

A REFLECTION ON PRAYER

# *When You're Too Tired to Pray*

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*For the worn-out heart that loves God but has run out of words*

*Simplify to Glorify*

# *When You're Too Tired to Pray*

There is a particular kind of tired that prayer cannot seem to reach. You know the one. You sit down to talk to God, the way you have a thousand times before, and nothing comes. Not because you do not love Him. Not because you have stopped believing. You are simply emptied out, and the words that used to rise so easily are gone.

I want to say something to you before anything else. That silence is not the failure you are afraid it is.

So many of us carry a quiet shame about this. We believe that a strong faith produces a full prayer life, and that a dry one must mean something has gone wrong inside us. We add it to the pile of things we are already failing at. But hear me. God is not standing at a distance grading the quality of your prayers. He is closer than that, and far kinder.

## **The prayer you cannot find words for is still prayer**

There is a verse I come back to on the days when I have nothing to say to God.

*Now in the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know what to pray for as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.*

*Romans 8:26*

Sit with that for a moment. Paul is not describing the spiritual giants of the faith. He is describing people who have come to the end of their own words. And his answer is not try harder. His answer is that the Spirit of God prays for you, from inside you, in groanings too deep for words.

That means the wordless ache you feel right now is not the absence of prayer. It may be the truest prayer you have ever prayed. When you have nothing left but a sigh, the Spirit takes that sigh and carries it to the Father. You do not have to translate your exhaustion into something tidy first.

## **You are allowed to come empty**

We hold a quiet assumption that we have to gather ourselves before we approach God. Get the heart right, the attitude right, the words right, and then come. But Scripture keeps inviting the opposite. David, who knew his own sleepless nights, wrote that we should pour out our hearts before God, the way you would empty a cup that has nothing left in the bottom of it.

And Jesus Himself, when He looked at the people worn down to the bone, did not ask them to clean up first.

*Come to Me, all who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.*

*Matthew 11:28-29*

Gentle and humble in heart. That is who is waiting for you on the other side of your tiredness. Not a demanding employer. A gentle One who knows exactly how heavy your days have been.

## **What prayer can look like when you have nothing left**

On the days I cannot pray the way I want to, I have learned to lower the bar all the way to the floor, and to let that be holy. Sometimes prayer is one word. His name, whispered once, is a complete sentence God understands. Sometimes it is sitting in the quiet with a Bible open on your lap, not reading it, just letting it be there with you.

Sometimes prayer is breathing in and out and letting the breath itself be the asking. Sometimes it is tears with no words attached at all. He counts those. The God who keeps your tears in a bottle is not waiting for you to explain them. None of these are lesser prayers.

## **When the tiredness does not lift**

I want to be honest with you, because pretending would not serve you. There are seasons when this weariness does not pass in a week. Caregiving stretches on. Grief settles in for the long haul. The depleted feeling becomes the normal feeling, and prayer stays hard for longer than you ever expected.

If that is where you are, please do not face it alone. Tell one trusted person the truth about how tired you have become. Let someone pray the words you cannot find right now, because that is what the body of Christ is for. And if the heaviness has moved beyond tiredness into something that frightens you, reaching out for help is not a lack of faith. It is one of the ways God cares for His worn-out children.

### **A gentle word to carry with you**

So if you are too tired to pray tonight, let this be your permission to stop trying to do it well. Sit down. Breathe. Say His name, or say nothing at all. Let the Spirit pray the prayer you cannot form, because He is already doing it. Let God meet you exactly as empty as you are, because that is the only version of you He has ever asked for.

You do not have to find the words. You only have to come, and even the coming, on a night like this, He will count as prayer.

## *A Prayer for the Wordless*

Father, I am too tired tonight to pray the way I wish I could, and I trust that You meet me here anyway. I have run out of words, but I have not run out of needing You. Thank You that Your Spirit is already praying underneath my silence, carrying what I cannot say. Let my sitting here be enough, and my breathing be the asking. Quiet the shame that calls this dryness a failure. Remind me that You asked only for my coming, not for it to be done well. In Jesus' name, Amen.

# *Gentle Tips for Empty Days*

Nothing here is required, and none of it is a technique for praying better. These are small doors back to God for the days when the words are gone. Walk through whichever one is nearest.

## **Lower the bar to the floor**

One word counts. His name, whispered while the kettle boils, is a whole prayer to the God who hears.

## **Borrow a psalm**

On the days your own words will not come, read Psalm 23 out loud and let it pray for you. Borrowed prayers are still prayers.

## **Let your breath be the asking**

Breathe in slowly: Lord, I am here. Breathe out: and so are You. That is enough.

## **Keep a verse in plain sight**

Tape one by the sink or the mirror. You do not have to study it. Just let it keep meeting you.

## **Ask someone to pray for you**

Borrowed strength is how the body of Christ works. Tell one person the truth, and let them carry you for a while.

## **Let the quiet count**

Sitting near God without words is not failed prayer. It is what closeness looks like when you are tired.

## *Pour It Out*

David said to pour out your heart before God. This page is a place to tip the cup, one line at a time. Spelling, grammar, and composure are not required.

*What I would tell God if I had the energy...*

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*What I need most right now...*

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*One thing that is still true about Him...*

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## *Small Prayers for Tired Days*

No paragraphs needed here. Gather a few small prayers you can reach for when the words are gone, and let them be enough.

*One word or name I can whisper this week...*

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*A verse I want to keep where I can see it...*

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*One person I could ask to pray for me...*

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## *More Resources*

*If your prayer life feels worn thin, these verses are gentle places to return when you have little to bring. Let them sit with you on the tired days, no performance required.*

### **Romans 8:26**

When you do not know what to pray, the Spirit Himself intercedes for you with groanings too deep for words.

### **Matthew 11:28-29**

Jesus invites the weary and burdened to come exactly as they are and find rest for their souls.

### **Psalm 62:8**

David invites us to pour out our hearts before God, who is a refuge for us at all times.

### **Psalm 56:8**

God keeps count of your sleepless nights and gathers your tears in His bottle, none of them unnoticed.

### **Psalm 46:10**

God invites you to stop striving and be still, remembering that He is God and the weight is His to hold.

### **1 Kings 19:5-7**

God let His exhausted prophet sleep and fed him gently before asking anything of him at all.

# A Note Before You Go

If these pages met you in a hard place, I'm so glad. Please know that nothing on your worst day disqualifies you from being deeply loved by God.

If you'd like to keep going, my journals, scripture cards, and devotionals are gentle companions for longer seasons: grief, caregiving, depression, and more. You can find them at [simplifytoglorify.com](http://simplifytoglorify.com).

With love and prayers,

*Carla*

*Simplify to Glorify*

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