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The one in charge

Dear Father in heaven,

How glad I am to be your child!
I'm also glad my parents taught me to depend on you,
because as they grew older,
I found myself calling on you for help more and
more.

I praise you for being in charge of my dad's life
from beginning to end, to glorious new
beginning.

You brought Dad through cancer surgery and gave him
almost twenty more years of life.

I praise you for being in charge of Mom's life too.
You brought her through chemotherapy twenty-five
years ago, and she is still here!

You've been in charge all along, dear Lord.
You've brought us through good and bad.
Now that Dad is with you and Mom at ninety-three
is still with me,
I'm glad you continue to be in charge.

I have many decisions to make about Mom's care.
And I need your help, dear Father.
I must allow you to be the Lord of my choices.
Forgive me when I forget who is in charge.
Help me not to try to do your work for you.

In the name of Jesus, my Lord and Savior.

Amen.

Sometimes it's difficult to allow God to be in charge—especially in tough situations. Even if you know God is in control, it's easy to think you need to handle things yourself. Ask God to help you trust him with the decisions in your life.

All I need to know

MY faithful, loving, and merciful God,

I could never have made it
to this point without you.

I praise you for never leaving me—
even when I'm so busy that I don't realize how
much I need to talk to you.

You have always been there for me,
ready to comfort and help whenever I've kept my
attention on you.

There are days I don't want to think about tomorrow.
Yet I know you'll be there for me tomorrow,
just as you are here with me right now.

You've blessed me over and over again in ways I never
anticipated.

So I do anticipate now, Lord, a blessed future.
I must dream, Father, about a time when my load
is lighter again.
It will be. I know it will be.

In the meantime, you're here, Father.
I praise you for being with me.
You'll never leave me,
and that's all I need to know.

In the faithful, loving, and merciful
name of Jesus I pray.

Amen.

Are you facing a difficult day? You might find it encouraging to praise God for some yesterdays when you could feel he was with you. Then dream about some pleasant tomorrows with your heavenly Father, and praise him for his faithful presence with you each day.

Dear God,

How I praise you for coming to earth in the person of Jesus Christ.

When you lived on earth, you didn't see crowds of people
around you.

You looked at individuals in the crowds and had
compassion on them.

You saw a lame man, a sick girl, a grieving mother.

Now, as you look down from heaven, you don't see masses
of humanity; you see individual people.

You see a frightened man in pain,
a sad woman struggling to remember who she is,
and a weary daughter doing her best to care for her parents.

I'm the weary daughter, and my friends try to understand
what I'm going through.

But they can't—not really.

My father was at one time the man in pain, and my mother is
still the woman without a memory.

I try to understand what they have been through.

But I can't—not really.

"And he had"

I praise you, God, for your compassion.

You can understand everything—you really can!
As you look down from heaven, you see and understand
everything my family and I are facing.
That's because on this earth you experienced pain,
rejection, sorrow, and weariness.

I thank you for understanding and caring.

And I praise you for being the best Friend our family
ever had.
Your love and compassion never end.

Give me a measure of your compassion, Lord.
In your name I pray.

Amen.

compassion on them"

*How has Jesus shown compassion for you and your loved one?
Praise him for his love. In what ways would you like Jesus to help
you now? In what ways does your loved one need his compassion?
Ask the Lord for his touch on your home. Then go to sleep tonight,
resting in his loving, compassionate arms.*

Now and forever

Father God,

I praise you for being my Father in heaven.

You are so good to me.

Sometimes I wander away in my thoughts,
in my words, or in my actions.

But like the father of the Prodigal Son, you're always
waiting for me to come back.

Thank you, Father, for listening and opening
your arms when I tell you how sorry I am.

Thank you for loving me even before I repent.

And thanks for not shaking your finger at me
because of my sins.

I praise you for offering me eternal life, Father God.

When I'm having a rough day with Mom,

I think about what's ahead for her and me.

Then the day goes by more quickly and
with more hope.

Thank you that the eternal life you offer has already
begun.

I'll talk to you every day, now and forever.

Hallelujah!

Amen.

What do you need from your heavenly Father today? Do you need to feel his hand in yours? to accept his forgiveness? Maybe you long to thank him for caring for you as a father would. Why not tell him what you need today?



