



# 31-DAY PRAYER CALENDAR COMPANION

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# INTRODUCTION

In the quest to end modern slavery and human trafficking (MSHT), there are many survivors, volunteers and employees, non-government organizations and government representatives hard at work. These dedicated people have both first-hand experience and/or extensive education in this area. However, there is a role for everyone in this quest, no matter their setting, education, experience, skill level or physical ability.

Prayer is available to everyone.

Prayer has a continual audience with the One who created all things and has the power to bring peace and justice to this world.

Prayer is not something that we do as a last resort.

Prayer is our primary strategy to change the world.

Moore, Morgan and McOwen Yim (2022) write,

“There is absolutely no victory against the evil of human trafficking without prayer. No laws, no governments, no intervention strategy, no unique logo, no passionate speech, no documentary will ever defeat the evil manifestation of human trafficking without prayer being our foundation” (p. 162).

God knows and understands every issue related to MSHT before a word is on our tongues. While it is not necessary that we fully understand the issues before we pray, there are some basic facts that can help us to pray more effectively and open our eyes to the world around us.

This calendar companion, to our 31-day prayer calendar, will provide some background information for each prayer point. It is not exhaustive. The simplicity of this guide should not negate the complexities of this issue in our world today, or its lasting impact on those with lived experience. Entire books cannot begin to encompass the vastness of this subject matter. This guide is simply meant to strengthen and direct our conversation with God, while opening our eyes to issues often hidden.

As you read this guide and pray accordingly, various questions and/or ideas may arise. These are welcome and can be emailed to [THQ-MSHT@salvationarmy.ca](mailto:THQ-MSHT@salvationarmy.ca).

This guide is not a replacement for thorough education on this subject matter. Should a deeper knowledge be desired, this can be acquired through the free online Introduction to Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Certificate housed by Booth University College at:

<https://salvationist.ca/human-trafficking/training/msht-response-certificate/>

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## **Disclaimer**

Human trafficking can affect any one of us, exposing us to a life of perpetual vigilance and endangering our physical and emotional safety on a daily basis. Our hope with this 31-day prayer calendar is that it helps us understand this as well as how we can pray for those currently experiencing and working in MSHT.

While this prayer calendar was created for the Canada and Bermuda Territory's January 2025 MSHT Awareness Month, it can be used by Christians around the world, in any month, in any year. May God richly bless those who pray in Jesus' name, and may he answer by working to bring about the changes in our world that will eliminate MSHT.



# EXPLANATION OF PRAYER POINTS

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## 1 **Current Victims of Human Trafficking**

Those who have been exploited live in a constant state of high alert. Their physical and emotional safety are at risk daily. Violence, drug overdoses, STIs and workplace injuries are just some of the possible threats. Exiting a trafficking situation is difficult and dangerous.

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*“Those who have been exploited live in a constant state of high alert.”*

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Survivors require safe places to go where protective measures are taken to avoid revictimization. People trained in trauma-informed care and peers with lived experience are key resources. Options that are easily accessible and free from barriers and judgments are necessary. Bravery and strength are required to create an exit strategy, and initial exit is only the beginning of a long journey toward emotional, physical and spiritual healing.

## 2 **Teachers and Guidance Counsellors**

Since the average age of entry into sex trafficking is between 12 and 14, teachers

and guidance counsellors are aptly placed to notice the signs, risks and methods associated with MSHT, and intervene. Therefore, they must be educated about it and value their key role. School curriculum has been implemented in many places, which teaches youth and children about healthy relationships, violence against women, gender equality and social justice. However, not all governments and school boards have done this.

Young people are often groomed by exploiters that they have known as friends or love interests. They can also be exploited by family or strangers. Teachers and guidance counsellors must also understand this and the barriers many young people face to accessing resources. When young people are empowered, their strengths are emphasized and they are adequately supported—this means they are harder to traffic.

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### 3 Immigrants

Those who immigrate to new countries often find that they do not have the same rights as citizens, nor the same access to resources. Many barriers affect their ability to access legal protection, finances, housing, employment and education. Credentials from other countries are often not recognized, and the navigation of new country systems is complex. Immigrants can find themselves working in challenging environments, facing racism and discrimination. Lack of support, language barriers, loneliness and financial hardship place non-citizens at greater risk of exploitation.

