traditionally there has been very little cross-over between sports ministry and prayer in the UK Church. The constituencies have been rather different, with many of those most involved in prayer being older and female, while most sports groups are younger and predominantly male. Yet who can pray more passionately and more accurately for sportsmen and sportswomen than those who love sport?

These are ideas to develop as appropriate.

Football/basketball/netball. *Theme*: *praying specific prayers/facing opposition*
Take time to write prayers either on paper or directly onto the ball and pray as it is kicked into the goal/ or shot into a hoop. You could also have a goalie attempting to stop the shots, so that the participants have to keep on trying till it gets in.

Shooting/darts/archery/javelin. *Theme: praying specific prayers*
Set up a target or layout that has multiple specific points for prayer. Then have participants shoot/fire and pray for the point that their dart/arrow lands on.

Relay race. *Theme: teamwork in prayer*
Get into teams to either run, walk or cycle around a track, passing on a written/verbal prayer to each other till the race is complete, achieving the end result together.

Marathon*. Theme: perseverance*
Take the 24/7 prayer idea and turn it into an interactive metaphor. Have people sign up for a number of laps so that the total distance run is achieved by many,

just like hours of 24/7 prayer. This could be included in any community/youth event.

Weights. *Theme: repetition*
Have various dumb bells and light weights available and ask people to write a prayer or memorise a biblical prayer and then repeat it as often as they lift the weight. You could have 'sets' of prayer.

Wearing an athlete's uniform*. Theme: intercession*
Allow participants to put on items of clothing belonging to/or representing certain athletes. Ideas are: shoes, sports shirt, hats etc. Once they are wearing the item they are to pray as if they were that person; either their own prayer or a scripted one.

Pictures of venues. *Theme: praying for locations*
Set up posters/photos of well known sports venues, e.g. local race tracks, football clubs, Olympic competition venues etc. Then have post-it notes available for the participants to stick their prayers for that place on the picture.

Intercessory football. *Theme: wrestling and working together*
Start a game of three-on-three football. Once a goal is scored then you pray together briefly for a topic before continuing the game.

Tennis ball and racket/cricket*. Theme: many voices together*
Have one or two people with a container of tennis balls and a racket/bat. They hit the balls into a crowd, firing more and more, faster and faster. Once the ball is caught the catcher must say a prayer out loud. The idea is that as more balls are fired and caught there is an increase in volume and quantity of prayers prayed. Perhaps this would be a good idea for a time of thanks or praise.

Section 10: Written and Responsive Prayers

Prayer for 2012

O Lord God almighty,
We worship and bless your Holy Name.
We bring the British Isles before you.
Have mercy on us and forgive our foolish ways.
Come to our aid, Father. Cause your will to be done among us.
Come, Lord Jesus; you alone are the Way, the Truth and the Life.
May you be honoured and glorified in our nations.
Come, Holy Spirit; refresh and revive us again.
Draw us after you and let us run together.
In Jesus' wonderful Name.
Amen

Ffald-y-Brenin Trust, 2012

Shine as the flame travels: Blessing Prayer

I/we stand in the mighty Name of Jesus and bless you, (place/region) that you might prosper under the mighty hand of God.

I/we bless you that justice and righteousness might take their proper place within your boundaries. I/we bless you that the favour of the Lord might rest upon you and give you peace.

I/we bless you that the Father's compassion might fall upon your people. I/we bless your poor that they might be lifted up.

I/we bless you that the knowledge of Jesus might come in amongst you like a flood.

I/we bless the people of God in this (place, region), that they might rise up with Servant authority and become a people of blessing.

I/we bless you that the joy of the Lord might be your strength. Amen.

Ffald-y-Brenin Trust, 2012

Responsive prayer based on the Lord's Prayer

Leader: Our Father in Heaven, you are called 'Holy', and you alone are worthy of our worship.

You established the earth on its foundations;

You populated it with tribes and nations;

You set the lonely in families.

All: Eternal Father, we thank you for your world: this family of nations which you have created and named;

Help us to live together in peace and generosity, that the whole earth may resound with your glory.

Beloved Father, we thank you for the people you have put around us in our lives;

Open their eyes to see you, and their hearts to receive you.

Leader: Jesus Christ, you are King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

You stepped from glory into obscurity;

You walked on our broken, sin-stained earth, that it might be healed and made new;

You died to bring hope and you rose to bring life.

All: Jesus, Redeemer, we pray for this nation of ours:

May your Kingdom come to every village, every town and every city, and may your will be done in every area of society.

Jesus, Deliverer, we pray for the place where we live:

May your Kingdom invade every street, every household and every workplace, and may your will be done here, just as it is in Heaven.

Leader: Holy Spirit, you empower Christ's' Body, the Church, to carry the Gospel to the ends of the earth.

You call us to unity;

You comfort us in trials;

You fill us with good gifts.

All: Spirit of Power, we pray for your Church, where it is embattled and under threat;

Give your people their daily bread, that all their needs will be met in you.

We pray for the Church in our local community;

Help us to walk in love and forgiveness, that our lives may tell the story of Jesus to the world around us.

Leader: Sovereign Lord, you order the affairs of this world according to your

plans and purposes.