Optional Worship Helps for Caregiver and Care Receiver

N O T E T O

T H E R E A D E R

Do you ever wonder what to say or what to do when you try to spend a few moments of quality time with your elderly loved one? The following pages offer suggested prayers, Scripture readings, and songs that you may find suitable to share from time to time.

Here are some simple worship ideas that may be helpful.

PRAYERS FOR CARE RECEIVERS

- Six printed prayers will give you ideas of ways to help your care receiver talk to God.
- Pick out prayers, or portions of them, that seem appropriate for the current circumstances. Perhaps these prayers will act as a springboard allowing your loved one to express his or her own thoughts to God.

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES

- Choose Bible verses that have been favorites of your loved one. If you're not sure which ones they are, watch for responses as you read.
- Mark the Scripture passages in which your care receiver appears most interested, and don't hesitate to repeat the same ones over and over again.
- If your loved one has highlighted verses in his or her own Bible, select verses that the two of you can read together often.

SONGS

- Many elderly people have difficulty expressing their thoughts and feelings but can do so through music. So you'll want to check out the section of songs, which contains many timeless favorites.
- If you don't feel comfortable singing, you can still read the words. The rhythm of the poetry will very likely get the attention of the person you care for.

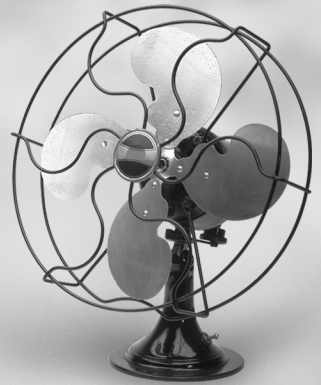
- You'll want to choose songs that your loved one knows. If you're not sure which ones those are, watch for a response as you sing or repeat the words.
- Mark the songs that your care receiver enjoys the most, and feel free to go back to the same ones again and again.
- If your loved one requests songs that aren't printed in this book, make a list of those songs along with the name of a songbook and the page number where you can find each one.
- Many churches record their services. If yours does, consider getting some of the tapes so you can play the music for your loved one. Or if you wish, ask if some of your church musicians would record favorite hymns, choruses, anthems, and other special music. Many recordings of hymns and praise songs are available from Christian bookstores, as well as on-line.

As you watch the moods of the person you care for, you'll recognize that there are days when a quiet worship time settles your loved one down. On those days you may spend half an hour singing, reading, and praying together.

On the other hand, there may be days when your parent or spouse struggles to understand reality or becomes emotionally distraught at any disruption of his or her routine. If that happens, don't force a worship time together.

Perhaps you care for a loved one who never committed his or her life to the Lord. Then ask for permission from time to time to read some of your favorite Scripture verses and to sing or repeat the words of some of your favorite songs. You can use the verses and songs as a way to share your personal testimony.

I pray that the following prayers, Scriptures, and songs will help you and your loved one experience meaningful worship times together.



Prayers for Care Receivers

*O Lord, you alone are my hope.
Now, in my old age, don't set me aside.
I will keep on hoping for you to help me;
I will praise you more and more.*

PSALM 71:5, 9, 14

Praise God, who gives all good gifts

Dear Father in heaven,

I thank you for the many years you have given to me.
You have been with me through good times and bad.
Thank you for never forgetting about me,
even when I have forgotten about you.
I know you care about me.
I know you are here with me right now.

I praise you for your love.
It's such a perfect, pure, and holy love.
You showed me that love when you sent
your Son, Jesus.
Thank you, Jesus, for dying on the cross
for my sins.
I want you to be my Shepherd.
I want to be like a little lamb
and follow you forever.

Amen.

Forgive me, Lord

Dear Lord,

You are so good.

You know me, and still you love me.

You understand me too.

You know what's in my heart.

Forgive me for the times I haven't trusted you.

Forgive me for the times I've been upset because

I thought you should have handled things differently.

Lord God, help me to believe you know
what's best.

Help me to believe you have everything
under control.

Father, please forgive my sins.

Cleanse me and purify me.

I want to be ready to meet you someday,

whenever you're ready for me to come home.

Thank you for your one and only Son, Jesus,
who came to be my Savior.

No one but Jesus is truly clean and pure.

I'm so glad he stands between you and me

so that you see only his goodness

when you look at me.

*Amen.*¹

¹Based on Einar Free's constant prayer the last six months of his life: Cleanse me, purify me, and make me whole.