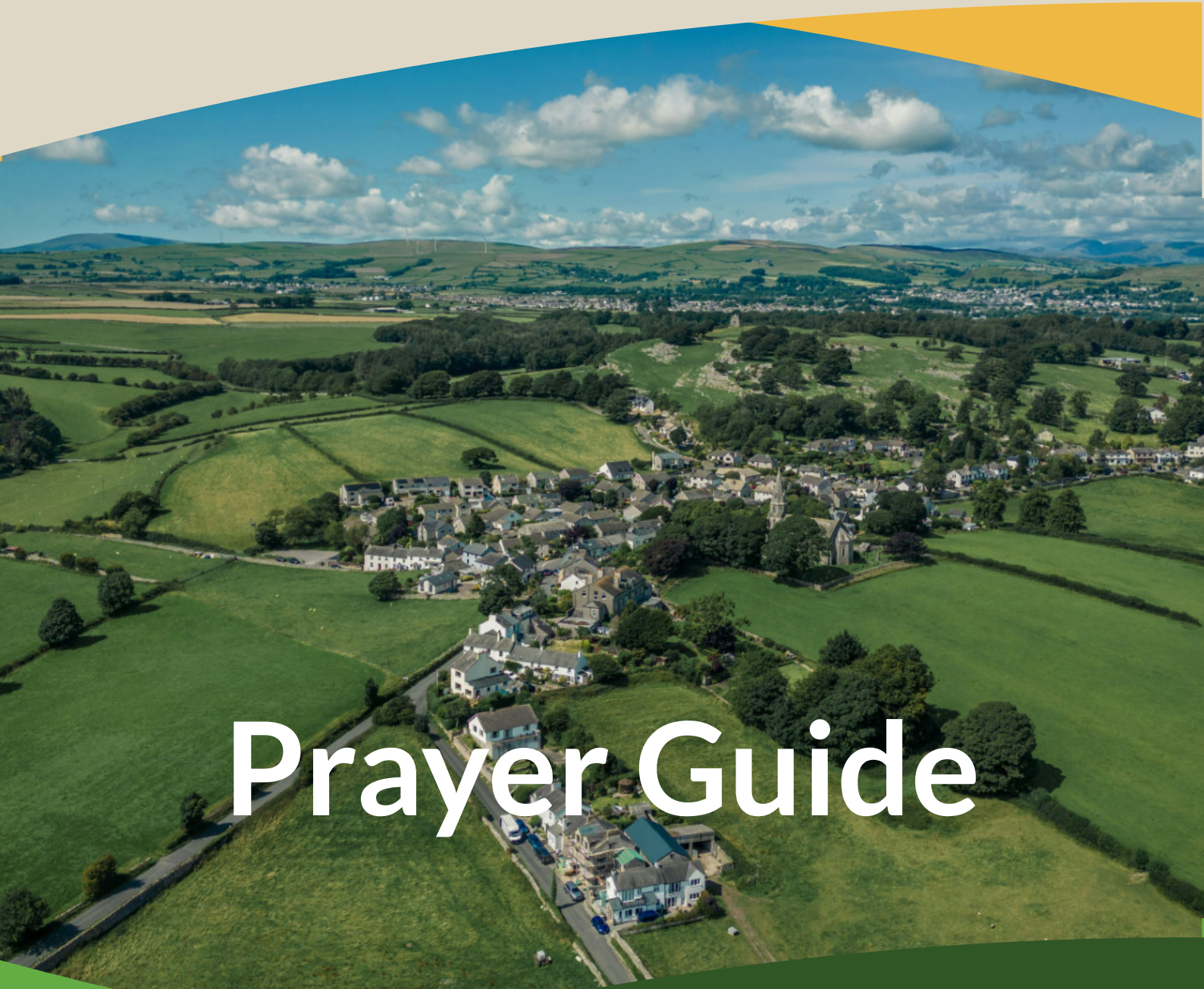




**Bringing the hope of the Gospel
to rural Britain**

An aerial photograph of a small village in rural Britain, surrounded by green fields and rolling hills under a blue sky with white clouds. The village features a church with a tall spire and several houses. The image is framed by a yellow and orange curved border at the top and a green curved border at the bottom.

Prayer Guide

**Mission. Prayer.
Fellowship. Scripture.**

What you can pray for rural Britain

This is a comprehensive, but not exhaustive, guide to praying for rural Britain. You can use it as it is, as a starting point, or to inspire deeper and wider prayer around each of the headings.

Use it on your own, with a small group, or as a whole church. However you use it, the aim is simply to help you pray confidently and faithfully for rural people, churches and communities.

Theology: Confidence in the Gospel

The Gospel remains central to every lasting benefit for rural people. Many ministries can misjudge needs or direct resources in the wrong places when Gospel work is not kept at the centre.

Truly beneficial ministry flows from Gospel-centred communities, and we should not underestimate the impact God can bring through those communities.

Spiritual Life and Renewal: Faith, Growth and New Life

We should pray for people in rural communities to come to know Christ, for Christians to grow in faith and for churches to experience new spiritual life. We should also pray that God raises up people who are willing to serve in rural places and gives existing Christians fresh confidence to share their faith.

