

POCKET PRAYERS

THE
UPPER
ROOM[®]

PRAYERS
for
COMFORT



*Words of Faith
for Times of Pain*

Contents

Words of Faith

For Hope	2-7
For Healing	8-11
For Comfort	12-15, 18-19
Scripture Guide	16-17
For a Loved One Who Is Ill	20-23
For a Loved One Who Is Dying	24-26
For Those Who Mourn	27
From the Jewish Tradition	28-31

About The Upper Room®	32
-----------------------	----

Faith

Read John 8:25-30

In thee, O LORD, do I hope.

—Psalm 38:15 (KJV)

Above the entrance to a tunnel in the Austrian Alps, these words, “In thee, O LORD, do I hope,” are written in the old Roman language. I read the words through the window of the car the moment before we started into the dark. To me they became a sermon that I never shall forget.

No mistake can be greater than the idea that Christians should be spared the tunnels in life and travel only in open places in radiant sunshine. On the contrary, experience shows that we will be tried as much as others, if not more.

The difference is not that Christians are spared the hardships of life. Here is the great difference: Christians can write on every tunnel in life those words: “In thee, O LORD, do I hope.” They never travel in the dark alone. Because of faith in Christ, Christians always have God’s Spirit in their heart and life. Christ lets us see, even in the darkness, glimpses of light opening into the world of light.

*Prayer: O God, we thank you that we need never be alone, for you are near. You enable us to meet darkness as well as light. In the name of Christ, who teaches us to believe in you and pray, “Our Father who art in heaven. . . .” Amen.**

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

Most important is not what happens to us but that we meet all things with faith in God.

—Torbjorn Wikmark (Sweden)

**See page 19 for the full text of The Lord’s Prayer.*

God Gives Hope

Read Romans 5:1-5

Endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us.

—Romans 5:4-5 (NRSV)

An old song kept coming into my mind this week after I heard some disturbing news. I don't remember who wrote or sang the song that I heard in my childhood, but it had a recurring thought: "You gotta have hope, miles and miles of hope."

In dealing with life we sometimes lose our faith, but more often we lose hope. When we face the unpleasantness of life, when reality somehow knocks us over, hope becomes difficult to hold on to.

As the disciples began to witness the scenes leading up to and finally ending with the crucifixion, they seemed to lose hope in any kingdom, now or ever.

In the concluding moments of his sermon "Shattered Dreams," Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., said, "The Christian faith makes it possible for us nobly to accept that which cannot be changed, to meet disappointments and sorrow with an inner poise, and to absorb the most intense pain without abandoning our sense of hope, for we know, as Paul testified, in life or death, in Spain or in Rome, that 'all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose.'"

Prayer: Dear God, help us to have hope—hope in you that will see us through our difficult times. In Jesus' name. Amen.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

Our hope is secure in Christ.

—Emile A. Rousseau, Jr. (Louisiana)

Asking Why

Read Psalm 130

I wait for the LORD, my soul waits, and in his word I hope.

—Psalm 130:5 (NRSV)

The wilderness is never a comfortable place to be. It is a place of despair, loneliness, and abandonment. Sometimes we are in the wilderness as a result of our own actions, sometimes because of what others have done. Either way, it is always full of questions and doubts and fears.

My own wilderness in these past months has been my struggle as I try to understand why my brother has Alzheimer's disease. I keep asking, *Why, Lord?* To live by faith is to lean on God as we face life with its sometimes agonizing seriousness. I do not understand why my brother has this disease. But I am learning that all I love and cherish is the Lord's. When I wait for the Lord, I learn many things. Most of all, I learn hope—hope for what God can do in my life and the lives of those I love, hope for what God can do with any situation.

Prayer: Lord, teach us to wait and put our hope in you, that we may give you the glory. Amen.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

Have life's hardships made me better or bitter?

—Martha M. Friesen (Nebraska)

Filled with Angels

Read Genesis 28:10-17

**Surely the LORD is in this place—
and I did not know it!**

—Genesis 28:16 (NRSV)

We all experience lonely times in our lives when it seems that God has abandoned us. For me, one of those times was when my dad was struck with cancer. He and my mother lived a distance from my home, so I made many trips back and forth, a three-hour drive each way. I had a lot of time to wrestle with my heart and thoughts.

