

National day of **PRAYER** for life **2026**

Theme:
Confession &
Strongholds

Prayer resource



Introduction



The inspiration for this year's National Day of Prayer for Life is found in 2 Corinthians 10:4:

“The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds.”

Sixty years of legalised and increasingly liberal abortion access have so normalised abortion that, for many people, a world without it has become almost unimaginable.

We are in a cultural and spiritual battle for life. We recognise that spiritual realities require a spiritual response.

This year, we come before God in **confession**, asking Him to break the **strongholds** that bind, and bring freedom, healing and transformation to our nations.

Every follower of Christ has a role in changing legislation and practice.

The Christian message brings the light that overcomes the darkness of abortion. Strongholds are revealed. Grace and mercy are available to all.

Together we are praying against the strongholds that affect women, men, babies, families, healthcare professionals and wider society in relation to pregnancy and abortion.

We pray instead that the UK will be a people and place that values the life and health of every woman and unborn child, and pursues the wellbeing of both.

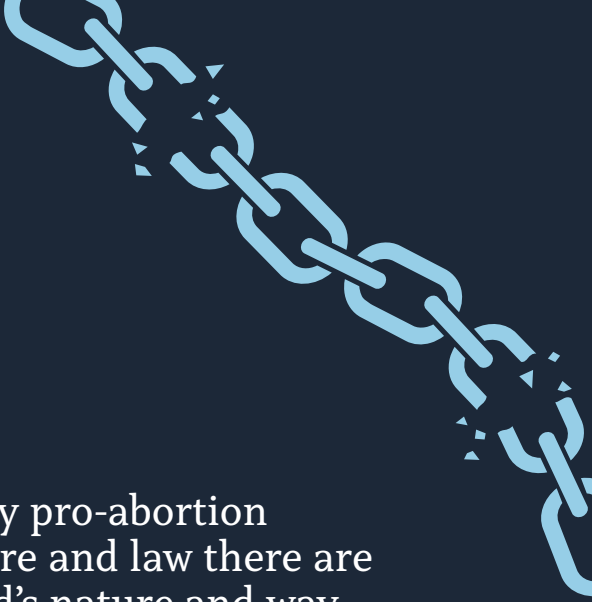
As we ready ourselves to come before God we are reminded in Psalm 24:1,

“The earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it.”

So, we pray with confidence in God’s authority and sovereignty, trusting him to bring change where situations may seem entrenched or unchangeable.



Strongholds



We live in a world being shaped and influenced by pro-abortion ideologies. Across our nation, embedded in culture and law there are attitudes and behaviours that are contrary to God's nature and way.

Pregnancy is seen as a state of being, rather than recognised as the presence of two lives: one born and one unborn.

The unborn are dehumanised – only considered a baby if wanted, but a clump of cells if unwanted.

The taking of life by abortion is defended as “compassion”, justified as choice or classed as merely bringing on a missed period. Human worth is measured by being wanted, healthy or able and human beings are treated as products to design rather than persons to respect.

These ways of thinking affect us all. They are evident in the laws and practice that normalise abortion, terminate our unborn children, and in doing so harm women, men and wider society.

At the end of this resource, we have included information about abortion legislation and statistics across the UK. The information can be overwhelming and there is always more to add. Behind the facts and numbers are people and in our prayers that is where our focus will be.

Often integral to pregnancy crises and helping drive abortion decisions are age-old strongholds such as fear; shame; self; choice and control; secrecy; silence and apathy. We the church, are not immune.

As one theologian puts it; a stronghold is:

“...a mindset impregnated with hopelessness that causes Christian's to accept as unchangeable situations that they know are contrary to the will of God.”

In the work of Both Lives we have the privilege of sharing the stories of women and men whose voices give name to the strongholds we pray against and the life and healing we pray for. Snapshots from a few of those personal experiences are the lens through which we are asking God to speak and guide our prayers in this battle for life.

Susan:

“Mum explained that, had I been a little older, there might have been a discussion about what I wanted to do. But at fifteen, during such a crucial year of secondary school, my parents had decided that the decision was out of my hands. “It will be sorted,” she assured me. To me, it felt like a nightmare I simply wanted to wake up from. I approached Dad and said, “I’ve been thinking about this. Church teaches that this is sinful, and I worry that God won’t be pleased with me. Ultimately, it’s the murder of a baby.” He responded in a soft, gentle tone: “This isn’t on your head, love, to worry about. On Judgement Day, I’ll tell God that this was my decision. I’ll explain my reasoning for doing it, and I’ll face any consequences. But it’s happening.”

