



Sabeel Wave of Prayer

Dec 28th, 2023

This prayer ministry enables local and international friends of Sabeel to pray over regional concerns on a weekly basis. Sent to Sabeel's network of supporters, the prayer is used in services around the world and during Sabeel's Thursday Communion service; as each community in its respective time zone lifts these concerns in prayer at noon every Thursday, this "wave of prayer" washes over the world.

On the 25th of December, many celebrated Christmas day, the day the western church remembers the birth of Christ. Some people commemorate Christ's incarnation by praying special liturgies and singing carols and songs of worship which focus on Christ's birth. Others celebrate Christmas in a more secular manner, buying gifts and holding parties and festivities for the holiday season. However, here in Palestine, things are not normal. Due to the horrific scenes in Gaza and the West Bank, in Palestine, the birthplace of Christmas, we decline any form of joyous Christmas festivities, but stand in solidarity and in mourning with all suffering from injustice in our land.

- **Immanuel, while many in the world are celebrating in ignorance, unbothered by the suffering of so many, we Palestinians understand more than ever the true meaning of Christmas. We and other oppressed peoples understand that Christmas is not for those who arrogantly think they do not need God, but it is for those desperately yearning for your deliverance. The superficial, materialistic meaning of Christmas is stripped away by the suffering of our martyrs, and the true meaning of Immanuel is revealed. Christ, we thank you for becoming one of us. We await the day of your return. Lord in your mercy... hear our prayer**

As of the 25th of December, Palestinian health officials report over 20,000 Palestinians have been killed in Gaza and over 53,000 have been injured since the 7th of October. The "safe" areas which Palestinians were told to flee to are now heavily bombarded, and a UN-backed report warns that more than half a million Palestinians in Gaza are facing catastrophic hunger and starvation. Indeed, everywhere in Gaza is unsafe. The trauma of this humanitarian crisis will affect generations to come.

- **God of the oppressed, whilst our souls are heavy with the suffering in Gaza, haunting us day and night, we feel anything we do is wrong. Lord, help us not to become numb to the pain. We pray that you would use our pain to stir in us a zeal for acts of righteousness and steadfastness when we are faced with trials and tribulations. God, help us fathom that the number killed, injured, and displaced in Gaza are not statistics but humans created in your image. In your name, we call you to save the people of Gaza. Lord in your mercy... hear our prayer**

Since the 7th of October, at least 300 Palestinians in the West Bank have been killed by Israeli forces and settler attacks, many of them under the age of 25. Refugee camps in the West Bank suffer from raids by the Israeli military, putting all Palestinians in the area at risk. Moreover, the number of Palestinians incarcerated without trial or charge has soared, essentially making them hostages. Due to the lack of movement, the increase of settler and army violence, amongst other factors, The West Bank has suffered immense economic damage.

- **God of the marginalized, we hold on to our faith that you see the suffering and the evil taking place in the West Bank. God, reveal yourself to our people and intervene in our lives both individually and collectively. Help us to have faith this Christmas as we meditate on the incarnation and utter Zechariah's song, "rescue us from the hand of our enemies, and enable us to serve him without fear in holiness and righteousness before him all our days" (Luke 1:74-75). Lord, liberate us from the 75 years of settler colonialization. Lord in your mercy... hear our prayer**

On the 22nd of December, Sabeel published a new issue of Cornerstone which contextualizes Advent and the Christmas message to our present reality in Palestine. The authors of the Cornerstone issue argue that the authentic message of the incarnation of Christ is one which demands repentance, revolution, courage, recognition to those unseen, and liberation to the oppressed. This interpretation rereads the Christmas story as an event which challenges colonialism in all its forms and empowers those who are the least of these in our societies.

- **God who is and was and is to come, you are the true ruler of the earth and cosmos. Evil powers, structures, or individuals are an illusion in their own temporal might. We thank you for all the Palestinians who are witnessing to your Holy name this Christmas. Lord, help us as we attempt to carry our own crosses. Guide us in your wisdom and not in our own understanding. Let us remember your faithfulness to creation as you choose to be incarnated in the humblest of ways. Lord in your mercy... hear our prayer**

Week after week, amongst death and destruction, we are witnessing heroes in Gaza. This comes in the form of Gazan men running to sites just bombed to rescue people under the rubble, journalists documenting the atrocities in Gaza, medical workers working in extreme adverse conditions, and all those trying to cheer the children who are displaced. All are risking their lives to do God's work, and many have lost loved ones and colleagues since the 7th of October.

- **God of Sumud, the journalists, medical workers, and those working to alleviate the suffering in Gaza are showing the world what compassion, goodness, and resilience looks like through their actions. Protect the many saints in Gaza, known and unknown, and bless them. Lord, help us follow their examples within our own contexts so that our actions may lead to love and solidarity. Let us "...be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the work of the Lord, because you know that in the Lord your labor is not in vain" (1 Corinthians 15:58). Lord in your mercy... hear our prayer**

The mass arrests and humiliation of Palestinians in Gaza by the Israeli military is continuing. Indeed, Israeli forces are forcibly arresting Palestinians under arbitrary allegations and taking them to unknown places. For the Palestinians who are reported to be in various prisons and military camps, it is reported that they endure harsh treatment, sexual violence, and at times, even death by torture.

- **God of light, evildoers often wish to hide themselves, attempting to conceal their actions and the truth from the public. However, no darkness can overcome your light which illuminates the good and the evil in all people. Lord, let your light shine in the prisons and military camps so that all sin is accounted for and all unjust suffering is known. Lord, protect all those imprisoned or taken hostage unjustly. Liberate them and redeem their suffering. While the Palestinian prisoners are hidden from the public eye, they are not hidden from your love. Lord in your mercy... hear our prayer.**
- **We join the World Council of Churches in their prayer for the countries of Japan, North Korea, and South Korea. Lord in your mercy... hear our prayers**