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*“Sexual exploitation of Indigenous people is taking place at a higher rate than in the average population.”*

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### 4 Indigenous Communities

Sexual exploitation of Indigenous people is taking place at a higher rate than in the average population. Many factors can contribute to this. For instance, historical trauma, isolation, poverty and lack of support for housing, education and health care. The effects of colonialization on Indigenous family units have resulted in disconnection from family and support for many people, increasing vulnerabilities. Meaningful steps toward reconciliation and lasting solutions to the above concerns are necessary to decrease the effects of MSHT in these communities. The voices of Indigenous leaders in these responses are vital. We can ask God to protect and heal these communities, and provide direction regarding reconciliation to eliminate exploitation.

### 5 Policy Makers and Government

Politics can be tricky when it comes to social justice issues. Political parties may

not necessarily agree on approaches to take, and while decisions and policies wait to be created or modified, those experiencing vulnerabilities may pay the price. Unity is needed to create policies that protect victims and value youth. Laws and policies pertaining to sex buying, digital-media accountability, fair-trade product procurement and the fair treatment of non-citizens will help to decrease incidents of MSHT.

### 6 Traffickers and Exploiters

MSHT is a lucrative business. Exploiters have learned that while drugs can only be used once, people can be used repeatedly. Traffickers are driven by greed rather than care for humanity. For these businesses to prosper they need people to exploit, demand to meet, ease of movement and acquisition, and manipulation of people. Traffickers are experts in spotting vulnerabilities. Coercion, intimidation, the fuelling of addictions and the use of violence are used to exploit these vulnerabilities. The prosecution and conviction of traffickers largely relies on the testimony of victims who are afraid of reprisal. This is a challenge to justice being served. We know that God can soften hearts and change lives, so while we pray that those who mistreat others are brought to justice, we also pray that they would know the transforming love of Christ.

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### 7 Foster Care Homes

There is a disproportionate number of people being exploited who have lived within the foster care system. There are many reasons for this. Histories involving

trauma, unstable living situations, lack of community/belonging and lack of family support all increase the risk of trafficking. Foster parents that are educated about the signs, risks and methods of human trafficking can prevent exploitation or discover it in the early stages. Caring foster homes can prevent trafficking by creating places of belonging and supporting children and youth through access to counselling. With effective foster care parent selection, training and support, as well as limited movement between homes, trafficking can be prevented.

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## **8** Temporary Foreign Workers

Many economies rely on temporary foreign workers, but they do not have the same rights as citizens. They may experience vulnerabilities, such as isolation, language barriers and lack of awareness of their rights and available services. Sometimes workers are promised work and pay that look drastically different when they arrive. Unsafe living and working conditions, exploitative hours and unfair pay are too often a reality. Workers may be threatened with termination or deportation. This motivates workers to endure exploitative conditions since their wages provide for families in their countries of origin. Workers cannot simply find reputable work elsewhere because their work permits are tied to their original employer. Unsafe working conditions can lead to workplace injuries, resulting in employers returning them home and their families consequently experiencing greater hardship.

## **9** Missing Indigenous Women

In Indigenous communities, women are leaders, elders and the heads of their households. They pass on wisdom to the next generation and are highly valued and respected. Colonialization negatively affected their role and how they were seen. Reconciliation is needed, and the vital place that Indigenous women hold in our communities must be

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*“We must pray for God’s protection for those who are at risk and that healing and answers will be provided to families who have lost loved ones.”*

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promoted. Too often they have been treated as commodities and priority has not been given to seeking women who have been lost. Many Indigenous women are still missing and some have been found too late. There is a strong correlation between missing or murdered Indigenous women and MSHT. Vulnerabilities, such as historical trauma, poverty, isolation and family disconnection, are just a few of the issues that perpetuate the increased risk. We must pray for direction for those who investigate these missing person cases and for success in finding those who are lost. As well, we must pray for God’s protection for those who are at risk and that healing and answers will be provided to families who have lost loved ones.

## **10 Shelters Supporting MSHT Survivors**

Healthy futures are possible for people with lived experience. Healing emotionally, spiritually and physically from the trauma they have endured is a lengthy and complex journey. There are many services which have proven helpful: mental-health services, life-skills training, medical care, addictions treatment, employment services, housing support, peer support and legal assistance, to name a few. These services require long-term funding and skilled employees. Supportive personnel may face risks to their own physical and mental health as they journey with those with lived experience and those who are being actively recruited into MSHT from a shelter. Shelters and transition houses that are trauma-informed—emphasizing safety, autonomy and choice, while avoiding retraumatization—are key to successful recoveries.

