



**Let's pray:**

**January 2023**

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



# Great plans. Greater God

2024 is here! It's a new year and with a new year comes endless possibilities. I am personally very excited for the year ahead and all the potential adventures in store.

In the leadup to the new year you may have had friends and family ask you a question along the lines of, "have you got any new year resolutions?"

If you are like me, you have probably got a few ideas for resolutions. This year, for instance, I plan on running more consistently. Despite the resolutions, however, if you're even more like me, you will know that most new year resolutions are usually not maintained.

This seems to be the cycle of things for me, and perhaps for you too? At the start of each year, we set goals and plans, but often these goals and plans fade away. Now, some of the plans just fade away quietly in the background and we don't care all too much, but some plans and dreams can cause us a whole world of emotions when they do not work out as intended.

As I reflect on my plans and dreams for this year, I am reminded of two verses I find especially encouraging. They are Jeremiah 29:11 and Proverbs 16:9.

## **Jeremiah 29:11 says this:**

For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. - Jeremiah 29:11 (NIV)

The remarkable thing about this verse is that in its context it is a promise made by God to a people whose lives were not working out at all as they had hoped. The Israelites had been conquered and taken off into exile to Babylon. They were a people with no home, little hope and who could no longer make plans or dream dreams. Yet, **God promises them that whilst they may have no plans, He does, and His plans for them are wonderful.**





Off the back of that **Proverbs 16:9** says:

We can make our plans, but the Lord determines our steps. - Proverbs 16:9 (NLT)

This might sound discouraging! I mean, my plans seem amazing, my dreams sound wonderful to me! What if my plans and dreams don't work out? What do I do then? What if God's plans for my life aren't things I'll like? It could leave us anxious and wary of our future and the year ahead.

But I want to encourage you that **God's plans for me and you are far greater than our own plans**. We know that because of who He is – He is faithful, loving and kind. So, as we go into the year ahead, may I encourage you to hold loosely to those new year resolutions and 'only' your plans for the year ahead, and trust God with what His plans are.

I mentioned earlier that for the Israelites, when God promised them a wonderful future, it must have been difficult to see any hope. They were experiencing challenges and were far from home. They were unable to hope, plan or dream for the future. There are people today in this country who may feel the same way. They could be your next-door neighbour, your friend, or even a family member. For some, it is incredibly difficult to make plans, to dream dreams or to trust that God will keep His promises.

This may be especially true for some children and young people in care who don't have stability, who might not be able to make plans or pursue some of the things they may dream of because they do not know what the new year has in store for them.





The difference that having a place to call home - a stable environment and a supportive family - could make for these children is remarkable. That is what we at Home for Good hope for, pray for and work towards. We believe the church has a key role to play in making this a possibility.

**Luke 18:16 says this:**

But Jesus called the children to him and said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. - Luke 18:16 (NIV)

The context of this verse is that those who were hearing Jesus speak kept on bringing children to Him, but His disciples rebuked these people and turned them away. Jesus shows His caring heart by inviting the children to come to Him.

The Church (globally, and locally) is to be Jesus' body on earth - we are to think, speak and act just as He would have us act. This means that just as He was warm, accepting and welcoming to the children in Luke 18, in a society where the norm was otherwise, so we are called to be. This, we believe, is especially true for children and young people with care experience.





# Points for Prayer

- 1. Let's pray** to the God of wonderful plans for children and young people with care experience. Let's pray that they would have stability that means they can dream and begin to step into what God has made each of them for.
- 2. Let's pray** for this generation of children and young people with care experience, that it will be characterised by vision, ambition and a pursuit of fullness of life.
- 3. Let's pray** for families who love and are raising children and young people with an experience of care, that they will have wisdom that enables children and young people to thrive and succeed and to champion all the different ways that could look.
- 4. Thank God** for the amazing creativity displayed in humans – each uniquely formed and crafted with skills, talents, gifts and calling. Thank God for those in your life for whom you're grateful. Let's thank God that the Bible promises that each and every child is created in the image of God, His work of art (Ephesians 2:10) and full of potential – let's pray that 2024 sees more of that potential realised and grown.
- 5. Let's pray** for those who at the start of this year are still waiting, for a stable fostering family, host or adoptive home. Let's pray for hope to rise. Let's pray for a responsive church across the UK who could step in and play their part.