

## **Prayer of Blessing**

(by Dan Erickson)

How can we bless in times of disease,  
we who are natural spreaders, our lives  
dedicated to pandemics of health—  
holding back is strange to us. We are huggers,  
hand shakers, kissers of both cheeks. Our  
greetings are stunted in this plague.

We are crossers of paths, of borders, we  
embed ourselves, many of us.  
We are foreign bodies,  
we long to be pathogens of purity.

How do we bless in these days?

We bless as we always have—with  
love balanced on wisdom,  
in defiance of both negligence and fear.

So I bless you—  
spreaders of the gospel in Jesus's name,  
with noses sensitive to opportunity,  
able to discern accurately where  
love must be applied in our neighborhoods,  
in our atmospheres.

I bless you in Jesus's name with the easy  
breath of God's Spirit, wholesome,  
pure, and deeply good,  
who comforts and drives  
us to comfort, who  
ministers and drives us to minister.

I bless you in Jesus's name with the wisdom of your lives—that they will be neither wasted nor left unspent.

And may God, who inhabits all times both before and after safety, before and after illnesses, before and after death, advance his Kingdom. May it be a breath of healing in our world, the natural exhale of the gospel that we spread.

### **Questions for reflective prayer:**

1. Quiet yourself before the Lord. Take a few moments to become aware of how you are entering this time of prayer. How are you doing emotionally? Physically? Mentally? Spiritually?
2. Next, become aware of God looking on you in love. How is Jesus attending to you today? The Holy Spirit? Take a few minutes to just rest in the love of God.
3. Enter into a conversation with God around COVID-19. How has it affected you? What are your thoughts and feelings surrounding it and all of the implications? What are your disappointments or fears? What are the losses that you mourn?
4. What does God want to say to you about this? How might he be asking his Church to respond to the global pandemic? What is his specific invitation to you? How can you best represent Christ?
5. Close your prayer time in gratitude to a God who redeems suffering, who is sovereign over all, who comforts those who mourn, who sees every sparrow that falls, and who holds all things in his hand.

(Dan and Annie Erickson, Ethne, South Africa)

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