## **11 NGOs Serving Those at Risk and Survivors**

Non-government organizations (NGOs) rely on fluctuating community donations and government funding. Meanwhile, the complexity of needs and the cost for supportive services are ever increasing. NGOs are consistently asked to do more with less. Skilled workers are needed to provide complex services and they should be compensated fairly. The support offered should be trauma informed. Peer support is important for those exiting a trafficking situation. However, those with lived experience are on their own healing journeys and thus can be triggered by the situations of those they walk alongside. Ultimately, collaboration between NGOs, and between the government and NGOs, is important for effective long-term service delivery.

## **12 Refugees**

Despite their resilience and courage, individuals seeking refuge in a foreign land become exceedingly vulnerable. They may experience language barriers, isolation, racism and discrimination. These vulnerabilities affect access to housing, employment and community support. Many have experienced trauma and benefit from counselling services as well as an understanding and accepting community. Refugees who are well connected to their communities, aware of available resources and who have their basic needs met are less vulnerable to trafficking.

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## 13 Police Services

The brave individuals who answer emergency calls and reports of human trafficking may encounter situations that are dangerous to them and others. There are many laws to enforce, such as the laws surrounding the illegal nature of buying people, organs or sex. Adequate services and personnel are needed not only to apprehend traffickers but to prevent exploitation and to support those who have been wronged. Mental-health teams embedded in police departments work to de-escalate situations as well as offer support and understanding. Trauma-informed police officers can be supportive to those with lived experience. Police investigators compile evidence to prosecute traffickers. The testimony of victims is usually required in addition to the presentation of many pieces of irrefutable evidence. We must pray for God's guidance for the police as they search for evidence in the quest for justice.

## 14 Children's Aid Societies

These organizations work toward keeping the youth and children of our society safe. The decisions that involve intervening in a child's best interest are complex and require God's direction because the consequences are extensive. Loneliness, lack of family support, being in the foster care system, trauma and low self-esteem are all risk factors for MSHT. Workers require discernment, adequate resources, and knowledge of the risks. Strengthening family units where possible and providing interventions that promote the healing and empowerment of families are MSHT prevention initiatives.

## 15 Salvation Army Leadership

The heart of The Salvation Army is to "share the love of Jesus Christ, meet human needs and be a transforming influence in the communities of our world." In line with this mission, Army leadership is responsible for prioritizing and allocating time and resources toward the resolution of many different social injustices, including the ending of MSHT. The Army is also strategically placed to speak into issues of social injustice in our world; this happened in our early years when we advocated for an increased age of consent in Britain and when we created a match factory that treated workers fairly and avoided their exposure to the chemicals that caused phossy jaw. The Army's heart for justice continues today and, with God's direction, we believe we can make a huge difference in MSHT.

*"We must pray for God's guidance for the police"*





## 16 Affordable Housing Crisis

Those who are unhoused are at greater risk for MSHT. To have their basic needs met, people may sell their bodies and labour, their organs and even their loved ones. Sometimes people are exploited when traffickers threaten to remove access to housing unless they comply. Lasting solutions to the lack of affordable housing must be found to eliminate this significant risk factor. People with safe affordable homes are harder to traffic!

## 17 Youth Pastors

Youth pastors introduce young people to Jesus and help them grow in their faith and knowledge of the Bible. They also walk with them through the challenges of body image, emotions, relationships and life decisions. As respected confidants and advocates, they are perfectly placed to empower young people to recognize unhealthy relationships and stand up against social injustice, discrimination and consumerism. Traffickers look for vulnerabilities in youth, such as lack of family support, isolation, poverty, mental-health issues and addiction. Youth groups can provide safe places of belonging and support to youth that may have no one else. Empowered youth are hard to traffic!

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## 18 Online and Digital-Media Safety

The longest explanation is offered for this prayer point because the influence of digital media on MSHT is extensive and perhaps beyond thorough description. Years ago, the only people who could influence and have relationships with children, were ones they knew face to face. This is no longer the case. The justice system is still catching up to the ever-evolving tactics of online perpetrators.

Laws must be in place to protect society, especially our children and youth. Resources must also be in place to support them.

The use of video games, social media and chat rooms facilitate the connection of children and youth to friends and family around the world. They also facilitate connections to total strangers who may or may not be who they say they are. Valid information about youth can be found online by tech-savvy exploiters who pretend to know the friends of youth, their schools or their employers.

Exploiters can threaten youth with the sharing of intimate images which they gain after patiently building trust over days, months, even years of contact online. Within families, there must be strong safety measures and supervision of children's internet use to decrease the risk of exploitation.

