

POCKET PRAYERS

THE UPPER  
ROOM<sup>®</sup>

PRAYERS  
*for*  
HAITI



*Words of Hope for People Who Help*

## PRAYERS FOR HAITI

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Recently, after returning from a mission trip to Haiti, a district superintendent brought me a carved wooden bell. The following words, which surround the circumference of the bell, haunt me every time I see them: *No one listens to the cry of the poor or the sound of a wooden bell.* The wooden clapper inside the bell, when shaken against the wood surface, makes a strange sound indeed.

We have heard the cries of the people of Haiti unceasingly since the earthquake struck and the magnitude of the devastation became clear. We have heard desperate cries for help to be rescued, cries to be fed, cries for water, cries for a safe place to sleep, cries for medical attention, cries for lost and buried family members. We have heard the cries of the rescue workers; the United Nations staff; the members of other nongovernmental organizations, including the United Methodist Committee on Relief; the medical teams; the agencies who supply food, water, and shelter. Their cries have been compelling as they describe the overwhelming conditions and challenges of getting help to people before it is too late. We have heard the cries from Sam Dixon, Clint Rabb, and Jim Gulley, bound together in the rubble of a collapsed hotel. We have seen and heard again what it means to surrender all to Christ in a world where there is so much suffering. We have also heard the unexpected sounds of singing through tears, of gathering for worship and praise in the streets amid the chaos, aftershocks, and stench of death. In spite of everything, we see God at work and hope reborn. Every day now, when I see the bell on my desk, I listen to the cry of the poor and the sound of a beautiful wooden bell.

—Bishop Charlene P. Kammerer  
President, General Board of Discipleship

# *A Prayer for the People of Haiti*

The seas roar, the earth shakes,  
buildings crumble, roofs topple  
and walls turn to dust.

Have mercy on the people of Haiti, O God.

Nations watch, alarms sound,  
traffic halts, utilities stop,  
and news is hard to verify.

Give us compassion to weep with those who weep, O God.

People die, families mourn,  
mountains split,  
infrastructure and superstructure alike are gone.

Make us swift to help and persistent to rebuild,  
not just things and structures, but lives, O God:

Through Christ, the solid Rock. Amen.

Taylor Burton-Edwards (Tennessee, USA)

[www.umcworship.org](http://www.umcworship.org)

# Hope Amid Destruction

Read Jeremiah 30:1-9

The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will restore the fortunes of my people . . . and I will bring them back to the land that I gave to their ancestors.

—Jeremiah 30:3

As a doctor, I was able to be a part of a medical team that was sent to an area devastated by an earthquake. Many lives had been lost and buildings destroyed.

Our relief team went to different villages talking to people who had survived, consoling them and sharing the good news of Jesus Christ wherever opportunity arose. Gradually, as our team carried out the relief work, I could see God at work. The victims of the earthquake had realized they had no security in worldly possessions. Yet they were looking for purpose in life after losing much—even some of their loved ones. Because the disaster had opened doors for us to share God's love with the people in a practical way, bringing both physical and spiritual healing, the people began to turn to God.

Jeremiah prophesied the destruction of Jerusalem and exile to Babylon. For God's people, that was not good news. Yet Jeremiah also prophesied later that God would bring restoration. Jeremiah saw something positive in the midst of destruction—God renewing the covenant. And God still does that for us.

*Prayer: Lord, help us to see your presence and to hope in every dark situation. Amen.*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

*God can use even tragic situations and circumstances for divine purposes.*

Ajit Barkataki (Maharashtra, India)

# All I Need

Read Job 1:20-22

The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away;  
blessed be the name of the LORD.

—Job 1:21

An earthquake rattled me out of a deep sleep. I lay there for a moment, frightened of the rolling motion. Then I jumped to my feet, pulled on my clothes, and ran out of my bedroom. Dishes clattered in the kitchen as I bolted toward the door. By then the quake had stopped.

Before that moment I had often wondered, What are my prized possessions? What would I take with me in a time of crisis? Would I take my Bible? Money? Photographs? The Lord had blessed me with so much! How would I ever choose? I had considered those questions.

Job had no choice. Tragedies took away his possessions, his family, and his health. Job's response was to bless God's name.

As I looked down at my empty hands after the earthquake, I realized that all I have is a gift from God. In the heat of a fire, the rush of a flood, the rattle of an earthquake, God is all I need.