One day as I drove home from seeing my dad, the horizon was dark in every direction. But there was one tiny opening in the clouds. Shafts of light poured through that hole, shedding light on the earth. For me those shafts of light were like the ladders in the story of Jacob and the angels. They told me that surely God was in this place, in this difficult time.

I knew it was a message for me. The day had been filled with bad news; the verdict for my dad's life was not good. Yet hope was alive, and I felt God was with us. I realized that God's plan brings forth the light in the darkness, that Jesus Christ came to illumine the darkness and to provide the way to the wide world of radiance and splendor. The way is open between heaven and earth, and every lonely spot is filled with angels.

Prayer: Lord, help me to recognize the opening that reveals your radiance and love in the dark places of my life. Amen.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

In every lonely place, God surrounds us with angels.

—Barbara Collier (Indiana)

Because He Lives

Read Luke 24:1-9

Jesus said, “Because I live, you also will live.”

—John 14:19 (NRSV)

The Easter card from my parents arrived a week ahead of time. Pulling the card from its envelope, I smiled. How like Mom to send things early. She knew I would display the card in a prominent place and read it often.

Opening the card, I read the printed verse and the words penned below in Mom’s handwriting: “I’m thankful for Jesus and what he means to me. I’m glad that because he lives, I too will live, now and forever.”

I placed the card on my desk and smiled again. That was Mom all right, taking advantage of every opportunity to share her faith.

But I was not smiling the Tuesday after Easter when I entered my living room. Setting down my suitcase, I stood for a moment as though in a daze. I had just returned from Mom’s funeral. A series of strokes had taken her unexpectedly.

I crossed the room and reached for the Easter card. This time as I read, the tears flowed freely. How was it that I, who had heard the resurrection story from childhood, had never before grasped the hope it conveyed? I didn’t know. I only knew that now I understood. Because Jesus triumphed over death, my mom lives.

Prayer: God of hope, thank you for your promise of life everlasting, assured by your Son. Amen.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

Because Jesus lives, I shall live too.

—Christal M. Ahlemann (Missouri)

Comforting Assurance

Read John 14:15-18

Jesus said, "I will come to you."

—John 14:18 (KJV)

My husband and I were in the midst of a recording session. During one of Roy's numbers, "A Cowboy Prayer," a secretary handed me a message: "Mrs. Roy Rogers, call Italy, Texas. Urgent!" The telephone number given me was that of my brother. My heart sank as I thought of my 83-year-old mother, who was in a rest home there.

Breathing a quick prayer for courage, I dialed the number. My sister-in-law answered—and in a strange, quiet voice told me that my brother, my only one, had just passed away from a heart attack in a hotel room in New York. He was 56 years old.

One night soon after his funeral I was unable to sleep. In tears, I started to pray, beseeching the Lord for some sign of comfort for my aching heart. I lay there under the covers, waiting—looking to the Lord expectantly for what he had promised—"I will come to you."

Suddenly, I felt a firm but gentle pressure on my entire body, as if invisible hands had soothed me in assurance that all was well. I knew with sudden clarity that the spirit of my beloved brother had returned to God. And I slept.

Prayer: I thank you, O Lord, for your comforting presence in every time of need and for the assurance that you do all things well. Amen.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

*The Lord is near to those who believe in him
and depend upon him.*

—Dale Evans Rogers (California)

February 10, 1974

Heal me, O LORD, and I shall
be healed;
save me, and I shall be saved;
for you are my praise.

Jeremiah 17:14 (NRSV)

The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases,
his mercies never come to an end;
they are new every morning;
great is your faithfulness.
“The LORD is my portion,” says my soul,
“therefore I will hope in him.”

Lamentations 3:22-24 (NRSV)

He heals the brokenhearted,
and binds up their wounds.
He determines the number of the stars;
he gives to all of them their names.
Great is our Lord, and abundant in power;
his understanding is beyond measure.
The LORD lifts up the downtrodden.

Psalm 147:3-6 (NRSV)

The LORD your God is with you,
he is mighty to save.
He will take great delight in you,
he will quiet you with his love,
he will rejoice over you with singing.

Zephaniah 3:17 (NIV)

Tender God,
who embraces us with love,
through the ages
you have told us,
“Fear Not.”
Whisper it again in our ears,
write it on our hearts.

Amen.

