



Let's pray:

April 2023

How can we pray well as we head into this new month?

 **home
for good**

A close-up photograph of a child's hands playing with colorful building blocks. The child is wearing a green sweater. The background is blurred, showing more blocks and a white surface. A green banner is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing the word 'Foundations' in white text.

Foundations

One of my favourite things about my job at Home for Good is that I get to be involved in our Foundations course. The Foundations course is for anybody, anywhere, who would like to find out more about fostering, adoption and supported lodgings for teenagers. It's a six week online course, led by a few members of the Home for Good team and a group of fantastic volunteer Champions who bring information and teaching to life with stories, experiences and wisdom. Every few months, we meet around 30 households; some are people who are just taking their very first step in thinking about welcoming a child or teenager into their family, others have been walking their journey for some time.

After one of our courses ended last year, we received some feedback from a participant who told us that she had entered the course with her mind made up: she wanted to adopt. But after taking part in Foundations, learning about the experiences of children and young people and learning about the different roles that people can play, she changed her mind. She finished the course feeling inspired to pursue fostering.

Everyone's journey is unique, and it's a joy to hear how the course has helped people consider what their next step might be. And let's be clear: there's no 'best' between fostering, adoption and supported lodgings, and we have no preference when it comes to supporting enquirers – our goal is to enable individuals and families to make a well-informed choice that's right for them, allowing them to provide care for a child or teenager. But this wasn't the first time we've received feedback like this, and every time we have, I'm struck by the significance.

It takes courage to allow your mind to be changed.

It takes sacrifice to step away from the picture you'd been imagining.

It takes faith to explore something new and unknown.

This month we celebrate Easter; our God, in human form, dying as the ultimate act of love and being raised to life again. If we use this time to look back on the life lived before the cross, we can see that often when Jesus met and interacted with people, it led to them changing their minds about something.

Near the beginning of his ministry, Jesus approached some fishermen. They were at the lake catching fish, doing their job. After a brief encounter with Jesus, they drop their nets and they go with him (Matthew 4: 12-22).

We meet a young boy on a hill who had a plan for his lunch – two fish and five loaves of bread. A planned meal for one became a feast for thousands (Mark 6:30-44).

I don't imagine that when Peter climbed into a boat with his friends he was planning to walk on water – but then Jesus invited him to join him (Matthew 14:22-33).

In what, for me, is one of the most powerful stories, we meet a woman who has been caught in adultery and brought to stand before a crowd in humiliation. She's about to be punished, the crowd is ready to have her killed. Jesus speaks a few words, and then bends to write something in the sand. Each of those individuals who were ready to throw a stone changed their minds in that moment and left (John 8:1-11).

It doesn't sound like Zacchaeus was expecting Jesus to invite himself over to his home. But he climbed down from his tree and welcomed him in, to the shock of others around him. And his encounter with Jesus led him to repay those he had cheated and give to those who had less (Luke 19:1-9).

Peter was initially certain that he didn't want Jesus anywhere near his feet. But after a firm word from his friend Jesus, he went from zero to 100, inviting Jesus to wash his hands and head too (John 13:1-20).

**It takes courage to allow your mind to be changed.
It takes sacrifice to step away from the picture you'd been imagining.
It takes faith to explore something new and unknown.
But sometimes these are the places Jesus invites us to join him in.**

Hearing this individual's story has reminded me how tightly I hold to some of the things in my life; my ideas, my plans, my path. And so as we join together in prayer this month, I ask this question as much of myself as I do of you: how open are you to allowing your mind to be changed?



Points for Prayer



1

Let's pray for children and young people in care who right now are waiting for the right place to call home. Pray that more individuals and families will be inspired to explore fostering, adoption or supported lodgings – perhaps having not considered opening their home in this way before. Let's pray boldly that homes will be found for children and teenagers where they'll feel safe and loved and where they'll be supported to thrive.

2

Let's pray for individuals currently on a journey towards fostering, adoption or supported lodgings. Pray that Jesus will meet them and feel near to them when plans change, when new ideas arise, in times of waiting and in times of uncertainty. Give thanks and praise God for the fact that throughout it all, He is constant and faithful.

3

Let's pray for those who lead our country and our communities. Let's pray that they will feel challenged and inspired to prioritise children, teenagers and families; that major strides will be taken to ensure that our children receive the best possible care and our families have access to the best possible support.

4

Let's pray for our churches; let's give thanks for those who weave new ideas and new vision into long-lasting traditions and rhythms. Let's pray that more and more churches in the UK will take steps towards being more welcoming and understanding towards children and young people with care experience and their families. Let's pray for boldness when that looks like running kids church differently, switching up how they do youth club or changing their services and spaces.



Prayer challenge

This month, we challenge you to do something that scares you a little! It's really important that you choose a challenge that is safe, healthy and not so scary that it's going to put you in harm's way – we're talking healthy nervousness, not genuine danger. Perhaps it's working up the courage to invite a new friend to coffee, joining a choir, wearing that jumper that you felt might be a little too bright, dipping your toe in the freezing cold sea.

Invite God into those moments – in their own way, they too require courage, sacrifice and faith. Pray that these moments will help build your trust in Him and in His love and care for you, so that should those bigger, mind-changing moments come, you can remember that He is present and faithful.