

# Care Today

*for generations yet to come.....*

**Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice; let the sea roar, and all that fills it;**

**Let the field exult, and everything in it. Then shall all the trees of the forest sing for joy.**

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Psalms 96:11-12



## The significance of variety of life (Biodiversity)

### What is Biodiversity?

The variety of life on Earth is known as Biodiversity. It is essential to sustaining the living networks and systems that provide us all with health, wealth, food, fuel and the vital services our lives depend on.

Species extinction is a natural part of Earth's history. However, over the past 100 years humans have increased the extinction rate by at least 100 times compared to the natural rate and so biodiversity is being destroyed at a great speed because of human activity and other factors. These include land use change, climate change, invasive species, overexploitation, pollution, and changes in human population, incomes or lifestyle.

Biodiversity losses are irreversible, impoverish us all and damage the life support systems we rely on every day.

### Ecosystem

Biodiversity is important in all ecosystems. An ecosystem is made up of all the living animals and plants and the non-living matter in a particular place, like a forest or lake. All forms of life in the ecosystem are interrelated and dependent on all other living and non-living things for food, nutrients and energy. When one population of animals, plants, or insects increase or decrease, other populations of living things are also affected.

Forests are important to ecosystems as they influence day-to-day weather and help in keeping the climate stable. Destruction of forests causes climate change and threatens the survival of plant and animal species in an ecosystem.

In some ways, the actions and reactions that take place within an ecosystem are like a spider web - when one strand is broken, the web starts to unravel. What affects one part of an ecosystem, affects the whole in some way.

### How we will be affected if the ecosystem is altered

**Food security:** Biodiversity is often a "safety net" that increases food security and the adaptability of some local communities to external economic and ecological disturbances.

**Vulnerability:** Loss of mangroves and coral reefs, which are excellent natural buffers against floods and storms have made many communities more vulnerable to natural disasters.

**Health:** A balanced diet depends on the availability of a wide variety of foods, which in turn depends on the conservation of biodiversity.

**Energy security:** Shortage of adequate wood fuel leaves people vulnerable to illness and malnutrition because of the lack of resources to heat homes, cook food, and boil water.

**Clean water:** The continued loss of forests and the destruction of watersheds reduce the quality and availability of water supplied to household use and agriculture.

**Social relations:** Many cultures attach spiritual, aesthetic, recreational, and religious values to ecosystems or their components.

### Consider the present rate at which biodiversity is being affected!

- Scientists estimate that between 150 and 200 species of life become extinct every 24 hours.
- In early 1900s, tigers numbered over 100,000 throughout Asia. Current estimates indicate that less than 3,200 of these remain in the wild.



- IUCN estimates that 172 species of animals in India are considered threatened of extinction which includes 53 species of mammals, 69 birds, 23 reptiles and 3 amphibians.
- Of the world's 270,000 known species of plants, 12.5 percent are found to be at risk.



- As many as 3,000-4,000 species of higher plants may be under a degree of threat in India
- 95 percent of plants used in Ayurvedic medicine are collected from the wild and are not cultivated; hence this has caused their extinction.



- Of the 359 prioritized wild medicinal plant species, some 335 have been assigned a Red List status of critically endangered, endangered, vulnerable, threatened or near threatened.
- India has some 2356 known species of amphibians, birds, mammals and reptiles, of these, 18.4% are endemic, meaning they exist in no other country, and 10.8% are threatened of extinction.

#### **Sources:**

<http://greenanswers.com/q/9004/animals-wildlife/why-indias-tiger-population-declining>

<http://www.wildlife-tour-india.com/endangered-species.html>

<http://ces.iisc.ernet.in/hpg/cesmg/indiabio.html>

<http://www.well.com/~davidu/plantextinction.html>

<http://www.unep.org/wed/2010/english/>

<http://urbanext.illinois.edu/ecosystems/teacherguide5.html>

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=33393&Cr=environment>



# ORDER OF WORSHIP

## 1. Call To Worship – Psalms 19:1-6

The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech: night after night they display knowledge. There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard. Their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world. In the heavens he has pitched a tent for the sun, which is like a bridegroom coming forth from his pavilion, like a champion rejoicing to run his course. It rises at one end of the heavens and makes its circuit to the other; nothing is hidden from its heat.

## 2. HYMN: ‘*All Things Bright And Beautiful*’ or any other relevant song.

## 3. OPENING PRAYER:

Gracious heavenly Father, we give you glory and honor for your creation and for the beauty of all your creation. We praise you for being the sustaining life of all things. We thank you for entrusting us to steward over them. Help us to uphold the responsibility you have given us to lovingly and efficiently care for your creation and make it a blessing to all creation. As we come together to listen to your words, may the Spirit which transcend all understanding speak to us, provoke and evoke our thoughts towards a new concern for your creations. Prepare our hearts to receive your blessings and speak to us afresh. In Jesus Christ name, **Amen.**

## 4 . RESPONSIVE READING:

### **Psalms 148: 1-13**

**L** – Praise the Lord.

**P** – Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise him in the heights above.

**L** – Praise him, all his angels, praise him, all his heavenly hosts. Praise him, sun and moon, praise him, all you shining stars.

**P** – Praise him, you highest heavens and you waters above the skies.

**ALL** – Let them praise the name of the Lord, for he commanded and they were created.

**L** – He set them in place forever and ever; he gave a decree that will never pass away.

**P** – Praise the Lord from the Earth, you great sea creatures and all ocean depths, lightning and hail, snow and clouds, stormy winds that do his bidding,

**L** – You mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars, wild animals and all cattle, small creatures and flying birds,

**P** – Kings of the Earth and all nations, you princes and all rulers on Earth, young men and maidens, old men and children.

