



PRAYERS IN TIME OF TROUBLE

From the beginning of humanity, prayer and prayers have been part of the human experience. Prayer takes us into ourselves but also out of ourselves as we consciously turn our minds and our attentiveness to the eternal God and to the world around us. This little booklet has a series of prayers, some of them very old, which can be part of our praying experience. It is comforting to think that down through the centuries, these prayer have been spoken, whispered and thought by countless men and women in all kinds of situations.

PSALM 33: 20-22

We wait in hope for the Lord;
he is our help and our shield.
In him our hearts rejoice,
for we trust in his holy name.
May your unfailing love be with us, Lord,
even as we put our hope in you.

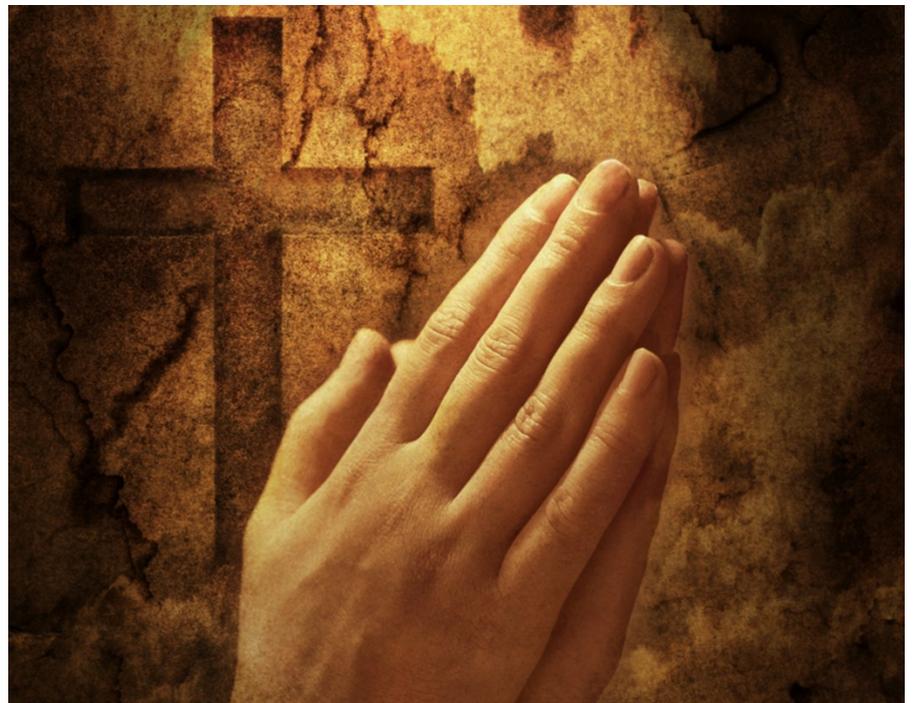
The Lord's Prayer

Of all the prayers that have ever been said, the Lord's Prayer is the one most often said. It may have been said from the very day that Jesus shared it with his disciples. When it is said in church, it is said without pausing or changing the words. However, when we are praying at home, we can pause after each line and we can expand in our prayers on each line. For example:

- *When we pray 'your will be done' we can reflect on what that might mean in our lives*
- *When we pray 'Give us our daily bread' we can reflect on and pray for the other necessities – material, social and spiritual that we need*
- *When we pray 'as we forgive others' we can reflect on any broken relationships that we have or hurts that we are still carrying*

So sometimes try using the prayer as a framework for prayer rather than just a set number of words.

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin
against us.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever.
Amen.



A Prayer of Thankfulness

This prayer is known as the Prayer of General Thanksgiving and comes from the 1662 Prayer Book of the Church of England. At a time of great uncertainty and anxiety, it reminds us that we have much to be thankful for.

ALMIGHTY God, Father of all mercies,
we your unworthy servants give you most humble and hearty thanks
for all your goodness and loving-kindness to us and to all people;
We bless you for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life;
but above all for your inestimable love
in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ,
for the means of grace,
and for the hope of glory.
And we beseech you, give us that due sense of all your mercies,
that our hearts may be unfeignedly thankful,
and that we show forth your praise,
not only with our lips, but in our lives;
by giving up ourselves to your service,
and by walking before you in holiness and righteousness all our days;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
to whom with you and the Holy Ghost be all honour and glory,
world without end. Amen.