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*"Those with lived experience are the experts on their circumstances."*

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In the labour trafficking realm, exploiters can digitally fabricate lucrative jobs to lure people to move to a new country. Once there, people may have their passports and cellphones taken and be forced to perform illegitimate, demeaning or unsafe work. People need to be educated to spot possible online deceptions. If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is!

Lastly, the world promotes unrealistic expectations for women and girls through digital media. It causes problems with self-esteem, and through the ease of access to pornography, distorts views of healthy relationships, even at young ages. Only God's love and miraculous intervention can heal the brokenness in our world that modern technology is perpetuating.

## 19 Survivors of Trauma

Those who experience trauma are more vulnerable to MSHT. They are also more likely to engage in high-risk behaviours, develop mental-health issues and face addictions. Sometimes the pain they encounter is numbed by substance use. Furthermore, repeated trauma contributes to changes in the body caused by the prolonged elevation of stress hormones. These chemicals increase the probability of things like autoimmune diseases, heart disease and mental-health issues. These chemicals can also affect the next generation through physical changes. Those with lived experience are the experts on their circumstances. They can choose their paths forward, finding healthy coping strategies and healing from trauma. This journey requires stamina, strength and bravery that must be recognized by service providers. Survivors also need God's protection from retraumatization and from further violence at the hands of exploiters who are still active.

## 20 Anti-Human Trafficking Initiatives

Initiatives are undertaken by survivors, governments, coalitions, organizations, businesses and schools, among others. This prayer topic is vast because anti-human trafficking initiatives are happening around the world. They are focused on varied forms of human trafficking: labour, sex, forced marriage and organs. Initiatives work better when there is collaboration and resource sharing. Direction is needed for their next steps for each to be successful. Those involved require safety and adequate resources. God can utilize the initiatives brought forward by brave and innovative people around the world to bring an end to MSHT.

## 21 People Experiencing Forced Marriage

Many women, men, youth and children are forced to marry against their will and consent. In many instances, these marriages involve spouses that are considerably older. Sometimes these marriages are arranged to pay

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off debts. Parents should advocate for the best interests of their children, listen to them and work toward their safety and happiness. When this does not occur, the voices of children and youth go unheard. If people were more aware of the warning signs and the resources available to help, fewer youth and children would face this injustice. Sometimes people hesitate to become involved because they consider it “a cultural thing”—that an arranged marriage that is agreed upon by both parties cannot be a forced marriage. Children and youth must be made aware of their rights and people must stand ready to advocate for them.

## **22** Pornography and Sexual Addictions

The digital age has made pornography easily accessible to everyone.

Essentially it can now be accessed from home 24-7, by people of any age, including children. Images cannot be easily forgotten. It can become an addiction as quickly as one to alcohol or drugs and affects all areas of a person’s life: financial, spiritual, relational, social, physical and emotional. As well, those who contribute to the production of pornography are not always consenting adults and there is no way for the average viewer to know the difference. Governments are trying to protect those involved, especially children, but this is very difficult to enact.

## **23** International Social Justice Advocates

Around the world, poverty, civil wars and natural disasters increase the number of people who are victimized by human

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*“While some vulnerabilities put people at greater risk, it can happen to anyone.”*

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trafficking. People are lured to new countries with promises of good work that prove to be false. The above conditions disconnect people from their families, support systems and known ways of life. Since traffickers specialize in spotting vulnerabilities and meeting needs, they are easily able to target people in these situations. Working together, international NGOs and government organizations can increase safety and available resources to those who experience vulnerabilities. These efforts require long-term funding, support and unity.

As well, international advocates work with governments to promote the fair treatment of workers. We must not be unaware that people continue to be exploited for their labour. Fruits and vegetables, gold and other minerals, textiles and seafood are just a few of the commodities that we rely on daily but are produced using forced labour in many parts of the world. We must be aware of where our products come from and both advocate for and support fair-trade principles.

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*“In order to prevent human trafficking, people need to be aware of how it happens”*

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## **24** MSHT Awareness

Many people believe that MSHT is something that only happens elsewhere. Sometimes it is believed that people are always brought to another country and then trafficked. These beliefs are false and create opportunities for traffickers to freely seek people within our country because the signs, risks and methods are not recognized. MSHT is not exclusive to big cities—it is everywhere. While some vulnerabilities put people at greater risk, it can happen to anyone. Knowing the

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*“Churches can provide places of safety.”*

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common signs, risks and methods can save lives. This education must start young since the average age of entry into sex trafficking is 12 to 14. While discussing this subject matter can be difficult for young people, it can be done sensitively. It is unsafe to consider this topic taboo. Knowledge is power and once again empowered people are hard to traffic!

