

# Resources for the coronavirus pandemic



## A Devotional and Prayer Guide for God's People



*<sup>6</sup> Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. <sup>7</sup> And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

**Philippians 4:6 – 7**



## Anxiety-Calming Scriptures

### **2 Timothy 1:7**

For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but one of power, love, and sound judgment. (CSB)

### **Psalms 4:8**

In peace I will lie down and sleep, for you alone, LORD, make me dwell in safety. (NIV)

### **1 Peter 5:6-7**

Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you. (NASB)

### **Philippians 4:6-7**

do not be anxious 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. (ESV)

### **Isaiah 41:10**

Do not fear, for I am with you;  
do not be afraid, for I am your God.  
I will strengthen you; I will help you;  
I will hold on to you with my righteous right hand. (CSB)

### **Isaiah 26:3**

You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you. (ESV)

### **John 14:1**

Your heart must not be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in Me. (HCSB)

## **Psalm 46**

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear though the earth gives way, though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble at its swelling. There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High. God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved; God will help her when morning dawns. The nations rage, the kingdoms totter; He utters His voice, the earth melts. The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress. Come, behold the works of the Lord, how He has brought desolations on the earth. He makes wars cease to the end of the earth; He breaks the bow and shatters the spear; He burns the chariots with fire. "Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!" The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.

## **Psalm 91**

Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, "He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust. Surely he will save you from the fowler's snare and from the deadly pestilence.

He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart. You will not fear the terror of night, nor the arrow that flies by day, nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness, nor the plague that destroys at midday. A thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand, but it will not come near you. You will only observe with your eyes and see the punishment of the wicked. If you say, "The LORD is my refuge," and you make the Most High your dwelling, no harm will overtake you, no disaster will come near your tent. For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways; they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone. You will tread on the lion and the cobra; you will trample the great lion and the serpent. "Because he loves me," says the LORD, "I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name. He will call on me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honor him. With long life I will satisfy him and show him my salvation."

### **Psalm 121**

I lift up my eyes to the hills. From where does my help come? My help comes from the Lord, who

made heaven and earth. He will not let your foot be moved; He who keeps you will not slumber. Behold, He who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep. The Lord is your keeper; the Lord is your shade on your right hand. The sun shall not strike you by day, nor the moon by night. The Lord will keep you from all evil; He will keep your life. The Lord will keep your going out and your coming in from this time forth and forevermore.

### **Psalm 130**

Out of the depths I cry to You, O Lord! O Lord, hear my voice! Let Your ears be attentive to the voice of my pleas for mercy! If You, O Lord, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand? But with You there is forgiveness, that You may be feared. I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in His word I hope; my soul waits for the Lord more than watchmen for the morning, more than watchmen for the morning. O Israel, hope in the Lord! For with the Lord there is steadfast love, and with Him is plentiful redemption. And He will redeem Israel from all his iniquities.

## **Martin Luther, Concerning the Black Death:**

"I shall ask God mercifully to protect us. Then I shall fumigate, help purify the air, administer medicine and take it. I shall avoid places and persons where my presence is not needed in order not to become contaminated and thus perchance inflict and pollute others and so cause their death as a result of my negligence. If God should wish to take me, he will surely find me and I have done what he has expected of me and so I am not responsible for either my own death or the death of others. If my neighbor needs me however I shall not avoid place or person but will go freely as stated above. See this is such a God-fearing faith because it is neither brash no foolhardy and does not tempt God."

\* Luther's Works Volume 43 pg 132 the letter "Whether one may flee from a Deadly Plague" written to Rev. Dr. John Hess

## **Assurance Set in Stone**

*Taken from Portals or Prayer*

Personal, family, and public calamities test the Christian's response to God's promises. It's easy to accept His Word in times of plenty, but it's a stiff challenge in times of loss and need. "Thy will be done," we pray throughout life— and then we face accepting what that will determines in our time of suffering. Job was no cockeyed optimist, hoping against hope that things would somehow right themselves. He realized that all his times and seasons were under God's unshakable control. His desire to have this confidence "engraved in the rock" came because he already stood secure upon the Rock of Ages. This same Lord, our rock and our salvation—the rejected stone who became the cornerstone—still supports all who trust in Him. Sin, death, and the devil are dashed to pieces upon Him as He stands firm in life's storms. He inspires confidence by His Word, as He makes His promises to His people, and by His deed, as Scripture testifies of Job, Moses, Daniel, and others. Even death by stoning couldn't force Stephen to abandon the rock of his salvation. Nor can our present troubles cast us down from our secure position, for we stand on Christ. Read Job 19:23–27; Psalm 18:1–6