A prayer to stay positive and hopeful

It is all too easy to allow our minds to dwell on negative thoughts and to be preoccupied with things that anger us, make us anxious or weigh us down. These words are taken from St Paul's letter to the Philippian Christians (Chapter 4)

Whatsoever things are true,
Whatsoever things are honest,
Whatsoever things are just,
Whatsoever things are pure,
Whatsoever things are lovely,
Whatsoever things are of good report,
If there be any virtue,
And if there be any praise,
Help us, Lord to centre our hearts and minds on these things. Amen.

A prayer that Jesus Christ will journey with us

Jesus promised that he would always be with those who look to him and call on him. This prayer reminds us that Jesus himself experienced what it is like to be human and live out a life that had its joys, triumphs and sorrows.

May the Baby of Bethlehem,
the Carpenter of Nazareth,
the Teacher of Galilee,
the Healer of Judea,
the Sufferer of Gethsemane,
the Prisoner of Jerusalem,
the Saviour of Calvary,
the Risen Lord of Emmaus,
and the Ascended Lord in Heaven –
Come to meet me on my journey and stay with me always. Amen.



A prayer from World War 2

This short prayer was used in World War 2

May you be kept in the love of God,
strengthened by his might,
and garrisoned by his peace, now and evermore. Amen.

A prayer from the first century AD

This is part of a longer prayer composed by Clement who was Bishop of Rome at the end of the first century and who almost certainly knew St Peter.

We ask you, Master, to be our helper and protector.
Save those among us who are in distress;
have mercy on the humble; raise up the fallen;
show yourself to those in need; heal the sick;
turn back those of your people who wander; feed the hungry;
ransom our prisoners; raise up the weak;
comfort the discouraged.
Let all the nations know that you are the only God,
that Jesus Christ is your servant,
and that we are your people and the sheep of your pasture. Amen.

A prayer to be delivered from fear

One of the greatest inner struggles we have is with fear and the experience of being afraid. President Roosevelt, quoting Francis Bacon, said in 1932 in his inaugural address, 'The only thing we have to fear but fear itself.' The epistle of John in the New Testament says "Perfect love casts out fear." This is a prayer to be delivered from fear.

O Lord, we beseech you to deliver us from the fear of the unknown future, from fear of failure, from fear of poverty, from fear of bereavement, from fear of loneliness, from fear of sickness and pain, from fear of age, and from fear of death. Help us, O Father, by thy grace to love and fear you alone, fill our hearts with cheerful courage and loving trust in you, through our Lord and Master Jesus Christ. Amen

A prayer for holy rest and peace at the last

This is a prayer to know God's support and peace throughout our lives and to the end of our lives whenever that will be. It is especially appropriate for anyone approaching the end of life. Instead of us, use the name of the person you are praying for.