*Prayer: God, you provide all things. Blessed is your name. Amen.*

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY  
*God gives us all that we have.*

Georgia Babb (California, USA)

# God Is Our Refuge

Read Psalm 46

God is our refuge and strength,  
a very present help in trouble.

—Psalm 46:1

Two years ago, there was a great cyclone at Kandla port on the west coast of India. Thousands of people died. Many lost their loved ones; many more lost their houses.

One very poor Christian family was working in the port as laborers. They lived in a very small hut, but by the grace of God, the family members survived. Though they lost everything, God showed them that their lives are more precious than their possessions. They passed through difficult times, but God was with them and is with them still.

As we pass through difficult times, our situations and problems may be different. Our culture and lifestyles are different; we live in different parts of the world. But we have the same God, who is God of all people in every nation. And the Bible reminds us that God is our refuge and strength, that in whatever trouble we may find ourselves, God will see us through.

*Prayer: Almighty and eternal God, we give you thanks that you are such a compassionate God. We pray for those who are passing through trials and difficulties. Lord, our God, assure them that you are with them. We ask in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

When I walk through death's valley,  
God is with me.

Hemantkumar Parmar (Gujarat, India)

# Hearing the Whisper

Read 1 Kings 19:1-13

After the earthquake [came] a fire; but the LORD was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice.

—1 Kings 19:12 (KJV)

Like many people, I have experienced exhaustion, discouragement, and depression. At such times, God has encouraged me to keep journeying through the spiritual wilderness these feelings can create. God has graciously strengthened me by providing spiritual food and drink and placing in my path supportive friends and powerful passages of scripture. When I'm feeling most vulnerable, I'm actually more open and receptive to God.

Like Elijah, we usually expect to see God in the figurative winds, earthquakes, and fires that hit our lives. Big highs and lows can speak clearly of God's working in and around us. But more often, God speaks in a gentle whisper.

Keeping a spiritual journal over the years has helped me to discern God's voice. Reading back five years, I discover that I was struggling with my prayer life. I tried different methods of prayer, but I always felt that I was doing the talking. Like Elijah, we can be zealous for the Lord but still not hear and understand God's voice. Instead of coming with a barrage of words, we can sit at God's feet, attentively listening for that "still small voice."

*Prayer: Dear God, help us to be receptive even in challenging times. Amen.*

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

*How can I better listen for God's gentle whisper?*

Sue McCoulough (Middlesex, England)

# 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 which 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 19 for the full text of The Lord’s Prayer.*

# God Weeps

Read Jeremiah 31:15-17

“A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation,  
Rachel weeping for her children;  
she refused to be consoled, because they are no more.”

—Matthew 2:18

I wake up in the morning to a deep sadness. My ears hear and my eyes see, but my mind cannot comprehend the destruction, the lives lost or disrupted. In places I do not know and may never visit, people are suffering, people are crying.

The words of the prophet Jeremiah quoted in Matthew 2:18 (above) apply today:

*Voices are heard in the city and in the countryside.*

*Voices are heard in shelters and hospitals and lonely places,  
wailing and loud lamentation,*

*Mothers and fathers, grandmothers and grandfathers, friends  
and strangers weeping . . .*

*They refused to be consoled, because their loved ones are no more.*

What can I say? How can I respond? The grieving, devastated ones are people I may never meet; they live different lives; some follow other faiths. But they are my sisters and brothers. They are children of the Most High, the God who must be weeping too.

*Prayer: God of Compassion, with you and all the world family, we weep and mourn. Comfort all who are alone or afraid, who wail in loud lamentation. Let us be your heart reaching out to those who grieve. Let us be your hands working to assist those who still live. For you are the God who stands with the least and the lost. Come by all the places that need your comforting and healing presence.*

Beth A. Richardson (Tennessee, USA)

## *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 (Massachusetts, USA)

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.*

**T**hus says the LORD, . . . who created you,  
Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;  
I have called you by name,  
you are mine.

When you pass through the waters  
I will be with you;  
and through the rivers, they shall not  
overwhelm you;  
when you walk through fire you shall  
not be burned,  
and the flame shall not consume you.  
. . . you are precious in my sight,  
and honored, and I love you.