## **25** Prevention Measures

In order to prevent human trafficking, people need to be aware of how it happens. It requires the buy-in of school boards, churches, organizations, businesses and governments. MSHT cannot be eliminated solely through the exit of people with lived experience. It can only be eliminated by being prevented. For example, the education of teachers, guidance counsellors, youth pastors and youth can decrease the likelihood of a young person being groomed, deceived and manipulated into sex trafficking. Communities educated about labour trafficking will recognize these situations and report them. When immigration officials teach people coming to a new country about the signs, risks and methods of MSHT, it decreases the likelihood of them being deceived by false employment promises.

## **26** Justice System

The prosecution of human traffickers relies heavily on the testimony of those with lived experience. Since this is often retraumatizing and in some instances exposes them to danger, the risk in testifying is prohibitive. This results in less convictions. Sentencing sometimes results

in the release of offenders in a short period of time, thus decreasing the sense of safety of those they exploited. Law enforcement teams trained in trauma-informed care and MSHT help to decrease the likelihood of revictimization. Sex-buyer accountability programs educate those accused about the repercussions of their actions on other human beings. Those who attend these programs often voice gratitude for this knowledge and do not reoffend. It is a helpful restorative justice tool.

## **27** Local Churches

Churches are places of acceptance and belonging. Supportive groups, Bible studies, musical groups and other activities provide points of connection for people. Since disconnection, loneliness and lack of family are all risk factors for MSHT, providing connection through church is MSHT prevention! Churches have opportunities to offer services and programs that empower people, especially children and youth. Any program that empowers people is MSHT prevention. Churches can provide places of safety. People within churches who are knowledgeable about the signs, risks and methods of MSHT can spot them and report them or take measures to prevent it.

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*“Those experiencing poverty have greater vulnerability to MSHT due to their many unmet needs.”*

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## **28** People With Neurodiversities and Disabilities

Those who are neurodiverse or experiencing a physical disability are at greater risk for trafficking. Programs that promote protection and safety, and inform about elevated risk, are helpful in preventing MSHT. Programs that teach

about healthy relationships, physical development and internet safety are empowering for people who are neurodiverse. Finding meaningful work that is free of discrimination promotes self-esteem, belonging and purpose which ultimately decreases the risk of MSHT.

## **29** People Facing Financial Instability

The cost of living continues to rise. The expenses of housing, food, medicine and other necessities of life frequently surpass the monthly income of many individuals and families. As a result, people are forced to choose between medicine and heating, housing and food. It can also result in taking drastic measures to earn money or relying on exploiters for things like housing. This can lead to debt bondage, where people owe money to those who have provided necessities. These debts are often astronomical, never ending and always increasing. Familial trafficking can result from these desperate situations. Those experiencing poverty have greater vulnerability to MSHT due to their many unmet needs. Traffickers capitalize on this and aim to meet their every need, creating dependence by threatening to remove those supports or hurt those they love.

## **30** After-School and Camp Programs

These programs are places of safety for children and youth who are potentially at risk for MSHT. Programs designed to empower and create belonging decrease risk. Staff and volunteers for these programs who are educated about the signs, risks and methods of MSHT are positioned to recognize potential dangers, report, intervene or walk alongside young people. Workers can be safe adults for children and youth who may not feel supported at home.

## **31** Church Prayer Initiatives

Jesus was passionate about social justice. He dedicated much of his ministry to advocating for those experiencing exploitation. He taught his disciples to pray that God's kingdom would come, "on earth as it is in heaven" (Matthew 6:10 *NIV*). He taught about the importance of persistence in prayer and about the power of prayer (see Luke 18). Some people may feel powerless in the face of MSHT, but we are not powerless. Everyone can pray. We can trust God, who can do everything that we think is impossible (see Ephesians 3:20). There is power in the prayers of God's people. Those actively working to end MSHT in all its forms are targets for the enemy because he does not want to lose his foothold on the world in this area. Therefore, we must pray for protection for those in these ministries. We must pray that Christians today would see this world as Jesus would, advocating for those experiencing vulnerabilities and taking action to protect people and prevent harm.

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*"Everyone can pray. We can trust God, who can do everything that we think is impossible"*

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### **Sources**

Moore, S., Morgan, S., & McOwen Yim, K. (2022). Ending Human Trafficking – A Handbook of Strategies for the Church Today. InterVarsity Press: Downer's Grove, IL.

# Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Awareness