*Oh that my words . . . were engraved in the rock forever! For I know that my Redeemer lives. Job 19:23–25*

***Rock of Ages, cleft for me, Let me hide myself in Thee. Amen. LW 361:1***

## **Can You Hear Me, God?**

*Taken from Portals of Prayer*

A cell phone ad campaign sent its main character all across the country, into all sorts of places, to test the company's ability to connect its callers. Everywhere he went, he asked, "Can you hear me now?" Things get serious when God is the intended recipient of our call. "Can You hear me now, God?" we ask from the peaks of pain and the depths of despair. "Surely," Elihu said, "God does not hear an empty cry." So how do we know our cry isn't empty? What fills it up, giving it power and clarity to reach the throne of grace? Scripture answers that Jesus "always lives to make intercession for" those in need (Hebrews 7:25). Joining the Son, "the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words" (Romans 8:26). Even if suffering and sorrow empty our prayers of their full content, focus, and power, the Father hears us because He loves us and has promised to hear us through His Son and Spirit, who call out with and for us. God hears us because He hears Jesus. He knows what we truly need because His Holy Spirit searches our hearts. He answers because He promises to answer all who trust His grace for the sake of His beloved Son. - Read Job 35; Psalm 4

*Surely God does not hear an empty cry. Job 35:13*

**Dear Father, remove my doubts and invite me to pray with all boldness and confidence for the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.**

## **Hoping for What You Cannot See**

*Taken From Portals of Prayer*

There is always tension between what we can see and feel and what God promises. Our senses tell us one thing; God's promises, another. Our senses may tell us that life is great and the future looks wonderful. Or they may say, "That hurts" or "I'm sad" or "I can't see any hope." Often the messages from experience or emotion are so loud it's difficult to hear anything else. In times of blessing or strife, faith turns away from the incessant whine of our perceptions to the sweet melody of God's Word. Here we are given a different message. It points to the glory that is to be revealed. That glory is far greater and more real than the distress or joy we know now. By Christ's victory on the cross, our Father secured our future. Our glory in Christ is unshakable. God's promises are brought to reality for us in the Gospel, in the body and blood of Christ in the Supper, and in the Word and water of Baptism. These avenues of promise and proclamation may seem less real than the tears we cry or the loss we feel, but they have the Word of almighty God behind them. The glory they reveal is permanent, while all our fleeting troubles surely will pass away. Read Romans 8:18–28; Psalm 91

*If we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience. Romans 8:25*

**Lord, thank You for Your promises, which sustain us in the midst of every trouble. Amen.**

## **Filling the Hole**

*Taken From Portals of Prayer*

Physical suffering, financial setbacks, and the shock of death tear holes in us. Empty, we focus on the hurt, asking God to ease our pain, speed our healing, and deliver us from this present evil hour. Often, our prayers amount to asking for an aspirin to heal a migraine or a couple of sardines to feed us for a week. They briefly touch on our current needs but have little depth or extent. We focus so much on our immediate concerns that we easily forget how completely God cares for us. To keep us from selling His mercies short, God invites us to pray for abiding faith, deep-rooted love, and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. To keep us from asking only that our pain be removed, He teaches us to want our suffering to be sanctified through the suffering of His Son until sin—the root of all afflictions— is totally cast down on the Last Day. God desires to provide meals, not morsels. He wants to remake us completely— body, mind, and spirit. Why sip His cup of blessing when He bids us to drink deeply and quench our thirst? He fills the aching hole within us, filling us “with all the fullness of God.” Read Ephesians 3:14–21 Luke 1:46–55

Ephesians 3:19 *[I pray] that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.*

**Grant, Lord Jesus, that my healing In Your holy wounds I find. Cleanse my spirit, will, and feeling; Heal my body, soul, and mind. Amen.**

**LW 95:1**

## The God Who Sympathizes

When we are suffering, it can seem as if God is very far away. He's "up there," aloof, distant from what's going on down here. Sure, He may know the facts of what's happening to us, but does He really understand or care? Scripture's answer is a definite yes. The same Son of God who passed through the heavens far above us came down among us as a real human being. He lived our life all the way from conception to the grave. Though He was without sin, He experienced all the effects of sin's curse. He sympathizes with our weaknesses and suffering and sorrows, because He Himself has known them. He knows what it's like to be tested and tempted and pushed to the limit. He carried all of our burdens to the cross and suffered them to death in His body to redeem us from them. So He does not forsake you in your time of need. He is with you in your suffering to deliver you and bring you into His Easter triumph. He is still Immanuel, God with us. Confident of this, we come to His throne of grace in bold faith. Our Lord Jesus surely hears our prayers and will give us the mercy and help we need, according to His good and gracious will. Read Hebrews 4:14–16 and Psalm 143

