

THE UPPER ROOM®

POCKET
PRAYERS
for
TIMES OF
ILLNESS

ABOUT THIS RESOURCE

The scripture and prayers in this booklet are offered for your comfort, whether you are experiencing your own illness or the illness of a loved one.

Our prayer is that this publication will encourage you to rest in God's loving presence during the difficult days of illness. May the words of hope found here bless you richly and give you peace.

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.

DO YOU NEED PRAYER?

Visit The Upper Room Prayer Ministry [http://
prayer-center.upperroom.org/prayer-wall](http://prayer-center.upperroom.org/prayer-wall)

Contents

Morning Prayer	2
Evening Prayer	3
The Lord's Prayer	4
Meditations of Faith and Hope	5-10
Words of Healing	11-15
Scripture Guide	16-17
Psalm 23	18
Words of Comfort	19-24
More Prayers/Special Prayers	25-31
Credits	32

Morning Prayer

For the gift of this new day, O Lord, we are grateful. Remind us that we are not alone, but that you are always with us. Give us courage and faith to face whatever today brings. And let us never forget that even when we do not know how to pray, the Holy Spirit prays for us in a way that our own words cannot express.

Amen.

Evening Prayer

KKeep watch, dear Lord, with those who work, or watch, or weep this night, and give your angels charge over those who sleep. Tend the sick, Lord Christ; give rest to the weary, bless the dying, soothe the suffering, pity the afflicted, shield the joyous; and all for your love's sake.

Amen.

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.

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.

—Torbjörn Wikmark (Sweden)

**See page 4 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)

The Healing Room

Read 1 Corinthians 12:4-11

To another [are given] gifts of healing by the one Spirit.

— 1 Corinthians 12:9 (NRSV)

I had been in the hospital room before. It contained two chairs, two beds, two IV stands, and two nightstands. I was instructed to remove my clothing, put on the hospital gown, and lie on the bed.

In that room members of the medical staff fussed over me to aid in restoring my health. They gave me oxygen, drew blood for lab work, took X-rays, and inserted an IV. In that room I felt pain, felt helpless, saw concern and compassion, heard words of encouragement, and received prayers, cards, flowers, and visitors. The miracle of healing slowly began, and my health was restored.

Sometimes, all we can do is to depend on other people and their God-given skills to aid us. Sometimes all we can do is to learn how to be a receiver. Strange as it sounds, learning to receive can make us more generous and compassionate givers. Today, let us receive the gifts of peace, joy, and hope that God, the Great Physician, offers.

Prayer: Dear God, we thank you for your servants whom you have gifted with the healing touch, for we know that all healing — body, mind, spirit — comes from you. Amen.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

All healing comes from God.

—Charles L. Flory (Indiana)

Be Freed!

Read Mark 5:25-34

Is any one of you sick? . . . Call the elders of the church to pray.

—James 5:14 (NIV)

Pushing her way through the dense crowd, the sick woman reached out to touch Jesus, knowing that if she did she would be healed. He turned at once, asking, “Who touched me?” Trembling, the woman confessed. “Daughter,” he responded, “your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering” (Mark 5:34, NIV).

How wonderful it would be to have faith like hers, faith that reaches out for healing! But often we do not turn to God for help with our pain, forgetting that all healing comes from God. If we rely only on medical science to address what is wrong with us, we miss the fullness of healing that comes only from God.

The “laying on of hands” practiced in many churches today has its roots in the healing ministry of Christ. We need the healing that only Christ can give, healing not just for particular ailments but to bring us wholeness of body, mind, and spirit.

Prayer: Holy Creator, make us holy; holy Jesus, make us holy; Holy Spirit, make us holy; holy God, make us whole. Amen.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY
Only God can make us whole.

—Barbara Haynes (Kent, England)

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 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)

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

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.

SCRIPTURE GUIDE:

Words of Faith for Times of Illness

In times of illness, 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	Psalms 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	Psalms 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



BIBLICAL STORIES OF HEALING

Jesus heals woman with hemorrhage	Matthew 9:18-26
Jesus heals the possessed	Matthew 15:21-28
Jesus heals the epileptic	Matthew 17:14-21
Jesus heals the blind	Matthew 20:29-34
Jesus heals the lepers	Luke 17:11-19

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)

God says:

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

Isaiah 66:13 (NRSV)

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)

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)

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

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)

Amazing Grace

Amazing grace! How sweet the sound
that saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found;
was blind, but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
and grace my fears relieved;
how precious did that grace appear
the hour I first believed.

Through many dangers, toils, and snares,
I have already come;
'tis grace hath brought me safe thus far,
and grace will lead me home.

The Lord has promised good to me,
his word my hope secures;
he will my shield and portion be,
as long as life endures.

When we've been there ten thousand years,
bright shining as the sun,
we've no less days to sing God's praise
than when we first begun.

John Newton, 1779

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.

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.

A Prayer for Recovery from Sickness

O God, the strength of the weak and the comfort of sufferers: Mercifully accept our prayers, and grant to your servant _____ the help of your power, that his/her sickness may be turned into health, and our sorrow into joy; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

On behalf of the one who is ill, you may add:

_____, I lay my hands upon you in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, beseeching him to uphold you and fill you with his grace, that you may know the healing power of his love.
Amen.

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)

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

CREDITS

Prayer on page 2 by Kathleen Stephens.

Page 3 and 27 from *The Book of Common Prayer* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990) pp. 458, 456.

Pages 4, 13, 24 from *The United Methodist Hymnal*. © 1989 The United Methodist Publishing House.

Meditations on pages 5-8 are from *100 Meditations on Hope*, © 1995, The Upper Room.

Meditation on page 9 is from *The Upper Room* magazine, © 2000, The Upper Room.

Meditation on page 10 is from *The Upper Room* magazine, © 2001, The Upper Room.

Prayer on page 15 by George Graham.

Page 22 reprinted with permission of the author. Reprinted from *Alive Now*, September/October 1997.

Prayers on pages 25 and 26 by Melissa Tidwell.

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: 0-8358-1000-3

Words of hope, comfort, and healing for all whose lives are touched by illness. Prayers, scripture, and meditations selected by The Upper Room®.

LORD, heal me and I will be
completely well;
rescue me and I will be perfectly
safe.

You are the one I praise!

Jeremiah 17:14

UPPER ROOM MINISTRIES®

www.upperroom.org

ISBN 0-8358-1000-3

ABOUT THIS RESOURCE

The scripture and prayers in this booklet are offered for your comfort, whether you are experiencing your own illness or the illness of a loved one.

Our prayer is that this publication will encourage you to rest in God's loving presence during the difficult days of illness. May the words of hope found here bless you richly and give you peace.

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.

DO YOU NEED PRAYER?

Visit The Upper Room Prayer Ministry [http://
prayer-center.upperroom.org/prayer-wall](http://prayer-center.upperroom.org/prayer-wall)