

# Let's Pray: February 2022

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



## A name is a powerful thing.

When I was a teenager, my Spanish class at school took a trip to Spain. We each stayed with a host family who would help us improve our vocabulary and pronunciation and share with us their food, lifestyle and culture. My Spanish wasn't the best, but I was confident I could manage the basics – hello, how are you, please and thank you, that kind of thing.

I remember arriving at the door of our host family's home and receiving the warmest and friendliest of greetings. I was welcomed into the house, directed to a chair, offered a drink. We began to chat, and I quickly became aware that the name the family had been given for me was my full name, Rosemary, which I never use.

"Me llamo Rosie," I told them, in what I suppose now must have been a fairly broad Northern Irish accent.

"¿Qué?". I was met with a bewildered look.

"Me llamo Rosie," I repeated, before grappling for a little more information. "No es... Rosemary."

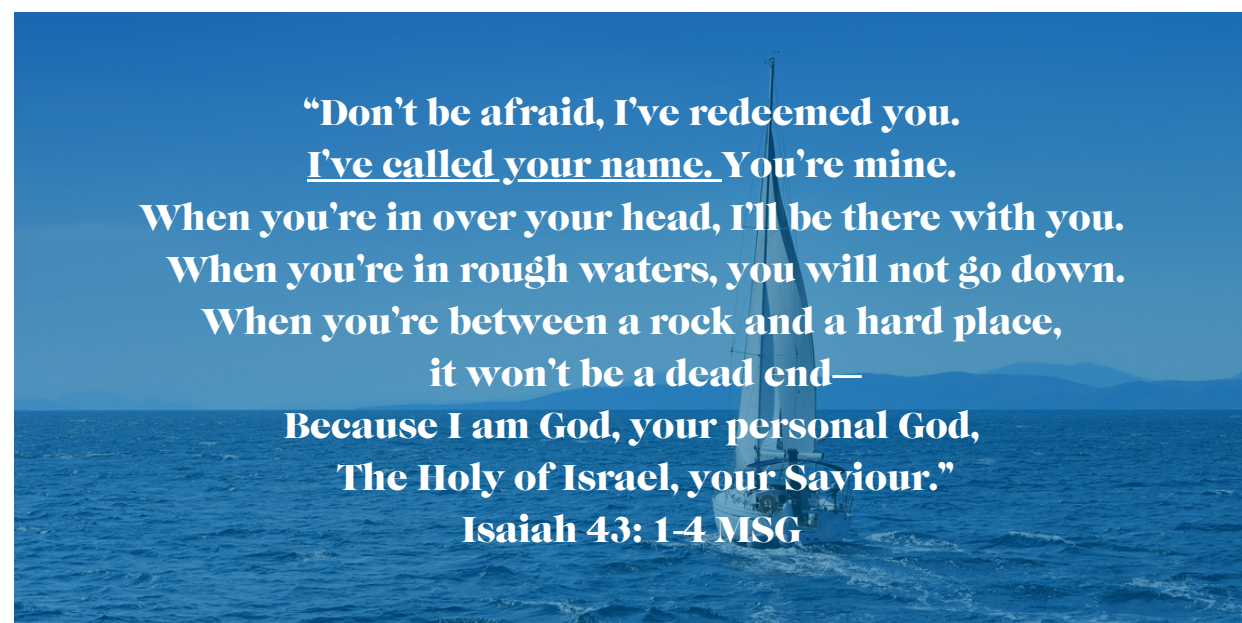
My host tried her best to interpret what I was trying to tell her, but my limited vocabulary, along with my inability to pronounce my name in anything remotely close to a Spanish accent, meant we ended up in a back-of-forth of vaguely similar, but not quite right, names.

"¿Brucie?" she tried after an awkwardly long interaction. I was defeated. "Eh... Sí," I lied.