Beth:

“The thoughts of inadequacy began to flood my mind once more. I was so confused and could not see how I would get through this. In the end, I gave in to fear. Reluctantly, I went back to the doctor and he arranged for me to return to the hospital. I felt this was my only option. I had the abortion, and from the minute I woke up I regretted it. I felt empty, lost and confused.”

Hannah:

“In the days following, well-meaning people encouraged my husband and me to consider travelling for an abortion, and I can understand how this may seem like a sensible option when there is a prognosis of no survival outside the womb and no medical intervention offered. Abortion wasn't something that we would consider, and I resolved to give my baby all the time they had, in recognition of their life having already begun.”

Sara:

“I found out that I was pregnant and was in turmoil. I had been brought up Roman Catholic and believed that life begins at conception. The father of our baby wanted me to have an abortion and made it very clear that he would not support me in any other decision.

Silenced by my shame, far from family and friends, I contacted a family member for advice. With the shame of my situation ringing in my ears, I made an appointment at the nearest Brook Clinic. It was far, far, far too easy.”

Response

Perhaps taking these stories as a starting point, we have some big questions to ask, of our nation, our church and ourselves. In prayer we come before our Lord and Saviour for discernment and wisdom as to how to respond and pray.



Where has the truth of every human life bearing Gods image and having inherent dignity been lost or sacrificed?

Where have we conceded to apathy or silence, believing there is nothing we can or should do, about abortion culture and practice? Have we in any way become complicit in the development of those cultural strongholds?

We know; “The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds.”
2 Corinthians 10:4

We are grateful that in God we can unbind that which is bound up (strongholds). “I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.” Matthew 16:19

“Through the praise of children and infants you have established a stronghold against your enemies to silence the foe and the avenger.”
Psalm 8:2

Lord hear our prayer.



Confession



We give thanks to God that in the stories shared, that warn of the harm from abortion, we also see His forgiveness for past decisions; the power of His love and a healing that brings freedom.

Susan:

“I then spent several years at Bible College and away on global mission. Every year on my due date, I would imagine how my child may have looked by now or what hobbies or interests they may have had. I would remind myself that such thoughts are foolish. I chose to go through this. I had no right to ponder such things. I took the life of my baby, and no amount of thinking would ever change that. At a discipleship school in Australia, there was a week of teaching on the importance of having a clear conscience before God, based on Acts 24:16 and Hebrews 13:18. We were taught to bring everything to the foot of the cross, no matter how hidden, and about the freedom that forgiveness could truly bring.”

Beth:

“I became a Christian. I had been to church a few times before the abortion but hadn’t taken it too seriously. I was so blessed to have people from the church contact me. I felt so ashamed of what I had done and didn’t believe I was ‘worthy’ to go to church. They were so kind and loving and helped me on a journey to recovery.”

Sara:

“It took over 20 years for me to hear the good news. I no longer needed to bear the burden of my guilt and shame. I heard that, at the cross, Jesus paid the price for all my sins, and the sins of all the world, and that if I believed in Him, I could be set free from the punishment I deserved and to flourish into the woman He created me to be. I became a Christian there and then and felt a peace that I had never known before.”

Response:

We know that in reading about and praying for the issues the raised, some of us will see ourselves and/or our loved ones in the stories shared. Others will be left considering the ways of thinking, attitudes of the heart, words or behaviours that may have contributed to, or allowed the cultural denial of human life and dignity to one or both lives in pregnancy.



**Where or how have
minds and hearts
become hardened?**

We ask God to reveal to us the attitudes and behaviours we need to confess; our own; on behalf of our church; for our nation.

Acts 24:16 “So I always take pains to have a clear conscience toward both God and man.”

Will we offer the love and healing of Jesus to someone who is living with the pain and grief of a past abortion?

We thank God for His merciful kindness that in confession and repentance there is healing, freedom and blessing.

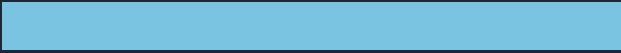
Psalms 32: 1-5 “Blessed is the one whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the one whose sin the Lord does not count against them and in whose spirit is no deceit. When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night your hand was heavy on me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer. Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, “I will confess my transgressions to the Lord.” And you forgave the guilt of my sin.”

Are we ready and willing to stand for life, to stand with a woman who is facing a pregnancy crisis and may be considering abortion? Are we willing and able to support her to choose life?

We ask God to help us to create a culture of life within our families, communities, church and nation. To stand against abortion. To speak up for the human dignity, value and worth of every image bearer of God.

Lord hear our prayer.

