

# Prayer of Lament



One of the most important parts of the Caring Well Challenge is seeking the Lord's help. That's why it's essential that prayer is a part of your Launch service. Below is a sample prayer prayed by J.D. Greear, president of the Southern Baptist Convention, at the SBC 2019 Annual Meeting that you can use as a guide. Our desire is to provide you with language that expresses our desire to mourn the abuse that has occurred, repent, and move forward in obedience for the glory of God and the good of His people.

Father,

We are filled with sorrow and shame over the toleration and cover-up of abuse in churches that bear the name of your holy Son, Jesus Christ. We acknowledge that Jesus not only welcomed children into his presence, but he also warned others of the judgment that would come upon those who caused a child to stumble.

When we think of the person and work of Jesus, and how pastors and churches that were commissioned to continue his work have actually undermined it through sins of omission and commission, we weep. We groan. Our hearts break. Give us the courage and wisdom to make the changes that genuine repentance requires. And we ask you to have mercy on us according to the riches of your grace in Christ Jesus.

Father, forgive us of our negligence, lovelessness, fear, greed, pride, ignorance, selfishness, and any other motive that caused us to be silent and passive when we should have been vocal and active. The abuse in our churches should have been exposed, not hidden.

Father, in your great righteousness, let those who have abused others or enabled abuse be brought to justice. Grant them to repent of their evil, find forgiveness in Christ, and accept the consequences of their crime in society.

Father, you are the stronghold of the poor and needy in their distress, a shield about your people, their glory, and the lifter of their head. You execute justice for the abandoned and the oppressed.

And you are the God of all comfort. So comfort our brothers and sisters who have been abused. In your kindness, restore the years that others have stolen from them. Help them to heal, to know your love and acceptance, and to hope in the full and final redemption of the One who says, *"Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense with me, to repay everyone for what they have done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end."*

Even so, Come, Lord Jesus! Amen.