Small numbers should never lead to small expectations. New believers, renewed churches and new Christian communities can grow and flourish wherever God chooses to work.

Mission: Witnessing Faithfully in a Distinctive Mission Field

Rural ministry often involves smaller congregations, smaller mission fields and more limited budget, requiring people who recognise God's call to serve in these distinctive places.

As farmers sow, reap and innovate, rural ministers and churches need resolve, perseverance and creativity to meet both their own needs and the needs of the mission to which God has called them.

Churches and Christian Leadership

Many rural churches serve small communities with limited people and resources. Some have ageing congregations, leadership vacancies or ministers serving several churches, while much may depend upon a few faithful lay people.

Those who lead and serve need wisdom, strength and encouragement, alongside good cooperation between churches and healthy Christian communities able to worship, witness and serve faithfully where God has called them.

Communities: Cohesion, Togetherness and Peace Among Neighbours

Rural communities are often less transient than urban ones. Families may remain for generations, and tensions between neighbours can last for many years.

Where whole families are involved, grievances may persist. Great care is therefore needed when representing Jesus, since reactions to evangelistic work can have long-lasting consequences. Nevertheless, Christians must remain faithful stewards and witnesses.

Education: Schools, Teachers, Parents and Children

Schools in rural areas need our prayers. They are often isolated, even when they belong to academy trusts or school partnerships, and they face many of the same challenges as other parts of rural life.

At times, they find themselves taking on more as they seek to support the wider needs of rural families experiencing significant pressures and change.

Young People: Opportunity, Belonging and a Future

Young people in rural communities can face limited opportunities for education, employment, housing and social life. Many leave their communities to study or work and may find it difficult to return and establish a home there later.

Young people need opportunities to see a future for themselves in rural places, while also being supported wherever their lives take them. Churches and communities need their energy, ideas, gifts and participation.

Older People: Care, Connection and Dignity

Older people are an important part of rural communities, often carrying years of knowledge, relationships and service. At the same time, declining mobility, bereavement, loneliness and the loss of local services can make later life increasingly difficult.

Older people need to remain connected, valued and supported, with churches and communities recognising both their needs and the contribution they continue to make.

Rural Life: Loneliness, Smallness, Isolation, Transport and Employment

These concerns connect closely with policy issues and have long been common features of rural life. Their effects are felt within families, schools and churches.

In rural settings, it is easy for people to remain unseen, and many do not feel they have a meaningful voice. Even politically, smaller populations can mean that rural needs receive less attention from parties seeking votes or listening to constituents.

Health, Wellbeing and Care: Access, Support and Provision

Living at a distance from services can make accessing healthcare, mental-health support and social care more difficult. Transport, long journeys and limited local provision can turn relatively ordinary needs into much greater challenges.

Those providing health and care services across rural areas need support and wise decisions about provision, while individuals and families need fair access to the help and care they require.

Housing: Homes, Affordability and Local Families

Suitable and affordable housing is essential if rural communities are to remain healthy and sustainable. High house prices, limited rental properties, second homes and holiday lets can make it difficult for local people, particularly younger families, to remain or settle in the places they call home.

Wise development and a healthy balance are needed, allowing communities to welcome visitors and newcomers while still providing homes for the people who live and work there.

Rural Businesses and Livelihoods: Work, Enterprise and Sustainability

The rural economy reaches far beyond farming. Small businesses, tradespeople, shops, hospitality, services and self-employed people provide employment and help keep communities active and sustainable.

Creativity, resilience and opportunity are particularly important where businesses face higher costs, seasonal pressures or smaller local markets. Healthy rural businesses provide employment and services that help people and families remain within their communities.

Farming and Agriculture

Farmers need constructive and positive prayer. While it is right to pray for their resilience amid the difficulties they face, creativity, ingenuity and innovation are also needed within their own businesses and across the wider agricultural industry.

Farming remains vital to food production, the rural economy and care of the countryside, while farmers face changing markets, costs, weather, regulation and the need to plan for the future.

Tourism: Appropriate and Proportionate Development

Tourism can bring significant benefits to rural communities. It can enable residents to make productive use of underused properties and allow farmers to diversify through accommodation, farm shops and visitor experiences.

Visitors support local shops, hospitality and other businesses, but tourism needs to respect local communities and the pressures that excessive visitor numbers, holiday accommodation and seasonal demand can bring.

Environment: Thoughtful, Faithful and Obedient Stewardship of God's Creation

The primary calling of the church is not simply to make the earth a better place, Christians are also called to encourage the wise, faithful and responsible care of the resources God has entrusted to humanity.

Environmental initiatives can provide meaningful opportunities to stand alongside others, pursue good practice and demonstrate thoughtful stewardship.

Policy: Transport, Health and Investment

Policy affecting people and places in rural communities does not always take enough account of the things that enable individuals and families to thrive.

Without proper consideration, rural residents can experience increasing strain, fragmentation and breakdown within family and community life.

This resource is provided by Village Hope. Every month we come together online to pray for rural Britain, and you are welcome to join us. Visit the website for more information.



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