

# Harvest Service



**Bidale Phintsire, 56, an agro-pastoralist in Malle Woreda, South Omo, Ethiopia, shows his scorched maize crop. Bidale has six children. (Credit: Christian Aid)**

## Call to Worship

Have a basket of oranges (Bunches of grapes or several packages of fair trade sweets work equally well)

Begin by giving an orange to pre-selected volunteers sitting throughout the congregation. Offer them an orange, then they will give a section to people in their area. They will share until everyone has a bit.

Voice 1: Funny thing about sharing. The more you practice, the more natural it gets. The more natural it gets, the more possibilities you see. Until, bit by bit, a little at a time, before you know it – everybody has what they need.

Voice 2: So let's share - our time right now, the hopes and dreams we have for the future and the forgiveness we need to move on. Let's share all the gifts we've been given by God. They were never meant for hoarding, but for helping out and handing on. Let us worship God on this Harvest Sunday.

## What If... Prayer

What if the whole world saw food as a community asset instead of a commodity?

What if our economy redistributed wealth like a healthy body uses fuel to ensure every part of it flourishes?

What if the church took on the challenge to be Christ's body here on earth with unfettered commitment?

What if the barriers fell, the blinkers came off, the tectonic plates holding the 'me and mine' mentality shifted until there was only us – and the powerful words 'You give them something to eat' became common sense because what else do you do with hunger, but share it away?

God, who pours good things into and over and through this world and its people, when our wants turn the flow of your gifts to a trickle, take our hearts by the hand and lead us back to your path. Teach us to walk lightly, sharing all we have. Today, as we gather to celebrate that harvest has come here, we are mindful that there are other places on our planet home where hunger came instead. May mindful grow into helpful. Help us see our yield as your gift to the world and welcome others to share our table.

## **(prayer, continued)**

Today, as we gather to celebrate harvest, we are mindful that there are places here in the UK and across the globe where crops have been seriously affected by extreme weather. For many the harvest has not been plentiful, and for many more it hasn't come at all. Instead there is only the prospect of hunger.

We pray especially for our sisters and brothers in the Horn of Africa, where famine stalks, stopping any harvest they hoped to see; where the triple threat of Covid, conflict and climate change combine to strangle hope. The most vulnerable suffer first and fiercest and, without sharing compassion, millions will die – each one loved by you and family to us. God, in your mercy, set us in solidarity, unite us in hope. Famine is drying all hope, so we ask that you rain generosity and justice onto our fields.

## **Food for Thought**

They were always fed – the 5000 on the hill, the 12 in the upper room, his friends on the beach. Fed to bursting and there were leftovers besides. No skimping anywhere to be seen.

And he was always sitting at table with people he claimed as his own - the tax collectors and sinners, Mary and Martha, Zacchaeus, and his friends on the Emmaus Road. Wherever he was, people were fed. Wherever you found him, he was sharing bread. What a model for us today.

When we share together, all sorts of feeding takes place – minds open, hearts and spirits sit down together, the present is sated and the future is nourished. When we share like family at your table, we meet and remember who Jesus was and who he calls us to be. Communion, eating together, sharing with unconstrained generosity and justice, that is the harvest that feeds Christ's vision.

## **Talking Points**

Christian Aid's vision is of a world free from poverty and hunger – where everyone has enough. In the face of famine, seeing it fuelled by the triple threat of Covid, conflict and climate change, it could be tempting to shake your head and sadly say 'Impossible! That's too big a mountain to climb.' We need to focus on charity at home, but we share a planet home. Across the Horn of Africa, 18.4m people are regularly going hungry.

7.1 million children are malnourished, including 2 million severely malnourished children. Projections indicate that 25.3 million people in the Horn of Africa will face high levels of food insecurity in the coming months ... our sisters and brothers.

But we are called to be united by hope – a hope that will not be silent or stalled. And we must not be seduced by the word impossible. We can make a difference. We can save lives. In 2011, the world saw famine stalking, heard the cries but didn't recognise the danger in time, did not respond, listened to 'impossible' and millions died.

In 2017, it came again, but this time, the world moved quickly – coordinated efforts, and millions were saved. We united in hope, came together, said 'it is possible' and made it happen. And today?

Today, we celebrate harvest together as the body of Christ. We gather to celebrate and give thanks for the gifts we have been given. We gather to celebrate a love that calls us family, and family share. Body of Christ, Family of God, anything is possible when we stand together.

## **Christian Aid's Focus**

Working through local partners, Christian Aid is responding to the severe drought in Ethiopia and Kenya and helping over 300,000 people by:

- repairing wells
- handing out water purification kits
- providing cash support
- trucking water to drought-affected communities
- providing fodder and medicine to keep livestock alive

## **How You Can Help**

- £15 could provide seeds and farming tools for one household.

- £30 could buy hygiene kits to provide clean drinking water for 6 households of 5.

- £50 could provide food for a household of five.

- Sign our online petition to send a clear message to the Prime Minister that we are #HungryForAction.

**[caid.org.uk/harvest](https://caid.org.uk/harvest)**