So, for the remaining five days of the trip, I was Brucie – except, I wasn't. It took a few calls of that name for me to realise it was my attention she wanted. It didn't jump out in the middle of a quick-paced Spanish sentence in the way my real name would have. The woman I was staying with was so kind, beautifully hospitable and a fantastic cook, but because she never really knew my name, I felt like we never really connected. I felt that she never really knew me.



A name is a powerful thing. Names allow for connection. They identify us, giving away something of who we are. Often this is a beautiful and positive thing as we build relationships with one another, but it also has its risks. It's because of this that we are incredibly careful about how we use names at Home for Good, and why you might find that foster carers, supported lodgings hosts or adoptive parents choose to only share an initial when talking about a child, or why they might change their own names on their social media profiles. It's why some of the names in this very prayer resource, taken from stories from our network, have been changed or shortened to protect anonymity.



Isaiah is a book that reveals the magnitude of God's heart and character. Through Isaiah, God demands righteousness and justice among and for His people, which at times means calling out where Israel have gone in the wrong direction. And through Isaiah, God comforts His children. He makes it clear to them that He is a compassionate, loving and merciful Father. In these verses in chapter 43, He promises to be close when the path ahead is unclear, to sustain when things are overwhelming and to provide a route out of difficulty and struggle. Why? Because that's who He is.

God's magnitude and power is illustrated in these verses alongside a sign of intimacy. His calming of fear seems to be directly linked to His knowing of names. He knows us. He can connect with us. He can identify us. He knows, more than anyone else ever has or ever will, exactly who we are.



He knows **Cathy** and her two birth daughters, Holly and Megan, and He was there in their spare bedroom with them as they prepared it for Jamie's arrival. He knows Jamie, and knows that at the age of two, Jamie had already lived with four different families.



He knows **Selam** by name, and knows, in unimaginable detail, her story of travelling to the UK as an unaccompanied young person. He knows her foster carers **Sarah and Graham** who fought for her to be able to stay.



He knows the name of **Louise**, an adopted young person who recently met her birth father having felt there was a gap in her life. He knows and is close to **Erin**, Louise's mum, who is supporting her daughter to explore and navigate this part of her story.



He knows **B**'s name, and He walks alongside her as she journeys through life as a care-experienced adult.

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This year in the UK, around 35,000 children and young people will enter the care system. That's 95 children every day.

It can be easy to feel lost in the numbers sometimes – but each number represents a name, a life and a story. This month, let's pray for children, teenagers and families by name – whether that's a full name, an initial, or a name created to keep identity safe – remembering that our powerful and mighty yet personal God knows, loves and is close to each one of them.



# Points for Prayer

- Pray for Jamie, and for other children who like him have experienced many moves in a short period of time. Pray that the right home will be found for Jamie, where he can settle and experience the stability and consistency that will help him to thrive.
- Pray for Holly and Megan, and for other children like them, as they learn how to live alongside a new fostered sibling. Pray that they as children might be able to offer the child who has joined their family a unique and beautiful kind of hospitality as they play together, share their belongings, enjoy family activities and grow to understand one another.
- Pray for Selam, and for teenagers who have journeyed to the UK in search of safety. Pray that they will be welcomed into families who will care for them, support them and advocate for them.
- Pray for Louise as she navigates a new relationship with her birth father and the rollercoaster of emotions that this experience might bring. Pray for adoptive parents like Erin as they help to grow and affirm their child's sense of identity and their understanding of their life story.
- Pray for B, giving thanks that she belongs to a family and a community who love her, support her and recognise all she has to offer. Pray that churches around the UK will consider how they too can provide a place of welcome, safety and belonging to care-experienced children, teenagers and adults.

## Prayer challenge: remember the name

This month we have a challenge for you: Learn a new name. Is there someone in your school you've never been introduced to? Perhaps a new person has started attending your church? Is there anyone in your workplace you haven't had the opportunity to meet yet? Do you know everyone on your street?

Whoever it might be – learn that name, perhaps write it down, and pray for them this month. Lift them up in prayer to God, who knows each of us by name.