

Christ, Our Channel of Hope

This responsive reading is based on the WMU emphasis, Hope in Christ. The watchword, Romans 12:12, and Scripture passage, Romans 12:9–16, provide a foundation for its content.

Enlist a leader, who is referred to as “One.” The leader will guide participants to respond. They are referred to as “All.”

One: In the world surrounding us, God is at work, and we are hopeful.

In the beauty of nature, we see the work God spoke into existence.

In creating humankind, He made us as reflections of Him.

In time, God fully revealed to us His finest gift—Jesus Christ.

It is in Christ that He placed the channel of hope for us all.

All: Thanks be to God, who gives us hope in Christ.

One: We who belong to Christ experience the reality of His hope.

We find hope essential to our being, and in that hope, we can move forward.

God’s Word encourages us to be joyful in hope,

... to love with sincerity,

... to be patient in tribulation,

... to persevere in prayer, and

... to be confident in Christ’s return and the glory that follows.

We believe in hope that is eternal.

All: Because of our hope in Christ, we seek to be genuine in love.

One: When voices cry out around us, we find our love inconstant.

While wars and conflicts rage, our helplessness arises.

... How can we love the avenger?

When desperate strangers knock on our hearts’ doors, we hesitate.

... How is it possible to love a stranger?

When fear steps in, we are paralyzed.

... Why do we fail to be all God’s genuine love requires of us?

Hope is born out of love for Christ—the same hope we seek to share in genuine love.

All: Because of our hope in Christ, we seek to be patient in tribulation.

One: Hope is not found in the politics or riots of our day,

... in disease or harsh words or voices raised in anger,

... in ill intentions or untruths or false teachings, or

... when depression suffocates.

Hope cannot be experienced apart from Christ in us.

When we have given everything, and all seems lost,

Christ’s word of hope breaks through the tribulation.

So may His Word and His voice teach us how to be patient in troubled times.

All: Because of our hope in Christ, we seek to be constant in prayer.

One: How can we be constant in prayer when our lives are in constant motion?

Think this way . . . A life open to constant prayer changes us, and we are transformed into the likeness of Christ.

We pray for those in desperate need of hope.

We pray for those caught in the wilderness of hopelessness,

... in destructive beliefs that hold believers captive,

... in webs they cannot tear apart,

... in entanglements so tightly knotted they will not untangle, and

... in chains with weights too strong to break.

Constant prayer transforms us, and the world and hope discover their place.

All: Because of our hope in Christ, we seek to be compassionate to all.

One: With compassion comes challenge and opportunity.

Without compassion,

... we miss encounters to share Christ’s hope;

... we disengage in helping those who cannot help themselves;

... we turn away from disaster when it strikes; and

... we view others as unlike ourselves in thought, in words, in looks, or in actions. We must remember the compassion of Christ toward all, and hope finds a way in.

All: Because of Christ, we experience hope in Him who transforms.

One: As breath is essential for life, hope in Christ is essential for life in our spirits because it sees what is possible.

All: You challenge us, oh God, to respond to our world with genuine love, patience in tribulation, constant prayer, and compassion for all, for our hope is in Christ alone. Thanks be to God!