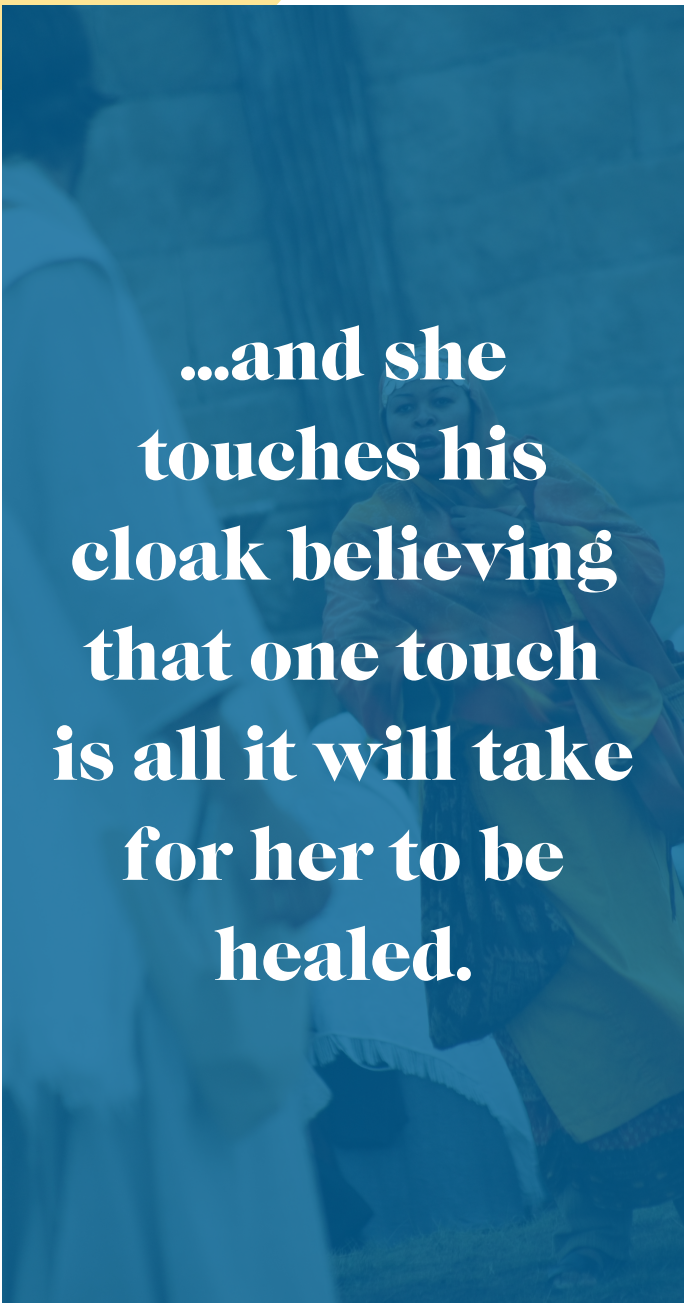


Let's Pray: November 2021

Children who wait

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

One of my favourite stories in the Bible is that of the woman who touches Jesus' cloak in Mark 5. Jesus is on his way to the home of a synagogue leader whose daughter is dying. A huge crowd is following, 'pressing around him' (v24).



**...and she
touches his
cloak believing
that one touch
is all it will take
for her to be
healed.**

Among them is a woman who has been bleeding for 12 years. We read that 'she had suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors and had spent all she had, yet instead of getting better she grew worse' (v26). The woman approaches Jesus amid the hustle and bustle of the crowd as they rush to where the sick girl lies, and she touches his cloak believing that one touch is all it will take for her to be healed.

I personally can't begin to imagine what this woman had lived through, though I know it's an experience not far from that of many living with long-term afflictions today.

Years of waiting, under the care of many different professionals, none of whom had been able to provide her what she needed.

The line that I love in this story comes just after the woman is healed upon touching Jesus' clothes.

He stops in the crowd to the disbelief of his followers and looks for the woman, asking who touched him. Verse 32 tells us she appears at Jesus' feet and **'tells him the whole truth.'**

It's possible that I'm reading between the lines a little, but I think that sentence carries weight.

She doesn't rush a quick explanation, she doesn't skip over the details; she tells him the whole truth. I wonder how much her 'whole truth' consisted of, after 12 years of waiting, countless professionals and still no answers?

