



Let's Pray: October 2021 Thanksgiving

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

October is a month of thanksgiving and celebration, as we acknowledge and mark a number of dates dedicated to raising awareness, celebrating and honouring specific people!


October is **Black History Month**. We at Home for Good acknowledge and **celebrate** individuals, families and churches from the Black community who have stepped up to care for vulnerable children in sacrificial ways, and who continue to make a transformational difference in the lives of vulnerable children by embodying hospitality, generosity and community.

October also brings us **Kinship Care Week, beginning 4 October**, and **National Adoption Week from 18 – 23**. We mark these weeks to remember and thank to those who welcome, love and care for children and young people through kinship care and adoption, and **celebrate** the stories of all those who play their part in helping children feel safe, supported and that they belong.

- **Black History Month**; all month
- **Kinship Care Week**; 4-10 Oct
- **National Adoption Week**; 18-23 Oct



I don't know if 'celebrate' is a word you would associate with your prayer life, your faith or your Father in Heaven. We can slip into only viewing God as a solemn character, and equate our reverence with sombreness. Sometimes we can underestimate the joy God has in His people. But Zephaniah 3: 17 illustrates for us a God who celebrates:



**The Lord your God is with you,
the Mighty Warrior who saves.
He will take great delight in you;
in His love He will no longer rebuke you,
but will rejoice over you with singing.**
Zephaniah 3: 17 NIV

Our God who is with us, who saves us, takes DELIGHT in His children. He REJOICES over us with singing. He CELEBRATES us. Not because of anything we've done, but because we belong to Him.

What do you imagine that looks like – God celebrating?

What does his joyful singing over you sound like?

What would it look like to join with God in celebrating His people?

May you know today how deeply loved you are by God; and may the thought of Him celebrating you, exactly as you are, bring you joy. And as we think of God rejoicing over us, let's join Him in celebration, lifting prayers of praise and thanksgiving for those in our lives, our communities, our society and our world. God's delight in us is not bound to particular days, weeks or months, but is eternal, unconditional and inexplicable. As we mark Black History Month, Kinship Care Week and National Adoption week, may we begin an ongoing practice of celebrating, delighting in and giving thanks for others – remembering those who so often go unrecognised and undervalued.

Points for Prayer

Let's join God in **celebrating individuals from the Black community** who are making a difference in the lives of vulnerable children. Give thanks for Black foster carers, adoptive parents, kinship carers, supported lodgings hosts and others who raise and love the children in their care, showing generosity and hospitality as they walk alongside children and young people and provide them with safety, stability and belonging. Celebrate and give thanks for the communities and networks that wrap around families with support, nurturing children and young people and cheering them on.

We know that **Black children are among those who wait the longest** for an adoptive family. But we also know this reality doesn't define them; each one of these children is unique, fearfully and wonderfully made in the image of God and bursting with potential. Let's thank God for these children, and celebrate their identity and their stories, their interests and hobbies, their skills and talents and their passions, hopes and dreams.

Let's join God in **celebrating grandparents, aunts and uncles, older siblings, other relatives, friends, neighbours and others** who care for children not theirs by birth. Give thanks to God for the stability they provide children by enabling them to remain part of a familiar community and environment. We know that caring for children who have had a tricky start comes with challenges as well as joys – let's thank God for the strength and resilience many kinship carers show in loving the children in their care, often without the support they need, and sometimes while experiencing the loss of a friend or relative themselves.

Thank God for adults who, by welcoming a child or sibling group who cannot return to their birth family, offer them the stability, permanence and love that all children need. Let's also remember **others involved in the lives of adopted children and young people** – birth family, social workers and other professionals. Let's pray for children and young people who are adopted, and those who are still waiting for family.



Creative Prayer Idea

I don't know what comes to your head when you hear the word 'celebrate.' Balloons? Music? Party poppers? For me, it's easy: cake.

I love to bake. I love that it can be a quiet, reflective and meditative practice. However, I know that for some of my friends and family, baking is chaotic and messy, with a looming question of 'what am I going to be left with when this is over? And will it even be edible?'

My prayers can often take similar styles. Sometimes prayer life looks like structured rhythms that bring peace and stillness; other times my prayers are messy spills of words, emotions and pleas. So it makes sense to me that the act of baking can often feel like embodied prayer – and I'd love to invite you to explore prayer through baking this month! You can use the prayer points above to guide you, or pray for something or someone else. You may want to do this with others near you and share and pray out loud, but feel free to make this a solo activity and pray silently if you'd prefer.