**ALL** – Let them praise the name of the Lord, for His name alone is exalted; His splendor is above the Earth and the heavens.

## **5. CONFESSION:**

**L-Leader**

**P-People**

**L** – We marveled at the sight of your handiworks, and rejoice for the stewardship bestowed on us over your creations; forgive us Father for abusing this privilege.

**P** – *Lord, in your mercy forgive us.*

**L** – Lord, we have fallen short of your intention for us to be the stewards for Your creation, we confess our inability to work with sincerity.

**P** – *Lord, in your mercy forgive us and create in us a new and selfless heart.*

**L** – We have desecrated the land you have given us. We have endangered the life of many species in our greed and consumerist lifestyle.

**P** – *We confess we are sinners, O Lord, have mercy on us.*

**L** – We have failed to protect the endangered species and failed to show our love, care and concern to these majestic creations.

**P** – *Lord, in your mercy forgive us.*

**L** – We have failed to appreciate the greenery, the mountains, the valleys and the contributions of the animals and other species towards the balance in our biosphere. We have cut down the trees and poached the animals for our own selfish desires.

**P** – *Lord, in your mercy forgive us and move within us, O God, to care for the world we live in.*

**L** – Lord, in your mercy forgive us, create in us a new heart, and open our eyes to see the perfect beauty and harmony of your creations, which we have failed to see before. May our hearts be encouraged to strive for the peaceful co-existence and protection of every creation, now and forever.

**P** – Lord, in your mercy hear our prayer and grant our grace to care for all of your creation.

**6. OLD TESTAMENT READING:** Genesis 1:11-12, 20-25

**7. HYMN:** ‘*How Great Thou Art*’ or any other relevant song.

**8. NEW TESTAMENT READING:** Matthew 6:25-30

**9. OFFERING/HYMN:**

‘*Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow*’ or ‘*Showers of Blessing*’ or any other relevant song.

**10. OFFERTORY PRAYER:**

Yours, O LORD, is the greatness, the power, the glory, the majesty and the splendor, for everything in heaven and earth is yours. Yours, O LORD, is the kingdom; you are exalted as head over all. Wealth and honor comes from you; You are the ruler of all things. In your hands are strength and power to exalt and give strength to all. Now, our God, we give you thanks, and praise your glorious name for the countless blessings we received. Knowing that everything comes from you and you alone are the source of everything. Accept our humble offerings and gifts, bless them and use it for the extension of your kingdom here on earth. In Christ name, **Amen.**

**11. SERMON:**

**12. HYMN:** ‘*This is My Father’s World*’ or ‘*Great is Thy Faithfulness*’ or any other relevant song.

**13. BENEDICTION:**

For from him and through him and to him are all things, may the grace of Jesus Christ give you thoughtfulness for the environment and may the love of God give you a heart to be concerned about His creation and the power of the Holy Spirit give you knowledge and wisdom to care for the environment and to all of whom we leave this land might find it a blessing. Help us to be good stewards of the land for now and for the generations yet to come. In Jesus Christ’s name. **Amen.**

## IDEAS FOR ACTION

*You may not be able to reduce global warming, end pollution and save endangered species single-handedly, but by choosing to live an earth-friendly lifestyle you can do a lot every day to help achieve those goals.*

- There are many things we can do to improve habitat for wildlife. Try to learn as much as possible about issues of environment, India's wildlife (from books, the internet, seminars and talks), and about the importance of the 'Web of Life'.
- Get people involved in your cause - in your colony, in your colleges and schools as well as your local MLAs.
- Organize trips to local wildlife areas, or botanical gardens and the zoo.
- Keep in touch with the Honorary Wildlife Warden and conservation NGOs in your area. Volunteer wherever possible.
- Plant trees and build a bird feeder in your backyard.
- Keep in touch with media people and alert them regarding issues of environmental concern
- Every time you leave your car/vehicle at home, you reduce air pollution, lower greenhouse gas emissions, improve your health and save money.
- Recycle household items by selling them or donating them to charity rather than throwing it away.
- Be part of lifestyle change programmes (like Earth Day), switching off lights etc.

- In day to day life, remember the six 'R's:

Refuse,

Reduce,

Re-use,

Reinvent,

Recycle (paper, plastic etc)

Replenish (water-harvesting, planting trees etc).

***“ What can you do if you find somebody trading in live/dead wild animals or their body parts?”***

If possible, collect more information discreetly, and contact WPSI(Wildlife Protection Society of India) as soon as possible at: (011) 4163.5920 / 21

***“ How can you help if you find an injured animal on the street?”***

Please contact a local animal rescue organization or your local zoo.

Learn more about issues of Environment from organizations like:

**Greenpeace** - <http://www.greenpeace.org/international/>

**Noah Alliance** - <http://www.noahalliance.org/>

**A Rocha** - <http://www.arocha.org/int-en/index.html>

### **About EFICOR:**

EFICOR is a national Christian relief and development organisation. It began in 1967 as a unit of Evangelical Fellowship of India (EFI), a national alliance of churches, church based institutions and individuals, to provide relief to the drought-hit state of Bihar. EFICOR became an independent organisation in 1980. Since then, EFICOR has been working with the needy and disadvantaged communities in the poorest districts in India

EFICOR is registered under the Karnataka Societies Registration Act. 1960 (Karnataka Act No. 17 of 1960) on 30th April, 1980. The Registration number is 70/80-81

EFICOR is also registered under the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act. 1976 and the registration number is 231650411

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