Near to the Heart of God

There is a place of quiet rest,
near to the heart of God;
a place where sin cannot molest,
near to the heart of God.

There is a place of comfort sweet,
near to the heart of God;
a place where we our Savior meet,
near to the heart of God.

There is a place of full release,
near to the heart of God;
a place where all is joy and peace,
near to the heart of God.

Refrain:

O Jesus, blest Redeemer,
sent from the heart of God,
hold us who wait before thee
near to the heart of God.

Cleland B. McAfee, 1903

You hold my right hand.
You guide me with your counsel,
and afterward you will receive me
with honor.
Whom have I in heaven but you?
And there is nothing on earth that
I desire other than you.
My flesh and my heart may fail,
but God is the strength of my heart
and my portion forever.

Psalm 73:23-26 (NRSV)

God says:

“As a mother comforts her child,
so I will comfort you.”

Isaiah 66:13 (NRSV)

SCRIPTURE GUIDE:

Words of Faith for Times of Pain

In times of pain, many have found strength and help in these words of faith from the Bible. Use this index to help you find scripture to meditate on during such moments.

When the burden is heavy **Matthew 11:28-30**

When you are worried **Philippians 4:6-7;**
1 Peter 5:7

When you don't know who to turn to **Psalm 121**

When you need a shelter **Psalm 91**

When you need courage **Joshua 1:9**

When you have a troubled heart **John 14:27**

When you are afraid **Psalm 27:1**

When you need a new beginning **Lamentations 3:22-24**

When you need strength **Isaiah 41:10**

When the way seems dark	Psalm 23:4
When you are afraid of dying	John 11:25-26
When you need endurance	Hebrews 12:1-2
When you feel as if you are drowning	Psalm 69:1-3
When you don't know what to pray	Romans 8:26-27
When it seems as if Jesus is not with you	Luke 24:13-35
When you fear the future	Jeremiah 29:10-11
When you want to thank God	Isaiah 25:1
When you need an advocate	Hebrews 4:15-16
When you need God's forgiveness	Psalm 51:1-3; Romans 8:1
When you want to believe	Mark 9:24

Psalm 23

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.
He makes me to lie down in green pastures;
He leads me beside the still waters.
He restores my soul;
He leads me in the paths of righteousness
For His name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the
shadow of death,
I will fear no evil;
For You are with me;
Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me in the presence
of my enemies;
You anoint my head with oil;
My cup runs over.
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
All the days of my life;
And I will dwell in the house of the LORD
Forever.

(NKJV)

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come,
thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power,
and the glory, forever.

Amen.

God of the darkness and the day,
It is so hard to wait
and to trust that you are present.
Sit with us in the darkness
help us to sleep
calm our anxiety
and bring us
to each new day
in hope.

Amen.

I wait for the LORD, my soul waits,
and in his word I hope;
my soul waits for the Lord
more than those who watch for
the morning,
more than those who watch for
the morning.

Psalm 130:5-6 (NRSV)

God of Hope,
Your love makes possible the impossible. When we are facing seemingly impossible situations, remind us of your love and the possibilities it proclaims.

AMEN.

Hope in a Difficult Time

There is something deeper than trouble.

It is mercy.

God's amazing grace.

Carrying, lifting, holding us in all seasons.

There is something more powerful than despair.

It is mercy.

God's amazing love.

*Seeing us through dark nights, waves of sadness,
mountains of grief.*

There is something longer lasting than pain.

It is mercy.

God's healing touch.

*Bringing us hope, leading us to joy, teaching
us to sing.*

Larry J. Peacock

Peace I leave with you;
my peace I give to you.
I do not give to you as the world
gives. Do not let your hearts be
troubled, and do not let them
be afraid.

John 14:27 (NRSV)

O Love That Wilt Not Let Me Go

○ Love that wilt not let me go,
I rest my weary soul in thee;
I give thee back the life I owe,
that in thine ocean depths
its flow may richer, fuller be.

○ Light that followest all my way,
I yield my flickering torch to thee;
my heart restores its borrowed ray,
that in thy sunshine's blaze
its day may brighter, fairer be.

○ Joy that seekest me through pain,
I cannot close my heart to thee;
I trace the rainbow thru the rain,
and feel the promise is not vain,
that morn shall tearless be.

○ Cross that liftest up my head,
I dare not ask to fly from thee;
I lay in dust life's glory dead,
and from the ground there blossoms red
life that shall endless be.

