

PRAYERS

Below are a range of written prayers for those experiencing mental health difficulties:

Our gracious God and loving heavenly Father, we know that our world is fallen and broken and that this has impacted every aspect of human life. Today we pray for those of us who experience challenges to our mental health. We thank you for the depth of your love for us in giving our Lord Jesus Christ so that we might be restored in relationship with you. We thank you that your love for us does not depend upon what we do or our feelings or the quality of our mental health. Thank you that even when our resources are spent, we rest secure in your loving hands. Please uphold and strengthen us. May our hearts and minds be guarded and kept by the strong and loving peace that is ours in Christ Jesus, in whose name we pray, Amen.

Lord Jesus Christ, you have experienced the pain and loneliness of life in this fallen world, with all its disappointments and grief. Thank you that we may come confidently to your throne of grace, assured that your mercy and grace are available to us in our times of need. When it is hard to understand, help us to trust you; when we feel the pain of rejection, in your unchanging love draw near; when we are overtaken by doubts and fears, may we then prove your abiding presence. Prince of peace, give to us the peace of God to guard our hearts and minds through your risen power. Amen.

Sourced from David Short & David Searle, Pastoral Visitation: A Pocket Manual, p. 63

Eternal God, thank you that even before we bring our prayers to you, already you know all our needs. Thank you that even though nothing is hidden from you, nevertheless you encourage us to share with you all our concerns and lay them at your feet. Forgive us that at times our faith is weak. Strengthen our trust in your promises to provide for our needs. Teach us the contentment of resting in the certain knowledge that you do care for us with the fatherly compassion and wise love revealed to us in Jesus Christ our Lord, in whose name we pray. Amen.

Sourced from David Short & David Searle, Pastoral Visitation: A Pocket Manual, pp 50f.

Heavenly Father, thank you for the wonderful, freeing truth that there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Thank you that the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set us free from the law of sin and death. Help us, Lord, to remember and digest this truth. Please carve this truth into our very hearts, so that when our minds accuse us of our failings and we doubt that you are for us, we can find rest and peace for our souls, through the saving work of our Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.

Adapted from Kathryn Greene-McCreight,
Darkness is My Only Companion, p. 49

Lord Jesus Christ, you are medicine for when I am sick;

You are my strength when I need help;

You are life itself when I fear death;

You are the way when I long for heaven;

You are light when all is dark;

You are my food when I need nourishment.

Ambrose of Milan (340-97)

Sourced from Kathryn Greene-McCreight,
Darkness is My Only Companion, p. 63

Almighty God, have mercy upon us, who, when troubled in life, lose faith, and courage, and hope. So have mercy upon us, and uphold us, that we, being sustained by a true faith that you are merciful and forgiving, may go on walking faithfully in your ways, finding joy in your bounty, trusting in your mercy, and with the sure hope of eternal life. Grant to us all, whatever happens to us, to always remember that everything lies under your guidance, care and will. And with this knowledge of you and your goodness, even in the darkest of days may we have courage to go on, faith to endure, patience to persevere and hopefulness to hold out, even to the end. Amen.

Adapted from George Dawson (1821 – 76)

Sourced from Kathryn Greene-McCreight, Darkness is My Only Companion, p. 42

Visit this place, O Lord, and drive far from it all snares of the enemy; let your holy angels dwell with us to preserve us in peace; and let your blessing be upon us always; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Book of Common Prayer

Sourced from Kathryn Greene-McCreight, Darkness is My Only Companion, pp. 33f.

Bring us, O Lord God, at our last awakening into the house and gate of heaven, to enter into that gate and dwell in that house, where there shall be no darkness nor dazzling, but one equal light; no noise or silence, but one equal music; no fears nor hopes, but one equal possession; no ends or beginnings, but one equal eternity; in the habitations of your glory and dominion, world without end.

John Donne (1572 – 1631)

Sourced from Kathryn Greene-McCreight, *Darkness is My Only Companion*, pp. 67f.

Prayers for God's help as we seek to support others:

Give to us grace, O Father, not to pass by suffering or joy without eyes to see; give us understanding and sympathy; and guard us from selfishness that we may enter into the joys and sufferings of others; use us to gladden and strengthen those who are weak and suffering; that by our lives we may help others who believe and serve you, and project your light which is the light of life.

H. R. L. Sheppard (1880 – 1937)

Sourced from Kathryn Greene-McCreight, *Darkness is My Only Companion*, p. xxiii

O blessed Jesus, you know the impurity of our affection, the narrowness of our sympathy, and the coldness of our love; take possession of our souls and fill our minds with the image of yourself; break the stubbornness of our selfish wills and mould us in the likeness of your unchanging love, O you who alone can do this, our Saviour, our Lord and our God.

William Temple (1881 – 1944)

Sourced from Kathryn Greene-McCreight, *Darkness is My Only Companion*, p. 14

Our Lord God, you see all and know all and love all. As your church, please grow our awareness and compassion for those in our midst who suffer with their mental health. Let no one be hidden away beneath blankets of stigma or shoved into corners of marginalisation. You call us as your Body to care for the least, the lost, the lonely, the left-behind – teach us how to include those whom others consider unworthy. Bless us with the opportunity to become a community where they flourish. Enable us to reflect your love in our love for each other.

We ask for this mercy in Jesus name, Amen.

Adapted from Catherine R. Downing, *Sparks of Redemptive Grace*, p. 58

A prayer for carers:

Lord Jesus Christ, we remember how exhausted you often were as you gave yourself to all who came to you in need. In the midst of a raging storm, you slept in the bottom of a rough fisherman's boat. Thank you that you understand how we can become drained and empty by the demands made on us as we constantly care for those who depend on us. Renew our strength that we may not flag in our service. Refresh our spirits that we may work with patience and with joy. And restore our love that we may serve in the same way as we love to serve you. We ask this for your glory. Amen.

Adapted from David Short & David Searle, *Pastoral Visitation: A Pocket Manual*, p. 83

Prayer at the end of the service:

You might consider arranging beforehand for some mature Christians to pray with people who are struggling with mental health concerns or those with loved ones in this situation. Make the announcement during the service that people will be available to pray at the conclusion of the service.

You might invite those who have offered to pray with others to use this prayer as a guide: *"Almighty God, you know us better than we know ourselves. And you have made (person's name) in your image. We pray that you would be near to (person's name), that they might know how much you love them through Christ's sacrifice on the cross and that you might give them the strength, courage and help they need to live as you desire them to live. Thank you for (person's name), for bringing them to us today and for the great promise of hope that you are always with us. In Jesus name, Amen."*