Final reflections



We come to these issues proclaiming boldly and with confidence that every life and both lives in pregnancy matter to God, because that is how He came Incarnate. The Word became flesh – God Unborn - in the womb of His mother.

In the human story of Jesus we see both our human story and our mandate. Conceived, born, and in love submitted to die; bearing our sins on the cross and defeating death so that we can live.

God's chosen plan for our salvation is beautiful. In it and in Him we see the fullness of a story that proclaims life and value to the unborn and born; the lowly, the hidden and those who feel least seen. This is a good news story and challenges us to choose life and walk in the way of Jesus amid the real and daily, material and spiritual conflicts between life and death.



The question before us now is:

Will we choose to live our human story following His way — honouring humanity, choosing life over death, and sacrificial love over fear?

Thank you and find out more

Thank you for using this prayer resource. We hope it gave you space and time to reflect on this important issue and hear from God. We'd love to hear your reflections. Was there a particular moment, prayer, or thought that encouraged or challenged you? Get in touch, message us on social media (@BothLives on Facebook and X, @BothLivesUK on Instagram) or email the team:

stand@bothlives.co.uk

The National Day of Prayer for Life is just one part of the work of Both Lives. Check out our website to find out more about our work and, [subscribe to our free monthly newsletter](#):

bothlives.co.uk



The Both Lives Podcast

Rooted in a pro-both lives ethos, this podcast is for anyone seeking honest, nuanced dialogue around what it means to pursue the wellbeing of both women and unborn children. Available on Spotify, Apple Podcasts, Podbean and YouTube.

Stories and resouces mentioned in this resource:

- Susan: www.eauk.org/what-we-do/initiatives/both-lives/culture/stories/susans-story
- Beth: www.eauk.org/news-and-views/beths-story-lack-of-support
- Sara: www.eauk.org/what-we-do/initiatives/both-lives/culture/stories/saras-story
- Hannah: www.eauk.org/news-and-views/kitione-and-hannahs-story
- God Unborn: www.eauk.org/what-we-do/initiatives/both-lives/god-unborn

Additional information – Legislation:

England and Wales:

In April 2026, Parliament decriminalised abortion for women acting in relation to their own pregnancies at any stage up to birth. Clinical services remain governed by the Abortion Act 1967. [Read more.](#)

- Up to 24 weeks: Under Ground C of the Abortion Act 1967, abortion is permitted where continuing the pregnancy poses a greater risk to the woman's physical or mental health than termination.
- After 24 weeks: Abortion is permitted in specific circumstances, including risk to the woman's life, prevention of grave permanent injury to her physical or mental health, or where the child would be "seriously handicapped".

Pills by post: Introduced as a temporary COVID-19 measure, home use of both abortion pills following remote consultation became permanent in England and Wales in August 2022. The proportion of abortions using this pathway rose from 47% in 2020 to 72% in 2023, accounting for over 500,000 abortions.

Scotland:

Abortion was devolved under the Scotland Act 2016, but remains governed by the Abortion Act 1967. Remote abortion services, including pills by post, account for 57% of abortions. Proposals to decriminalise abortion are under debate.

Northern Ireland:

The Executive Formation Act 2019 decriminalised abortion and enabled a new legal framework:

- Up to 12 weeks: Abortion for any reason, with no reason required or recorded.
- 12–24 weeks: Abortion on unspecified physical or mental health grounds.
- Up to birth: Abortion where the unborn child is diagnosed with a disability, a category that is not precisely defined and may include conditions such as cleft lip or club foot.

Unlike England, Wales and Scotland, Northern Ireland does not permit abortion pills to be provided entirely by post; at least one in-person appointment is required.

Additional information - Statistics:

According to the World Health Organisation, around 73 million induced abortions take place worldwide each year.

In Great Britain, the majority (98%) of abortions are carried out under “Ground C”, with the vast majority (99.9%) of abortions carried out under Ground C alone reported as being performed because of a risk to the woman’s mental health.

This means that 98% of abortions involve physically healthy women aborting physically healthy babies as almost all abortions are performed for undefined mental health reasons. In reality this is abortion on request.



In 2023, there were 277,790 abortions for residents in England and Wales, the highest since records began.

That averages to:

- 762 abortions every day
- 32 per hour
- one abortion every two minutes

18,783 abortions were reported in Scotland in 2025.

2,899 abortions were carried out in Northern Ireland between April 2024 – March 2025.

Between 31 March 2020 – 31 March 2025, 11,192 abortions have been carried out in Northern Ireland following the introduction of The Abortion (Northern Ireland) (No 2) Regulations 2020.