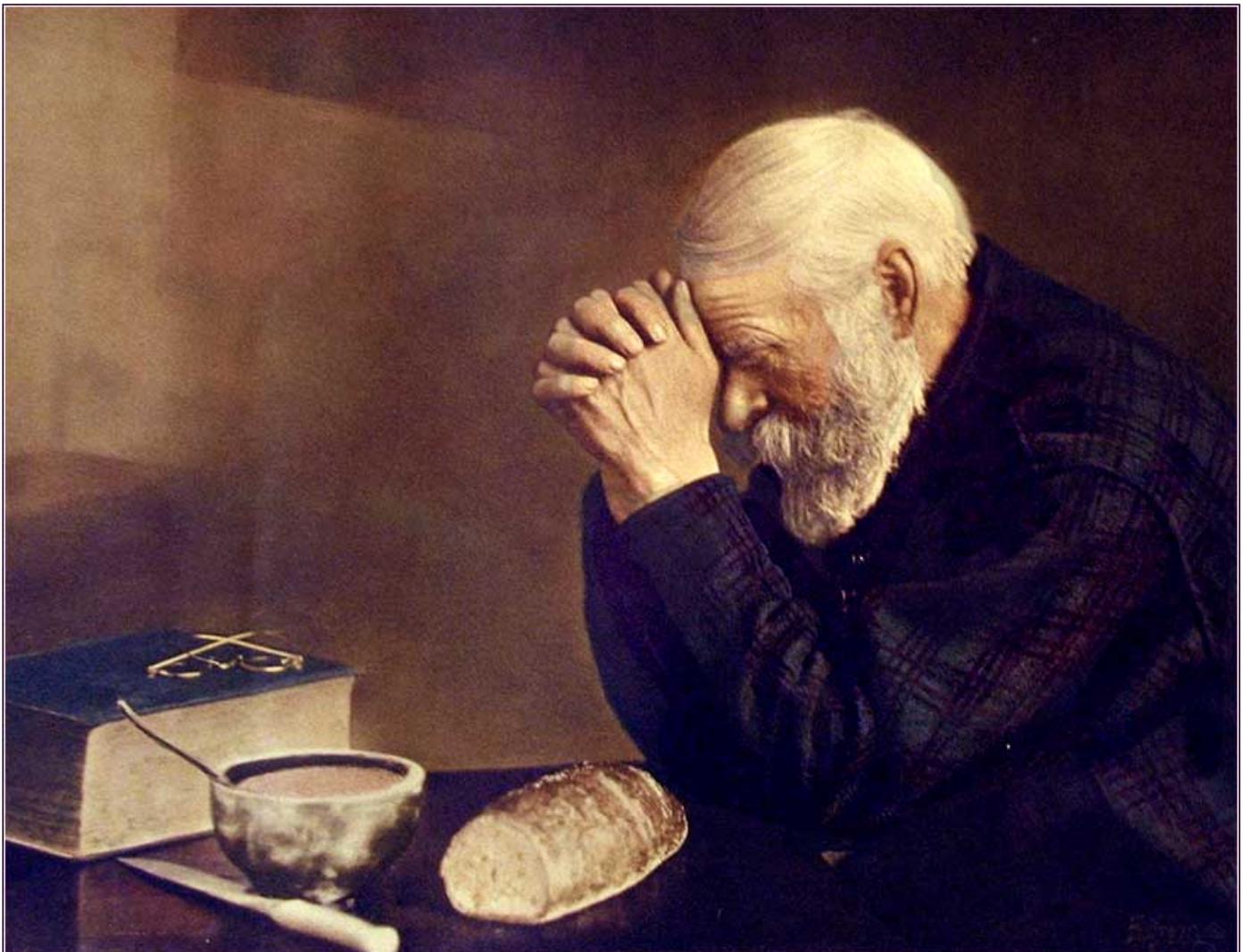
O Lord, support us all the day long of this troublous life, until the shades lengthen, and evening comes, and the busy world is hushed, the fever of life is over, and our work is done. Then Lord, in Thy mercy, grant us safe lodging, a holy rest, and peace at the last, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

A prayer for protection

The Venerable Bede was a monk who lived in Northumbria in the seventh and eight centuries. He was one of the first historians of English history. He lived at a time when life was very uncertain and often short through disease, war (especially from raids from the Vikings) and failures of the harvest.

O God, who are the only hope of the world, the only refuge for unhappy men, abiding in the perfect harmony of heaven, give me courage and strength amidst the conflicts here on earth. Protect me from the utter ruin that would befall me if my weak faith gave way under the many blows which assail me. Remember that I am mere dust and wind and shadow, whose life is as fleeting as that of a wild flower in the grass. But may your eternal mercy, which has shone since time began, rescue me from the jaws of evil.

Lord in your mercy: hear my prayer.



A prayer of blessing

This can be prayed as a prayer for oneself or for others.

Now, oh Lord, I pray that you will lift up the light of your countenance upon me, and give me peace: in my going out and my coming in; in my sitting down and rising up; in my work and in my play; in my joys and in my sorrows, in my laughter and in my tears; until that day comes which is without dawn and without dark. Through Jesus Christ who has loved me from the beginning. Amen.

The man who stood at the gate of the year

The following verse comes from a poem by Minnie Louise Haskins, who was born in Hanham, near Bath & Bristol. The young Princess Elizabeth, later to be Queen Elizabeth II, read it and drew it to the attention of her father, King George VI. He quoted these words in his 1939 Christmas broadcast, four months after Britain entered World War II.

And I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year:

And I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year:

“Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown.”

And he replied:

“Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the Hand of God.

That shall be to you better than light and safer than a known way.”

So I went forth, and finding the Hand of God, trod gladly into the night.

And He led me towards the hills and the breaking of day in the lone East.