*We do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses.* Hebrews 4:15

**Lord Jesus, who bore my weaknesses, give me Your aid, that I may find strength in You. Amen.**

## **PRAYER FOR GOD'S PEOPLE DURING TIMES OF DISTRESS**

"Our Father in heaven, You have redeemed us with the holy, precious blood of Your Son. You have reconciled us to You in the waters of Holy Baptism. Guide and keep us in our lives as we meet trial and temptation. Strengthen our faith, that we may ever be mindful that You have called us by name and that we are Yours, through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen." Prayer from *Visitation*, pg. 43-44

### **In Times of Epidemic**

Almighty and merciful God, although You have allowed this disease to break out among us, we confess that our sins merit even worse afflictions. Have mercy on us, for You gave Your Son to bear our sicknesses and sorrows. For the sake of Jesus' anguish on the cross, be gracious to us. If it be Your will, grant health and strength to all who are ill and whose lives are threatened. Comfort the bereaved.

Give wisdom and skill to those in the medical profession and to all who are in authority, that this epidemic may be ended swiftly; through Jesus, our Great Physician. Amen.

## **In Time of National Crisis or Calamity**

Heavenly Father, King of creation and Ruler of the nations, in this time of national crisis, come to the aid of our country and her people. To the dying, grant peace in Jesus; to the grieving, provide comfort in His name; to the sick or wounded, bestow healing; to the worried and confused, give trust in Your mighty and merciful hand. Guide our leaders and public servants, that all would work wisely toward the common good and welfare. Grant us to look to You for peace and guidance, and give us the peace that passes all understanding; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

## **For Government Officials**

Lord of heaven and earth, You have chosen to rule over Your creation through the governments You have established on earth. Give the elected officials of our country the wisdom to make decisions that will bring peace and safety to every citizen. Guide state and local leaders in their daily work, and create in their hearts an attitude of loving care for the people they serve. Protect our leaders from harm and temptation. Especially in these trying times, give them the courage and confidence they need to solve the problems we face today and to plan for the future. Amen.

## **For Health Care Workers**

O great Physician of soul and body, You work through earthly means to bring Your blessings to the people of this world. As by plain water and simple bread and wine You bring us Your great spiritual blessings, so also by the men and women serving in the health care professions You extend Your healing to those in need. Bless doctors, nurses, and all whom You call to vocations in the healing arts. Keep their skills, vigilance, and compassion sharp and sensitive, that they might serve You by serving those who are ill or injured in body or mind; for Your name's sake. Amen.

## **For Deliverance from Anxiety**

Heavenly Father, many times in Your Word You warn us against worry and fear: "Do not be anxious about tomorrow" (Matthew 6:34); "Do not be anxious about anything" (Philippians 4:6). You have promised to help and comfort us. But right now that very anxiety makes it hard to remember and trust Your promises. By Your Holy Word and Spirit, strengthen our faith and take away our anxiety. Turn our hearts and minds toward Your promises, and help us remember that nothing can separate us from the love You have for us in Christ Jesus. Hear our prayer for His sake. Amen.

## **For Rescue from All Calamity**

Lord Jesus, You taught us to pray, “Deliver us from evil.” Therefore, we humbly beg You to rescue us from every evil of body and soul. Since this world is under the curse of sin, we are always in danger of calamity from fire and water, war and violence, scarcity and famine, pest and disease. Since You bore the curse of sin for us on the cross, defend us against these dangers. When we suffer calamity, let not our faith in You falter, but draw us ever closer to You. Help us endure unto the end, and graciously take us from this valley of sorrow to Yourself in heaven. Amen.

## **For Peace**

Lord Jesus Christ, Prince of Peace, amid a world full of tribulation, You encourage us, saying, “Take heart; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33). Thank You that Your peace is not the shallow, short-lived peace the world gives. By Your holy cross, You reconciled us forever to the Father, giving us the peace that passes understanding, the deep and lasting rest of sins forgiven. Grant us to know Your peace, even in the midst of troubles. Cause enmity among peoples to cease. By Your Spirit, grant that, as far as it depends on us, we may live peaceably with all. Amen.

## **Martin Luther's Morning Prayer**

Make the sign of the holy cross and say: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen. I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have kept me this night from all harm and danger; and I pray that You would keep me this day also from sin and every evil, that all my doings and life may please You. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.

## **Martin Luther's Evening Prayer**

Make the sign of the holy cross and say: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen. I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have graciously kept me this day; and I pray that You would forgive me all my sins where I have done wrong, and graciously keep me this night. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen. —  
Quoted from Luther's Small Catechism

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