



PRAYERS  
*for*  
TROUBLED  
TIMES

*Jeannie St. John Taylor*

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TIMES

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 AMG Publishers

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WHEN ALL SEEMS LOST,  
THERE ARE...

*Prayers*  
*for*  
TROUBLED  
TIMES

## Prayers for Troubled Times

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# *Dedication*

We dedicate this book to the One True God  
And to His only begotten Son, Jesus,  
In whose name we offer every prayer in these pages.

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## Foreword

Nothing stifles the vitality of authentic, spiritual life like cold ritual and cobwebbed liturgy. If our purpose is to live in the vibrancy and spontaneity of the Holy Spirit's fullness, inspiration, and expression in every part of our lives, then we ought to have a healthy fear of mechanical worship and rote prayers.

Yet there are times when the praying saints of God find themselves numbed by crisis—our prayers lack vibrancy and spontaneity. We're hurting, we don't understand our terrible circumstances, we don't know where God is, and we don't know how to begin to talk to him about it. We desperately need help. We need someone to give us voice. We echo what the apostle Paul states in Romans: “. . . we do not know how to pray. . .” (Rom. 8:26).

That fact is what moved the divines in the Anglican Church of England to write the *Book of Common Prayer* over four hundred years ago. Those great men of God let others press eavesdropping ears against the doors of their secret places of prayer. They gave to incapable lips the voice of intercession.

I'm grateful for a unique book like *Prayers for Tough Times*. It represents another opportunity to eavesdrop on the inspired heart-cries of men and women of prayer in the practical trenches of life. They have encouraged me, challenged me, motivated me, and drawn me closer to Jesus, the Great Intercessor. I hope that, as you read, they will do all that for you and more.

Ron Mehl

## Acknowledgments

*M*y expressions of gratitude must begin with Dan Penwell, my editor and friend, who conceived the idea for this book, chose me to compile it, encouraged as I wrote, and then painstakingly edited the final copy.

I am grateful to Barbara Martin, who wrote twenty-eight prayers and proofed the copy before I sent it off to the publisher, for Petey Prater, who introduced me to her amazing praying friends, wrote twenty-eight prayers, and prayed with me on the phone daily, and for Ron Mehl, my pastor and godly example, who agreed without hesitation to write the foreword, faxing it the day after my initial request.

I appreciate every contributor, the majority of whom are not writers, but pray-ers who simply copied onto paper the prayers they speak daily. They prayed from their own experience—often from their own pain. They prayed for each other as they wrote. They continue to pray for these prayers to bless *you* as you speak them to the Father.

This is the second book Mary McNeil has edited and Andrea Reider has designed and typeset for me. Once again, they both performed superbly. Tricia Toney cleaned and smoothed as she proofread the manuscript. Phillip Rogers' striking cover design completes the package.

Thank you to all.

# Introduction

In times of crisis and difficulty, we often feel too wounded and numb to pray. Fear and worry freeze our brains, still our tongues. We hold a cup of coffee and stare into space or curl into a fetal position on the couch. Though we know our only help comes from the Lord, the words don't come; we can't cry out to him.

That's when we call on friends to uplift us, to pray the words that won't form in our brains. Or, if we don't know many praying people, we call the prayer chain at a local church, feeling comforted in the knowledge that they will ask God to fill our needs. We know they will pray the right words, even though we can't.

Wouldn't it be wonderful, though, if we could think how to pray for ourselves during a tragedy or knew how to speak fervent words for friends in trouble? Or form effective words to beg God to lift our nation from disaster and heal it?

This book was written for those terrible times when hope fades and you sink into near-catatonia. It is filled with prayers you can read; prayers to fill your heart with comfort and calm your thoughts; and prayers you can earnestly and fervently pray to the King of kings who has all power, to the God who will hear and help you.

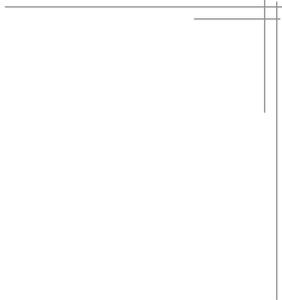
Because of the endless situations requiring prayer, no book could ever cover every circumstance for every person. You may need to scan the table of contents, and then adapt a prayer as you speak it. You may need to change "him" to "her" or "them" to "me." But the content of the prayer, if prayed in earnest, will reach deep into the heart of your Abba Father, who loves you eternally—the God who longs to help you.

In this book, people who spend hours in prayer have joyfully shared some of their prayers with you. They poured their cries to the Lord onto paper for you—so you could pray with them. Prayer comes easily for these men and women because they do it so often. Prayer is their daily habit. The time they spend in prayer polishes their words, tingeing them with eloquence.

Many of the prayers in this book flowed from the band of intercessors who have gathered at Petey Prater's house every Thursday for twenty-five years. Others come from people who partner in twos to pray; still others from people who meet God at home alone in their "prayer closet." These people all have three things in common: they love the Lord, take great pleasure and find contentment from meeting with him often, and desire to pray with you in the pages of this book. They want to help you call out to God in the tough times.

Now, before you begin, would you pray with me?

