

A Collection of
Prayers & Liturgies for Parents

To Light Their Way



KAYLA CRAIG

Advance Praise for *To Light Their Way*

Nothing brings you to your knees in prayer quite like becoming a parent. *To Light Their Way* is just that—a candle in the dark, a hand to hold, words to guide you when you have none. Kayla’s warm, compassionate voice is a balm to weary parents everywhere, offering the perfect language to pray over a multitude of circumstances. This book has earned a permanent spot on my nightstand. I will be turning to these love-soaked prayers again and again as I raise my three children.

ASHLEE GADD

Founder of Coffee + Crumbs and author of *The Magic of Motherhood*

To Light Their Way is a beautiful invitation to pause and draw near to God, no matter the circumstance. For parents, this collection is a grace-filled place to turn when seeking language, hope, and peace.

MORGAN HARPER NICHOLS

Artist and poet

To Light Their Way is such an inspiring collection of liturgies and prayers that help families discuss and discern the themes of justice we want to see in our world. Kayla thoughtfully leads parents, children, and extended family down the path of truly living out Jesus’ hope of seeing God’s will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

JONATHAN “PASTAH J” BROOKS

Pastor; author of *Church Forsaken*

Few voices I’ve come across do the work of demystifying not only spiritual matters but also the sometimes overwhelming world of parenting. This book, like so much of Kayla’s work, meets me in both places, providing pathways of language and imagery that help place me in my own secret and everyday life.

JUSTIN McROBERTS

Author of *It Is What You Make of It*

To live fully is to embrace the wonder of the ordinary and the mystery of God with us. These simple, meaningful prayers are a night-light, reminding us we are not alone. I will keep this beautiful book close at hand and reach for it again and again.

SHANNAN MARTIN

Author of *The Ministry of Ordinary Places* and *Falling Free*

Inspired, beautiful, heartfelt, compassionate, and real, these prayers will help you enter into a deeper relationship with God in almost every part of your life as a believer.

JAMES MARTIN, SJ

Author of [Learning to Pray](#)

As a mom to many foster children and one newborn baby, I have experienced the highest of highs and lowest of lows in my parenting journey. Moments with God are harder to come by when you have children whose needs demand all your time and attention. Time with God is essential for myself and my family. When I have time, I am often depleted and lacking the words to pray. Thankfully, Kayla Craig has provided this book full of beautifully woven prayers and liturgies for parents just like me. This is the book I didn't know I so desperately needed.

MANDA CARPENTER

Author of [Space: An Invitation to Create Sustainable Rhythms of Work, Play, and Rest](#)

Every parent or caregiver knows what it's like to stare down the hopes, fears, joys, and griefs of childrearing and struggle to find words to say, much less words to pray. This book is an expansive offering of grace, generously providing the language we all need to lift our children to the One who knit each and every one of them together in love.

SHANNON K. EVANS

Author of [Rewilding Motherhood: Your Path to an Empowered Feminine Spirituality](#)

These liturgies awaken us to the glory of children again and again. Kayla has curated a collection that is honest about every flawed and aching aspect of parenthood, yet her words are grounded in a deep gratitude for her role as keeper, protector, and lover of the little ones she calls her own. I suspect these prayers will be shared, remembered, and held close for many years to come.

COLE ARTHUR RILEY

Writer of [Black Liturgies](#)

To Light Their Way is a trusted companion for every parent's journey, honoring the bright and dark places along the way. Kayla Craig has given us a rich collection of liturgies to pray in quiet or proclaim together in chaos, a book for the joys and sorrows of raising children through milestone moments and mundane days. Kayla has a heart for justice, an ear for poetry, and clear eyes to see the world through grit and glory. Her

prayers offer a deep breath and a drink of grace when we need it most. At the heart of each liturgy is gratitude for the goodness of family love, even when it is complicated or challenging. *To Light Their Way* is the prayer book so many of us have been searching for—strong in faith, wide in reach, and stubborn in hope.

LAURA KELLY FANUCCI

Author of *Everyday Sacrament: The Messy Grace of Parenting* and *To Bless Our Callings: Prayers, Poems, and Hymns to Celebrate Vocation*

Now more than ever, many of us are overwhelmed with the demands of parenting in such a loud world. With compassion, curiosity, and tenderness, Kayla Craig offers us sacred prayers and space for the complexity of parenthood. *To Light Their Way* is a gift to all of us who are seeking to stay rooted in faith as we navigate the beautiful and difficult terrain of raising kids.