So, pop your apron on and dig out your favourite recipe! If you're not sure where to begin, here are a few of my favourites (plus a couple of family-friendly recipes for those of you who will have some little helpers!). Do be aware of any allergies or dietary requirements before you get started.

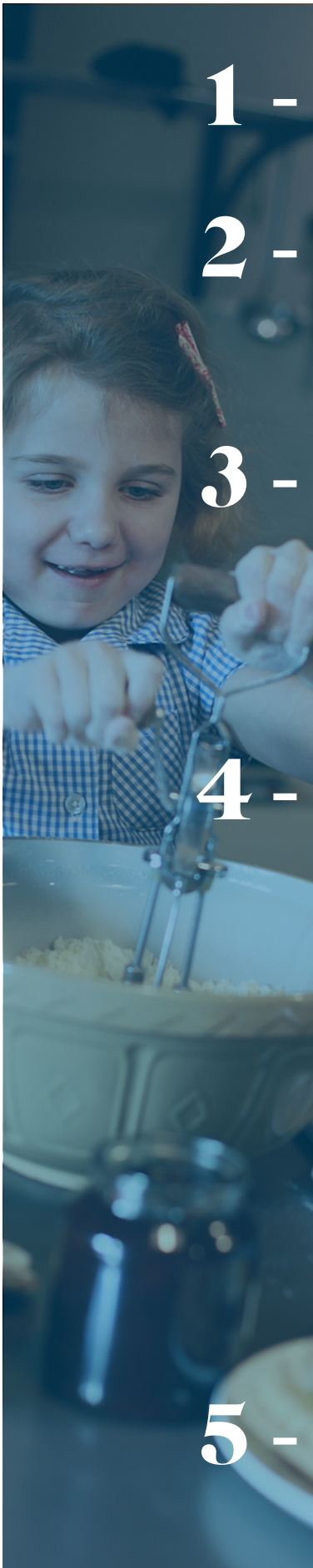
[Benamina Ebuehi's Classic Lemon Drizzle](#)

[Nadiya Hussain's Mango and Coconut Yogurt Cake with German Buttercream](#)

[Nigella's Coffee and Walnut Layer Cake](#)

[BBC Good Food: Butterfly cakes](#)

[BBC Good Food: Chocolate Rice Krispie cakes](#)



Let's bake!

1 - First things first: gather your ingredients. Take a moment to be still and take stock of what's in front of you. Remember that God is present with you, in your midst, delighting in and rejoicing over you.

2 - Time to mix. This part can take some time and often a little elbow grease; this is usually the part of the process most likely to make a mess. Follow your recipe and combine your ingredients, and pray for those for whom things are currently challenging or a little messy.

3 - Let's get our cake in the oven (or the fridge, if your creation has to set rather than bake). This is where the transformation happens – something wet and sloppy magically begins to rise and form into something soft and delicious or solid and crunchy. Things are pretty much out of your hands at this stage. Use this time to pray some big prayers – the things you need to just give over to God, who can do more than we could ask or imagine.

4 - If you're anything like my dad, waiting for a creation to cool is the hardest part of any bake. As soon as I've opened the oven door, he'll be at my side with a spoon, ready to take a bite! But that step in the instructions, however unrealistic you believe it to be, is important. Some treats actually continue to bake from within even after you've removed them from the oven. Others will be really delicate while they're still warm, and might fall apart if cut into too early. And if you try to ice a cake that's still warm, chances are your buttercream will melt, spoiling any dreams of beautiful decoration. Often we want an answer to our prayers immediately, and can grow discouraged when they appear to go unheard or unanswered. But the Bible is filled with believers for whom waiting was a significant part of their story. As we practice waiting in this small way today, remember that often we are encouraged to wait on God with hope, anticipation and trust in the beauty He has ahead of us.

5 - Speaking of beauty; time to decorate! We are loved by an artistic Creator, the painter of sunsets, the crafter of forests, the illustrator of flowers. Decorate your cake with whatever you have to hand as an act of worship and praise.

Enjoy your delicious creation as an act of celebration! Perhaps you could invite someone over to share your cake with, or deliver it to the doorstep of a friend or neighbour to let them know that you are celebrating them today.

Maybe you want to light some candles and enjoy your cake with others in your house and use the time as an opportunity to discuss who you are thankful for and why. Or you may want to tuck in quietly on your own, using the time to pray prayers of thanksgiving and celebration for individuals or groups or people in your life or who are listed in the prayer points above. Whoever and however you choose to celebrate, know that you are doing so alongside your Father in Heaven who delights in, rejoices over and celebrates with His beloved children.



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