"Gracious heavenly Father, I know you love me and want to help me through every difficult situation. I desperately need your help, but I know I need to be in right relationship with you before I ask for it. Will you please forgive my sins and be the Lord of my life? We can come to you because of Jesus, amen."



*Praying for  
Myself*



## A Wife's Prayer for the First Year of Marriage

Lord, help me! I'm married! *Married!* This isn't what I expected at all! I anticipated romantic evenings and thoughtful surprises, but suddenly he's a totally different person than he was before we married. He used to tell me how wonderful he thought I was, now he takes me for granted. I thought we'd be together all the time, instead I rarely see him. Sometimes I wonder if body snatchers sneaked in and replaced the man I love with an alien.

Show me what to do. This is a nightmare. I promised to stay with this man forever! I do love him, but how can I live like this? Is my marriage different than everyone else's? Or is this what everyone meant when they said marriage would be hard work? Teach me how to do this marriage-work, Lord.

I've never felt so lonely in my life. Help me reach out to you for love when I wonder if my husband loves me. Teach me how to show love to him in spite of arguments and disappointments. I know he isn't deliberately hurting me. Release me from my expectations. Help me to be contented with the reality of marriage instead of hoping for a fantasy that exists only in books and movies.

Calm my spirit when we disagree. Show me how to forgive him when he hurts me. Help me understand his point of view. Help us overlook each other's flaws. Teach us how to compromise. Melt us into a unit. I know you can do this, Lord, even though right now the possibility seems pretty remote. I'm asking in Jesus' name, amen.

*"Hatred stirs up dissension, but love covers over all wrongs." (Prov. 10:12)*

## Prayer Concerning the Baby Blues

Dear Lord, I feel desperate. I wanted a baby for so long, but now that he's here, part of me wishes I'd never given birth. Part of me understands women who give away their children. I'm so lonely and depressed. I cry all the time. What's wrong with me? Why do I feel so sad?

I know this is supposed to be one of the best times in my life, a time of joy. Sometimes I love holding the baby, stroking his perfect fingers and toes. I love the smell of him and the feel of his head tucked under my chin.

But I'm more exhausted than I've ever been before—right when I need so much energy. I had no idea having a baby would be such work. When the baby cries in the middle of the night, I want to roll over and go back to sleep. I know his baby years will pass quickly; help me enjoy them.

If others are right, and I should see my doctor, then show him how to help me. I depend on you to heal me, Lord. You can wipe away my “baby blues” and teach me how to welcome this new little one. Make me a wise woman who builds her house. Help me remember that my baby is a gift from you; a blessing. Help me to love him with a parent's fervent love—the way you love me. I ask this in the name of your Son Jesus, amen.

*“A wise woman builds her house, but with her own hands the foolish one tears hers down.” (Prov. 14:1)*

## A New Parent's Prayer

Lord, after months of waiting, he's finally here! What do I do with this little guy? He's so tiny I can hold him in my hands. But he scares me! All of a sudden I'm a parent!

You've given me the privilege of raising this child for you, but I'm not sure I'm up to the task. The baby furniture and fresh coat of paint on the walls of his room seem insufficient preparation for this tiny eternal soul.

Funny. I already love him. I want the best for him. How do I train him to love and obey you? I need the wisdom of centuries! Thank you that I have your wisdom recorded in the Bible.

I feel so unworthy. I want him to follow in your footsteps, but I fear he'll imitate mine. Teach me your love and your ways so I can raise a son who will be your man in his generation. In Jesus' name, amen.

*"Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it." (Prov. 22:6)*

## Needing Help with a Difficult Child

Lord, your Word says that children are a reward from you, but this child makes me wonder about that scripture. I brought her home from the hospital with such joy and high hopes, never envisioning the challenge she would bring to my life.

She has drained my physical, mental, financial, and spiritual resources. I have worried, prayed, and sought advice from godly professionals. She's exasperated me, embarrassed me, and caused me to question both my parenting *and* my sanity. I love her dearly, but sometimes I don't like her very much. If I've missed a physical or emotional component to this situation, please show me.

Heavenly Father, I ask that *you* love her through me when my love has dwindled; that *your* infinite wisdom guide me, for she has me totally stumped; that *your* strength and patience sustain me, for I have run out of both.

You love her even more than I do, and only you have the power to change her heart. Place within her a hunger and thirst for you and your Word. Help her experience your unconditional love at every level of her being. Replace any rebelliousness with surrender to your lordship. Make a way of escape for her from fleshly temptations. Give her the strength to resist the pull of our worldly culture.

I thank you ahead of time for shaping her into a beautiful trophy to your love, amen.

*"Sons are a heritage from the LORD, children a reward from him." (Ps. 127:3)*

## Prayer from the Bottom of an Empty Nest

*H*eavenly Father, today someone simply mentioned the name of my absent child and I collapsed into heaving sobs, totally out of control in front of a near stranger. I miss my child. I know it's your plan for children to grow up and leave home, so why does it feel like someone ripped off one of my arms? I feel as if I was fired from the most important job I ever held. I loved doing it. This is so hard. Who am I if not a mother? I can't believe more than a third of my life still looms ahead of me. Where do I go from here?

