

## **'Pray4Your Police' Additional Information from Project Lead – Paul Wilson**

*"Enlarge the place of your tent, stretch your tent curtains wide, do not hold back; lengthen your cords, strengthen your stakes, for you will spread out to the right and to the left...." Is 54:2*

Why pray for the police? Most people agree that the police do a pretty good job, often in very difficult circumstances. But why should we pray for them?

The Christian Police Association (CPA) has been supporting Christians in the police service since it was first formed in London in 1883. CPA supports Christians in the police service and has a growing and active membership all across the UK. There are more Christians in the Police Service than you might think, across all roles in policing.

The above words from Isaiah 54 are special to us. In them, we believe God is calling the church to mobilise, to step out and to enlarge our vision for prayer. With it comes a promise, that as we step out, we will see our towns and cities renewed.

The police service needs your prayers like never before. We have seen a rise in violent crime across the UK and the police service faces unprecedented challenges as they seek to tackle increasing crime with limited resources. We want to encourage you to pray for your local police and to set out how you can do it more effectively.

The CPA is launching a new prayer initiative 'Pray4YourPolice.' Through this initiative CPA can help you pray more effectively for the police. We can connect you with your local police officers, we can enable you to get to know them, to pray for them and to pray for the challenges they face in your community. In doing so, it will allow you to pray in a much more informed way.

Here are some key reasons why we think you might want to pray for your police. Firstly, God's word encourages us to. In Paul's letter to Timothy, he writes:

*'I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all...in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Saviour.'*

The Bible says quite clearly that we should support and pray for all in authority if we want to live peaceful lives. But more than this, it goes on to say, that it actually *pleases* our God when we pray for those in authority.

Secondly, the police service stands in the front line of the battle against evil and wrongdoing in our society. Nationally, we have seen a rise in violent crime, with the number of both homicides and robberies increasing too. We have all seen the recent tragic murders of young people across the country. Knife crime has risen nationally and, in London, even more significantly. Whilst the police service is making every effort and prioritising the tackling of serious criminality, the reduction of



around 20,000 police officers nationally in recent years is having an impact. Of course, this reduction is by no means the sole reason for the rise in crime, but it is without doubt, a significant contributory factor.

Thirdly, policing is a tough job which can take a serious toll on our police officers and police staff, who are of course, human beings and have families just like anyone else. Every traumatic incident that officers attend can have an impact. Many police officers have been exposed to more trauma in their lifetime than most people can imagine. If I think back over my career (and I have, by no means, experienced as much as some) I have been to more suicides and serious crime scenes than I care to remember. I've been to countless serious and sometimes fatal accidents, road crashes, train crashes, sudden and unexpected deaths, all of which have a devastating effect on the families of those involved. You might say it goes with the territory, which of course it does, that's what policing is about, but each one has an effect on you. I worked in hospital operating theatres before I joined the police, so was quite used to unpleasant sights, but nothing quite prepares you for experiencing some of the tragic incidents I have attended.

Because it's a tough job, mentally the effects can be even tougher. During my career, I saw countless numbers of police officers go through divorce and broken relationships. A significant number struggled with alcoholism, as they tried to cope by drinking too much. Two police colleagues were almost killed on duty, one when he was attacked and stabbed by an offender with a machete, the other when he was beaten unconscious by four men. Thank God both recovered, but one was never able to return to policing again. Two other officers left the job, so traumatised by incidents they attended and the things they witnessed first-hand and were unable to continue policing. Most tragic of all, during my time in policing, a number of police colleagues who I knew well, took their own lives. Perhaps the saddest thing, was that not one of us had a clue what they were going to do, I guess they put on a brave face and just "carried on" as police officers do. Thank God, and I do thank God, that by His grace and with the support of a loving wife and family, I came through it all. But most police officers will tell you a similar tale, my experiences are nothing unusual.

Finally, the police can help you pray more effectively for policing priorities and for your communities. If you want to know what's going on in your community, then talk to the police. If you really want to know what the problems are in your community, just be a 'fly on the wall' in your local police station custody block at 10pm on a Saturday night – society's issues come through the door one after another.

In late 2018, I shared to our CPA Leadership team from across the country, how God had spoken to me and had given me a picture from Isaiah 54. As I read the verses *'Enlarge the place of your tent, spread out to the left and the right...'* I saw a picture of a huge canopy flying high over the whole of the UK. The canopy was held in place by guide ropes, each attached to a stake in the ground, one in each and every police force area right across the UK.

I believe that the canopy I saw was a canopy of prayer across this nation, held in place and anchored by God's people praying in every area. We believe God is calling the church to *'Enlarge the place of our tent, to stretch our tent curtains wide, not to hold back; to lengthen our cords, strengthen our stakes.'*



There is both a need and an opportunity like never before for the Church to mobilise in prayer, to pray for the police and for the issues the police face in your community every single day. But if we are to be effective, then we must not just pray, but must pray in a targeted way. You may have heard of the expression 'Intelligence-led Policing.' Well we believe that if we want to see real change in our communities, it's time to adopt 'Intelligence-led prayer' that prays right into the heart of the crimes impacting on our communities. Only that way, we believe, will we see a real impact across our land.

So CPA has teamed up with 'Redeeming Our Communities' (ROC), 'Thy Kingdom Come' and many others to provide prayer resources that enables you to focus pray into your police and the challenges that they face.. The Christian Police Association is inviting you to join with us and pray for your local police by:

- Signing up to the **National Day of Prayer for the police – to be held this year on Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> May** – by organising a prayer event, perhaps 'one day' of 24/7 prayer or something similar - to pray for your police and the challenges they face in your community. Our aim is to see such a prayer event in every force area across the UK.
- Link with the police in your area - CPA can connect you and your church with your local police - to help you get know them and to build a close and effective relationship with them.
- Visit the CPA web site [www.cpauk.net](http://www.cpauk.net) – to find useful information that will help you pray more effectively for those men and women who police your community.
- Joining with your local police to pray specifically into the challenges they face in your community.

As Christians, surely we cannot just stand by and watch from the side lines. We must cry out to our God in prayer to heal our nation. Our communities and our police need our support now more than ever.

So, let us together *"Enlarge the place of our tent, stretch our tent curtains wide, and not hold back."* – let us pray and intercede for our nation like we've never done so before.

Paul Wilson  
CPA Project Lead for **Pray4YourPolice**

*Note:*

*Paul is a retired police officer, having worked in Birmingham, Sussex and in various parts of London for the last 17 years of a 30 year police career – retiring as a Chief Inspector in 2011. Paul has been member of CPA for more than 40 yrs.*