Isaiah 43:1-2, 4

**T**ender 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.*

God 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

*Y*ou 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

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

Isaiah 66:13

Those who wait for the LORD shall renew  
their strength,  
they shall mount up with wings like eagles,  
they shall run and not be weary,  
they shall walk and not faint.

Isaiah 40:31

Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4:6-7

## Psalm 23

**T**he 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)

## *The Lord's Prayer*

Our Father which art in heaven,  
Hallowed be thy name.  
Thy kingdom come.  
Thy will be done in earth,  
    as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our debts,  
    as we forgive our debtors.  
And lead us not into temptation,  
    but deliver us from evil:  
For thine is the kingdom, and the power,  
    and the glory, for ever. Amen.

Matthew 6:9-13 (KJV)

**T**he 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)

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

## *An Anchor for the Soul*

**W**e have this hope, a sure  
and steadfast anchor of the soul.

Hebrews 6:19a

### *Reflection*

*What is your greatest source of hope?*

*In what areas of your life are you most in need of hope?*

*Hebrews speaks of hope as an “anchor of the soul.” Reflect on that image.*

*What other symbol or image would remind you of hope?*

*Draw or find a picture of that item, and hang it in a prominent place where you can see it and let it strengthen you.*

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

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

Why are you cast down, O my soul,  
and why are you disquieted  
within me?

Hope in God; for I shall again  
praise him,  
my help and my God.

Psalm 42:5-6a

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

**I** hereby command you:  
Be strong and courageous; do not  
be frightened or dismayed, for the  
LORD your God is with you  
wherever you go.

Joshua 1:9

**F**or God alone my soul waits  
in silence,  
for my hope is from him.

Psalm 62:5

Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and through grace gave us eternal comfort and good hope, comfort your hearts and strengthen them in every good work and word.

2 Thessalonians 2:16-17

Love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor. Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer.

Romans 12:10-12

**I**n your hearts sanctify Christ as Lord. Always be ready to make your defense to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you.

1 Peter 3:15

## *About The Upper Room<sup>®</sup>*

For 75 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. Today it is read by over three million people in more than 100 countries. For more information about Upper Room Ministries, visit our Web site: **www.upperroom.org**. To help us create other resources like this one, visit

**<http://www.upperroom.org/disaster/>**

# Counting Sparrows

Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. . . . So do not be afraid; you are of more value than many sparrows.

—Matthew 10:29-31

What prayer can we say when  
An unimaginable disaster comes  
To our community,  
Wreaking havoc, claiming lives  
And bodies are missing—never to be retrieved?

What prayer would make a difference  
To those who remain?

So often we have been taught to pray to change things,  
to make a difference, to stop a tragedy. But when the tragedy has  
already come, how do we pray?  
Perhaps conventional wisdom about prayer must be laid aside.

When disaster abandons its heinous child upon our doorstep,  
we are comforted by the knowledge that the same God who  
knows when a sparrow falls to the ground knew and loved each  
of those who died.

Our prayer is one of remembrance:  
We remember that those who perished are  
    More than numbers,  
    More than statistics,  
    More valuable than sparrows;  
Each was a person of sacred worth created in the image of God.

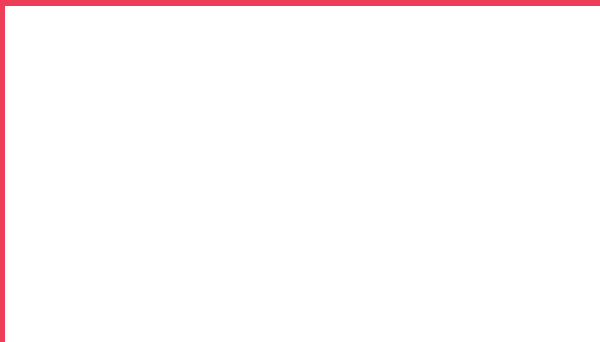
## **Prayer:**

*Loving God, we pause to remember all who perished in tragedy— both those who will be named and mourned and those who have no one to toll bells in their memory. They were people who belonged to cities and villages, communities and places of worship. With their neighbors and friends, families and loved ones, we pause to remember that you gave them life and loved them. In our present helpless state, we are comforted to know that you know each person by name. Lord, have mercy upon this earth and all who mourn. Amen.*

Safiyah Fosua (Tennessee, USA)

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

—Romans 15:13



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