Despite the pressing crowd, the confusion of his followers and the urgent need ahead of him, Jesus stops. He gives this woman the attention she deserves, attention she has been lacking for years. **He listens to, understands and honours her whole truth.**

Although not identical, the woman's position resonates with those of children and young people across the UK, many of whom have been waiting longer than they should for the right place to call home, often under the care of many different professionals who haven't yet been able to find them the right family. This includes Black children and those of other ethnic minorities, children over the age of four, children with disabilities or health needs and children who are part of sibling groups. Each one of these children is a precious individual, with unique gifts and interests that make them who they are, absolutely bursting with potential and purpose. **Each one of these children carries with them a whole truth of their own.**

While we seek to find a home for every child, Home for Good is particularly passionate about ensuring that children who wait the longest are placed in families – whether that's a foster or adoptive family, a kinship arrangement or supported lodgings – where they can thrive; where they are supported and encouraged to fulfil their potential, and **where their whole story is listened to, understood and honoured.**



Will you join us this month in praying for the children who are waiting?

Points for Prayer

- Pray for those **children who even now are waiting for the right home**, either through foster care, adoption or supported lodgings. This includes: Black and other ethnic minority children; children over the age of four and teenagers; sibling groups; and children with disabilities or medical needs. Let's pray for them as unique individuals, thanking God for the stories, gifts and interests that make them who they are, and the potential and purpose in each one of them.
- Pray boldly that **more people will step forward**, with the right skills and in the right places, to be a foster or adoptive family or to care for a teenager through supported lodgings, so that no child waits disproportionately because of the colour of their skin, their age, their disability or medical needs or the fact that they have brothers and/or sisters.
- Pray for the **policy-shapers and decision-makers** whose work has an enormous impact on the lives of children waiting for the right place to call home. Pray for those in Government, and those involved in the Review of Children's Social Care in England, as they work to address racial disparity and seek better outcomes for the children they are responsible for.
- Pray as well for the **social workers** who are working on the ground, often managing heavy caseloads and working long hours to find safe and loving homes for the children who wait the longest. These people have the power to make a transformational difference; let's pray that they are fuelled and driven by hope.




Creative Prayer Idea **- pray between the lines**

When it comes to vulnerable children and families, the news can often feel overwhelming and hard to take in. While there are positive stories to celebrate, all too often we are made aware of the pain and the waiting that children and young people face. It can be difficult to see the individual, the name, the story behind the headlines and statistics. But we know that behind the figures and percentage signs are real people, each of whom carry a unique story.

As we pray this month for children and young people in care, and particularly those who are waiting the longest for the foster or adoptive home that's best for them, we invite you to pray between the lines of those news articles and headlines.

If you can, print out a few of the following news articles which have been published by different news outlets over the past few months. If you haven't access to a printer, write a few of the headlines out by hand. Grab a pen, perhaps of a contrasting colour, or some post-it notes. Begin to write prayers for the individual children and young people represented in each story. Use the prayer points listed above, write prayers of your own and add words, pictures or bible verses as you pray. Pray as specifically as you can, remembering that each child carries with them their own unique 'whole truth.'


Vulnerable Children in the News



Universal credit cut
will lead to more UK
children in care –
Guardian, 26
September



Children's
Commissioner for
England calls for
urgent improvements
to Care System –
Children & Young
People Now, 21
September



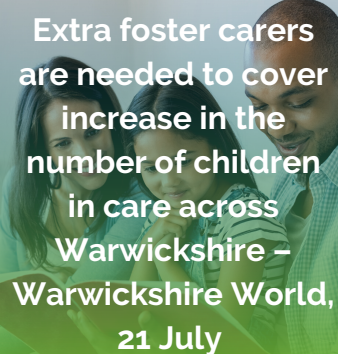
Covid-19:
Pandemic had
severe impact
on young
people – BBC
News Northern
Ireland, 26
August



Crisis in children's
services in
England is
shocking if not
surprising –
Guardian, 11
August




Children in care:
Lack of secure
accommodation
'scandalous' –
BBC News, 30
July



Extra foster carers
are needed to cover
increase in the
number of children
in care across
Warwickshire –
Warwickshire World,
21 July



Average length
of care
proceedings at
nine-year high –
Community Care,
29 June



Children's
services in
England shaky
as Jenga tower
– Guardian, 17
June



Concerns for
child migrants as
Kent County
Council hits
capacity – BBC
News, 14 June