George Matheson, 1882

Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 8:35, 37-39 (NRSV)

For Those Who Mourn

Gracious God,
as your Son wept with Mary and Martha at the
tomb of Lazarus,
look with compassion on those who grieve,
[especially *Name(s)*].
Grant them the assurance of your presence now
and faith in your eternal goodness,
that in them may be fulfilled the promise
that those who mourn shall be comforted;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Laurence Hull Stookey

A Prayer for Healing

Heal us, *Adonai*, and we shall be healed.
Help us and save us for You are our song.
Grant perfect healing for all our afflictions.

On behalf of someone ill you may add:

May it be Your will, *Adonai* our God and God of our ancestors, to send perfect healing, of body and of soul, to _____ along with all others who are stricken.

For You are the faithful and merciful God
of healing.
Praised are You, *Adonai*, healer of the people Israel.

Rabbi Kerry M. Olitzky

Reaching for Wholeness

Compassionate God,
Healer of my body,
Healer of my soul,
 heal me.
Strengthen my ailing body;
 soothe my aching heart;
mend my shattered existence.
 Make me whole.

Rebbe Nachman of Breslov

In Thanks

Loving, caring God,
all the happiness and fulfillment
in my life
come only from You.
Knowing how absolute
is my dependence on You,
I find peace of mind.
Your presence
suffuses my life,
caressing me with
Hope, joy and love.
I've tasted Your love,
I've known Your compassion,
I've experienced Your patience,
And I am filled with
gratefulness.

Rebbe Nachman of Breslov

Overcoming Loss

Dear God,
suddenly I'm alone; I'm in pain.
As I search for some source
of comfort,
the world—
the world so full, so bustling—
seems so empty now.
It's cold
and it's frightening
in this hollow that is me—
in this hollow that once brimmed
with confidence and joy.
God, pull me back—
back to the world of the living,
back to a life of action
and human relationships.

Rebbe Nachman of Breslov

ABOUT THE UPPER ROOM®

For over 80 years *The Upper Room* daily devotional guide has been helping people listen to God and discover God's presence in their lives through daily devotional practice. For more information about our resources, visit our web site: www.upperroom.org.

To order an individual subscription to *The Upper Room* daily devotional guide, regular or large-print edition, order online or call 1-800-972-0433. A one-year subscription is only \$13.99.

Prayers for Comfort is published by Upper Room Ministries® in partnership with Methodist Healthcare Ministries of San Antonio, Texas. Our prayer is that this little booklet will encourage you to rest in God's loving presence during the difficult days of a hospital stay. May you find words of hope, peace, and comfort on its pages.

Meditations on pages 2-6 are from *100 Meditations on Hope*, © 1995, The Upper Room.

Meditation on page 7 reprinted courtesy of the Roy Rogers-Dale Evans Museum, Branson, MO.

Unmarked prayers were written by *Alive Now* editors. Prayer on page 12 by George Graham.

Prayers on pages 20 and 22 by Melissa Tidwell.

Pages 13, 19, 25 *The United Methodist Hymnal*. © 1989 The United Methodist Publishing House.

Page 27 "For Those Who Mourn" © 1989 United Methodist Publishing House. Used by permission.

Page 23 reprinted with permission of the author. Reprinted from *Alive Now*, September/October 1997.

Page 28 from *Jewish Paths to Healing and Wholeness: A Personal Guide to Dealing with Suffering*, © 2000 Rabbi Kerry M. Olitzky (Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights Publishing). Permission granted by Jewish Lights Publishing, P.O. Box 237, Woodstock, VT 05091 www.jewishlights.com.

Pages 29-31 from *The Gentle Weapon: Prayers for Everyday and Not-So-Everyday Moments* © 1999 The Breslov Research Institute (Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights Publishing). Permission granted by Jewish Lights Publishing, P.O. Box 237, Woodstock, VT 05091 www.jewishlights.com.

Scripture quotations marked (KJV) are taken from the King James Version of the Bible.

Scripture quotations marked (NIV) are taken from the HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION. Copyright 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society. Used by permission Zondervan Publishing House. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked (NRSV) are taken from the New Revised Standard Version Bible, copyright 1989, Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked (NKJV) are taken from the New King James Version. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

ISBN: 0-8358-9896-2