I know she is your child. You just lent her to me for a while. Help me remember that and thank you for your gift. Show me my place in my child's life now. Show me how to love with an open hand—from a distance. Help me not to hold on to a child who needs to leave me behind in order to become mature. Help me cheer her on; help me to be happy for her.

Give me a new direction, Lord, a new purpose, a ministry. Replace my spirit of mourning with an attitude of gratitude and praise. Help me make you the center of my life. In Jesus' name, amen.

*"Turn and be gracious to me, for I am lonely and afflicted." (Ps. 25:16)*

## Prayer for Help During a Move

Lord God, I am overwhelmed. I knew moving wouldn't be easy, but it feels like my whole life has been turned upside down. My friends live far away now. Familiar landmarks and streets have been replaced with a landscape I don't recognize. God, will this place ever feel like home to me, or will a part of me always long for the place I just left?

Boxes are everywhere. I don't even know where to start. As I stare at the bare walls, I realize that only you can fill this home with your warmth. Only your presence can make those who enter here feel peace. Bring fulfillment in my life and replace the longings for my old home with enthusiasm for the memories I will make here. May new friendships be born and old friendships continue despite the distance between us. Soothe the ache in my heart as I think about being far away from those I love.

On the days and nights when I feel so lonely, help me to feel your special touch and be reminded that you are always with me. I ask this in the name of your Son Jesus, amen.

*"The LORD's curse is on the house of the wicked, but he blesses the home of the righteous." (Prov. 3:33)*

## Grant Wisdom as I Start a New Business

**O** God of my life, Solomon asked for wisdom and you gave it to him. The book of James claims if we want wisdom, all we have to do is ask and you'll give it to us, too. Okay, Lord, I'm asking. I need it. Please give me wisdom as I consider starting up this new business venture. I don't want to run ahead of you, Lord, and I can't do it without you. Please show me if you *don't* want me to do this. Warn me of any possible pitfalls I haven't noticed. If you aren't in it with me, it will fail.

If you do approve, though, let me approach it with energy and confidence. You're the Creator of the universe. Grant me wisdom to create this business. You own the cattle on a thousand hills; provide the money I need to give it a solid start. Set the rules for my business and hold me to a standard of rigorous honesty. I determine before you not to compromise when times get tough.

You see into the hearts and minds of people. Point out solid, honest employees to me, and don't ever let me get away with treating them unfairly in order to increase profits. Rather, show me how to reward them for their faithful service. Teach me how to embrace them as family, seeing them with your eyes of compassion, loving them with your love.

Shape this business into a ministry, an outreach that will somehow bless many in your name. I thank you for your generous blessings. In Jesus' name, amen.

*"If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask of God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him." (James 1:5)*

## Help Me Cope with a New Pet

*H*eavenly Father, I asked that you would bring me a new pet when I was ready. And you did! But now I'm not sure that I'll be able to assume the responsibility. It seems so overwhelming after having been without a pet for a while. He demands so much time and effort that sometimes I just want to call his previous owner and ask if she'll take him back.

And yet he is so adorable! I thank you for this precious gift. Help me to be patient with him and to be a kind and encouraging teacher. Help me to never take out my frustrations on him.

Lord, sometimes I find myself wanting him to be like my last pet. His personality is so different, and he's so active. My other pet was such a mellow and comfortable companion. Help me not to compare the two, but to see him as a new and beautiful creation from you. After all, you gave him to me and you know better than I what I need.

Help me adjust to his personality and habits and to want to spend time with him and care for him. Let us be a source of joy for one another and let him feel secure and loved. Guide me, Lord, so that I do him no harm and give him only things that would be good for his health and well being. Thank you for entrusting him to my care, amen.

*"And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus." (Phil. 4:19)*

## A Wife's Prayer on Her Husband's Retirement

Gracious Father, show me how to live through this new stage of life. Part of me loves having my husband home full time, but most of me feels crowded out of my own home. I'm grateful he has time to kick back, but I don't like it when he commandeers areas of responsibility that used to belong to me.

I feel displaced—like I have no home. Television noise jams the house; papers lie strewn across couches and floors. I need alone time; he wants me to go everywhere with him. I feel guilty when streams of resentment rise within me. I have my own life, my own work. Must I give that up? What is my responsibility, Lord? I hate wasting my time in idle pursuits. Yet I don't want to neglect my husband, either, and I know he's lonely. Father, teach me how to enjoy retirement with him. Help me to know when it's all right to “idle away” time with him. I need your help to figure this out.

Give him a purpose, a ministry. Show him ways to use his time productively. Teach him that life is about more than pleasure, more than money. Help him to see that work produces satisfaction, even if you don't get paid for it. Give him a spirit of self-motivation. Let him see things that need to be done, and then give him the desire and energy to do them. Draw him to actively spend his time seeking after you, God, so that the three of us can be an effective team together. I ask this in Jesus' name, amen.

*“And we urge you brothers, warn those who are idle, encourage the timid, help the weak, be patient with everyone.” (1 Thess. 5:14)*