AUNDI KOLBER

Licensed therapist and author of *Try Softer*

Breathtaking and transformational. This book takes us by the hand and shows us how to pray for our children through heartbreak and with a howl of hope in our chests. Don't miss this chance to light up milestones and meltdowns and everything in between with unflinching prayers of joy and generosity. We need more guides like Kayla in the world and on the bookshelf!

DIANA K. OESTREICH

Founder of the Waging Peace Project; author of Amazon's #1 new release in war and peace, *Waging Peace: One Soldier's Story of Putting Love First*

If written prayers are a light meant to help illuminate our path, *To Light Their Way* is a bonfire. When words won't come, when our groanings are all the communication we have, Kayla Craig has gathered hopes and laments like wildflowers, an overflowing basket of beauty to spur us onward. If you often find yourself stymied or overwhelmed by prayer, Kayla lets us borrow her hard-won words as she beckons us from just ahead on the road. *To Light Their Way* is honest, rich, and attentive to all the ways we can suffuse grace into our children's lives, as well as our own.

ERIN HICKS MOON

Host of the *Faith Adjacent* podcast; resident Bible scholar on *The Bible Binge* podcast; author of *Every Broken Thing*, *O Heavy Lightness*, and *Memento Mori*

Kayla Craig's stunningly beautiful gift of written word has, time and again, captured exactly what my spirit was longing to say in times of grief, celebration, and waiting. Her reflections in *To Light Their Way* will prove to do exactly this: they'll surely illuminate our spirits' longings as we hope for connection with the heart of God and one another. This collection is a holy offering from Kayla's heart to us—and I'm so grateful.

ASHLEE EILAND

Pastor, Mars Hill Bible Church; author of *Human(Kind)*

Simple and profound, gentle and bold, each page of *To Light Their Way* is packed with life. What a gift this book will be to all who find it. May it illuminate the paths of many. With this book, Kayla Craig has created something very special. It will be a source of hope and help for many years to come. In these pages, I saw reflected so many of the things I've often wanted to say but could not express. It's a reminder that we're not alone and that the aches and longings, joys and blessings of being a parent can lead us to a closer knowing of God's great, good love.

BRAD MONTAGUE

New York Times bestselling author of *Kid President's Guide to Being Awesome* and *Becoming Better Grownups*

In these days of nonstop parenting, I've been struck by how often I turn to one of Kayla's prayers. Though I have books and books on prayer, her words are fresh and yet familiar. They point me toward God, myself, and the people around me in love. Now that I get to work alongside Kayla, I'm all the more grateful for the deep well of prayer and love of both neighbor and Scripture that is evident in her life. Her words, work, and witness are a gift I can't wait to share with friends at baby showers and in the "I can't go on like this" moments.

JENN GILES KEMPER

Founder of Sacred Ordinary Days

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To Light Their Way



KAYLA CRAIG



The Tyndale nonfiction imprint

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Designed by Eva M. Winters

Edited by Stephanie Rische

Published in association with the literary agency of Books & Such Literary Management, 52 Mission Circle, Suite 122, PMB 170, Santa Rosa, CA 95409.

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A catalog record for this book is available from the Library of Congress.

ISBN 978-1-4964-5400-3

Printed in China

27	26	25	24	23	22	21
7	6	5	4	3	2	1

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A Parade of Prayers

WHEN MY FAMILY GOES on walks together, we form quite the parade. Joseph speeds down the sidewalk on his scooter, leading the way, as eldest children often do. Asher isn't far behind him, pedaling furiously on his green bike, as Abram runs to catch up, sneakers illuminating the pavement. My husband rounds out the procession, pulling a worn red wagon, Eliza's very own chariot as we wait for insurance approval for a wheelchair. I linger behind, balancing two dogs' leashes in one hand and a mug of coffee in the other, marveling at my spot in this vibrant, wild, beautiful parade.

These walks, like family, like prayer, are a bit cobbled together, full of twists and turns. But they are filled with beauty and wonder nonetheless.

I marvel at the paths that brought us together—paths that weave through time and space, adoption and biology. As I parent these four children and journey with them through their wide range of ages and stages, I stand in awe of the image of God—the *imago Dei*—reflected in each heart and soul, mind and strength. I see their individual personalities break forth into the world, with their unique passions and frustrations, joys and heartbreaks.

When we get back from our neighborhood adventures, we turn the key and break through the door. Shoes become wayward heaps on the living room floor, sweaty kids and dogs gulp fresh water, and I collapse onto the couch, suddenly aware of my exhaustion. But every once in a while, when the windows are open and a breeze filters in, I become wide awake, aware of this gift of *together*. And though I can barely string words one after another, I offer a silent thank-you to God for each child that I've been given the privilege to parent.

