

Prayers for this time

Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. — *1 Peter 5:7*

Lord, Keep Your people,
in the arms of Your embrace.
Shelter them under Your wings.
Be their light in darkness.
Be their hope in distress.
Be their calm in anxiety.
Be strength in their weakness.
Be their comfort in pain.
Be their song in the night.

Loving Jesus, you are compassionate to those in need
and heal the sick in body and mind.
Look kindly on those who are fearful at this time.
Help us all to put away all thoughts and actions
that separate us from you and from one another.
Give us grace to live our lives
confident in your promise that you are with us always.
Amen.

Lord Jesus Christ,
you taught us to love our neighbour,
and to care for those in need
as if we were caring for you.
In this time of anxiety, give us strength
to comfort the fearful, to care for the sick,
and to assure the isolated
of our love, and your love,
for your name's sake.
Amen.

Lord Jesus Christ, you said to your disciples, 'I am with you always'.
Be with me today, as I offer myself to you.
Hear my prayers for others and for myself,
and keep me in your care.
Amen.

Have mercy on me, my God, have mercy on me, for in you I take refuge.
I will take refuge in the shadow of your wings — *Psalms 57:1*

Prayers for specific people and circumstances

Praying for people who are infected with COVID-19 or facing quarantine:

Jesus, you drew close to people of all ages and stations of life who longed to be set free from physical, mental, and spiritual ailments. Be present now to those who need your loving touch because of COVID-19. May they feel your power of restoration through the care of doctors and nurses. Take away fear, anxiety, and feelings of isolation from people receiving treatment or under quarantine. Give a sense of purpose in pursuing health and protecting others from exposure to the disease. Protect their families and friends and bring peace to all who love them.

Praying for medical professionals, caregivers, and researchers:

Faithful God, we pray for our healthcare workers and first responders. Renew their energy and sustain them on long shifts. Bring your protection upon them as they work with patients. Multiply their supplies so they have the protective items needed to stay safe on the job. Inspire and invigorate the research doctors developing better tests to diagnose the virus, create vaccines to prevent it, and identify protocols to eliminate the disease's spread.

Praying for decision makers:

Father, we pray for those who bear the responsibility for leading us in this time. Assist those making decisions that affect the lives and futures of our families, communities, countries, and the wider world. Grant them wisdom and clarity of thought and enable their communication with each other and with the public. May we receive and heed their guidance. May truth and compassion be their touchstones as they set policies for our protection.

Praying for us as we adjust to new ways of living for a time:

Holy Spirit, as we adjust to new ways of living, as businesses and schools close, we ask that you guide us in our new temporary realities. Give us grace towards each other, especially when we are tired or tense. Prompt worn-out parents to speak words of kindness and encouragement to their children. Help children find creative ways to experience the beauty of all you have created and to continue learning and growing.

Praying for those experiencing financial stress:

Jesus, we thank you for your faithfulness when we have needed it most. We pray for those who are fearful because they don't know they will provide for themselves and their families and how bills and obligations will be met or to not be able to provide for families. As people feel financial strain during the uncertainty, bring them comfort and peace and enable them to get the help they need.

Prayers drawn from the experience and wisdom of the ages

Christ be with me, Christ within me,
Christ behind me, Christ before me,
Christ beside me, Christ to win me,
Christ to comfort and restore me.
Christ beneath me, Christ above me,
Christ in quiet, Christ in danger,
Christ in hearts of all that love me,
Christ in mouth of friend and stranger.

St Patrick - from St Patrick's Breastplate

Alone with none but thee, my God,
I journey on my way.
What need I fear, when thou art near O king of night and day?
Safer am I within thy hand
Than if a host did round me stand.

Columba, c.521 - 597

Give me the grace to recollect myself in the little heaven of my soul where You have established Your dwelling. There You let me find You, there I feel that You are closer to me than anywhere else, and there You prepare my soul quickly to enter into intimacy with You...Help me O Lord, to withdraw my senses from exterior things, make them docile to the commands of my will, so that when I want to converse with You, they will retire at once, like bees shutting themselves up in the hive in order to make honey:

St Teresa of Avila

Look upon us, O Lord,
and let all the darkness of our souls
vanish before the beams of thy brightness.
Fill us with holy love,
and open to us the treasures of thy wisdom.
All our desire is known unto thee,
therefore perfect what thou hast begun,
and what thy Spirit has awakened us to ask in prayer.
We seek thy face,
turn thy face unto us and show us thy glory.
Then shall our longing be satisfied,
and our peace shall be perfect.

Augustine, 354 – 430

Deep peace of the running wave to you,
Deep peace of the flowing air to you,
Deep peace of the quiet earth to you,
Deep peace of the shining stars to you,
Deep peace of the Son of Peace to you, for ever.

Gaelic blessing – original source unknown

We beseech You, Master, to be our helper and protector.
Save the afflicted among us; have mercy on the lowly;
Raise up the fallen; appear to the needy; heal the ungodly;
Restore the wanderers of Your people;
Feed the hungry; ransom our prisoners;
Raise up the sick; comfort the faint-hearted.

St. Clement of Rome, c. 35-101

Harriet Tubman, Harriet Tubman an African slave who escaped bondage and then risked recapture by returning South to free others, prayed prayers which were short and to the point. Every time she led slaves to freedom, she prayed an unwavering and determined prayer, addressing God thus:

“I’m going to hold steady on You, and You’ve got to see me through.”

Harriet Tubman, 1822-1913

Open unto me, light for my darkness
Open unto me, courage for my fear
Open unto me, hope for my despair
Open unto me, peace for my turmoil
Open unto me, joy for my sorrow
Open unto me, strength for my weakness
Open unto me, wisdom for my confusion
Open unto me, forgiveness for my sins
Open unto me, tenderness for my toughness
Open unto me, love for my hates
Open unto me, Thy Self for myself
Lord, Lord, open unto me!

- Howard Thurman, 1899 – 1981