> **You determine times and seasons by your wisdom;**
> **You call things into being by your word;**
> **You work all things together for the good of your loved-ones.**

All: Lord of History, we thank you for the many moments of celebration planned for this nation over these coming years;

> Lead us not into the time of trial, but use these events to bring joy and hope to this nation.
>
> We pray for all those involved in organising and running these events;
>
> Deliver us from the evil one, that every element of the planning may be threaded through with your will.

Leader: One True God, your works are perfect and your ways are just.

> **Your presence is life;**
> **Your presence is power;**
> **Your presence is fullness of joy.**

All: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, we choose to submit ourselves to your will and your ways.

> We welcome your purposes for this nation,
>
> We welcome your presence in our communities, our churches, our homes and ourselves.
>
> For yours is the Kingdom, the power and the glory,
>
> Forever and ever, Amen.

Prayer for our everyday lives

Lord, when we see greatness in sport, on TV, in life in general.

When we see great names perform or compete, when we see great achievements.

We pray that this would encourage and inspire us to excel in our own spheres of life so that we might exert influence and see transformation for the sake of your Kingdom.

Help us realise that we can do nothing of Kingdom value by ourselves but only as we are dependent upon, and are energised by your Holy Spirit.

Help us to consider everything we have attained in this life as loss compared with the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus our Lord to whom we give all the glory.

We seek greatness for His Kingdom in every context in which you have called us to serve.

In His name which is the name above every name – Jesus Christ the King –

Amen

Fixing our Eyes on Jesus

Leader 1: 'Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith.' (Hebrews 12:1-2)

Leader 2: As we anticipate the coming Olympic Games, recognising the example of those in training to compete, we pray that we may be ready as we respond to God's call on our lives.

Let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. As athletes make sure they are ready to compete, Lord may our lives not be cluttered by wrong burdens or sin.

***All*: As we fix our eyes on Jesus, may He forgive us and take our burdens from us.**

Leader 1: 'We are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses'.

Leader 2: As athletes have coaches and supporters who encourage them; Lord may we receive support from you, from the Bible and from other Christians.

***All*: As we fix our eyes on Jesus, may we learn from His example. May we receive encouragement and be ready to support those around us.**

Leader 1: 'Let us run the race marked out for us'.

Leader 2: As athletes know the course they are to run, may we have confidence to know God's calling upon our lives each day.

***All*: As we fix our eyes on Jesus, may He be our guide, showing us how to live each day.**

Leader 1: 'Let us run with perseverance'.

Leader 2: As athletes sometimes feel like giving up, may we be willing to keep going, even when its tough.

***All*: As we fix our eyes on Jesus, may we remember all you endured, and be encouraged not to give up.**

May we live with our eyes fixed on Jesus, not growing weary or losing heart, but running with perseverance. Amen

This could easily be done with just one leader reading both the scripture and the invitation.

Prayer for the 2012 Games

Father God, I offer myself to you now and thank you for your heart of grace, open to receive my prayers.

I need to bring to you people around the world who at this moment are preparing for this year's Olympic and Paralympic Games. Please protect each one with your Spirit's power, and encourage every individual to enter into the events of 2012 with a spirit of unity and peace.

I pray for those who are working to prepare Olympic venues in the UK, that they may know they are investing their talents and energy into that which is potentially life changing.

I pray for the organisers of the Games, at every level, that they will display integrity in every area of their work to every nation taking part.

I pray for the security of the athletes and the venues. Please cover everything and everyone with your protection and power.

I pray for the athletes as they prepare themselves physically and mentally, and seek to achieve their best performance.

I pray for the Church in the UK as we mobilise ourselves to lead the community in celebration. Father, give us faith to take hold of this amazing opportunity to build your Kingdom.

Thank you for my faith, which is worth MORE THAN GOLD, and enable me to engage with the 2012 Games through prayer. Amen.

Prayer for those engaged in mission and service during the Olympics 2012

Lord,

Help us to be as single minded and focused as the athlete at the starting line

Help us to persevere like the athlete hitting the final circuit of the track

Help us to find in you the strength we need to reach that winning line

Forgive us when our focus is on others rather than on you and your Kingdom, when we are too easily diverted from the path you have set before us, and when we trust in our own strength rather than the power and strength of your Spirit

Fill us now with your Holy Spirit and empower us to serve you;

And help us to run the race for your glory alone.

Send us out that we might see your Kingdom come and lives transformed.

In the name of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit.

Amen

Prayer for our everyday lives

Lord, when we see greatness in sport, on TV, in life in general.

When we see great names perform or compete, when we see great achievements.

We pray that this would encourage and inspire us to excel in our own spheres of life so that we might exert influence and see transformation for the sake of your Kingdom.

Help us realise that we can do nothing of Kingdom value by ourselves but only as we are dependent upon, and are energised by, your Holy Spirit.

Help us to consider everything we have attained in this life as loss compared with the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus our Lord to whom we give all the glory.

We seek greatness for His Kingdom in every context in which you have called us to serve.

In His name which is the name above every name – Jesus Christ the King –

Amen

Resources

There are many initiatives and organisations providing prayer themes and resources during the 2012 year of prayer including:

www.prayer-alert.net - a weekly email focussing on items in the news

www.hopeprayer.org.uk - including videos and other prayer resources

www.24-7prayer.co.uk/kingdomcome - resources from 24-7prayer

www.alpha.org/kingdomcome - Alpha prayer resources

www.prayerforum.org - stories, resources and national prayer calendar for 2012

More than Gold Prayer Team
January 2012