TO LIGHT THEIR WAY

In these moments, which begin in quiet and then are soon covered in the noise of a now-buzzing TV, shouting children, and at least one barking dog, I pray simple, integrated prayers, asking God to breathe love into each child, to care for their varied needs, and to light their way through each day.

Keeping It Simple

I'm aware of my propensity to overthink things, prayer included. Once a religious expert stood up to test Jesus, asking what he must do to inherit eternal life. Jesus responded with a question, as He often did: "What is written in the Law?" (Luke 10:26).

And the answer still stands, even in my cluttered and chaotic house, even now: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind." And the second part of it? "Love your neighbor as yourself" (Luke 10:27).

So when I pray for each of my kids, I pray for their

heart,
soul,
strength (body), and
mind.

And I pray that in all things, they would know the love of God so deeply that they would love themselves, and out of that would come an outpouring of love to the neighbor down the road and the neighbor across the world.

When You Have No Words

Though I've been praying in some form or another since I was young, it took a critically ill child to bring me to the rootedness of written prayers—or, as many traditions call them, liturgies.

When a respiratory virus attacked my three-year-old daughter's lungs, she relied on a ventilator to keep her alive. I sat by her too-big hospital bed, searching for reminders of life as her sedated body struggled under the weight of drips and machines.

Three weeks in, I knew every nurse's name and every IV's purpose. My husband, Jonny, and I were taking turns in the hospital, and that night he was home with our three young

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sons. It was my night to sleep on the plastic pullout couch as the doctors and nurses came and went, checking stats and assessing numbers.

I couldn't hold my baby. I could barely even touch her head without disrupting her fragile body.

"Healing takes time," the doctors told me. "She's very sick. This is a life-threatening illness."

All I could do was sit under the fluorescent lights and wait. I wanted to pray but had not one ounce of energy to muster anything. And honestly, I wanted to yell at God. My heart raced; my face flushed. How could He let this precious child hang in the thin space between heaven and earth? Exhaustion flooded my bones. I was putting on a front for my boys at home, trading day and night shifts with my husband, and the schedule was taking its toll on my mind, body, and soul.

I looked outside as another blizzard blanketed the parking lot. I watched the minivans and sedans disappear under thick clouds of snow and wondered about the people each vehicle represented. Each car meant somebody's loved one was sick and in need of care. I thought of the suffering that people experience every day. I lamented. I doubted.

I wrestled with fears and doubts, and I wasn't sure if I could hand them over to God. I didn't know how. So instead, I held on to them. I couldn't hold my daughter. But I could embrace my anger and fear, clutching them close to my chest.

There I was, married to a pastor, and I couldn't pray.

There I was, a Christian for the previous thirty years, and I couldn't muster any words.

People told me they were praying for our little girl. *I guess your prayers don't work*, I thought. I knew that God wasn't a genie in a bottle who would just grant our wish if we all prayed hard enough. But still, I struggled to find words that rang true in the walls of that hospital room.

On one of my days at home, I checked the mailbox. Bills and junk mail spilled out, but there was a package nestled inside too. A book of prayers. There in my mailbox was an invitation into conversation with God—and permission to rest from the exhaustion of finding just the right words.

I didn't have to have it all together. I didn't have to have the perfect quiet space to center my thoughts—the beeps and buzzes of medical machines would do. All I had to do was open to the page and read, recite, and repeat until I felt my heart rate begin to calm, until I was no longer tensing my shoulders, until I could release the breaths I'd been holding for too long.

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We don't need the perfect location or perfect circumstances or perfect words to pray. If we wait for that, we never will.

When everything crumbled, the prayers of another voice comforted me. And as I prayed, the written words became my own pleas and petitions, jumping off the page and nestling into my soul. The warmth and welcome of the body of Christ says, *I'll lift your hands for you*. And as I learned in those thin spaces in the intensive care unit, the body of Christ also says: *You don't have the words? Here, take mine*.

After a month in the hospital, with the care of a compassionate crew of doctors and nurses, my husband and I brought our daughter home. I still didn't have any concrete answers about the mystery of prayer. I grieved for the parents who left the intensive care unit with empty seats in their minivans. I celebrated my daughter's return to health. I sat in the tension.

When we arrived home, unloading bag after bag of belongings, I clipped the plastic hospital ID bracelets from our wrists and tossed them into the trash. But I held on to the book. The prayers of others had become *my* prayers.

Likewise, may the prayers of lament and celebration in this book become yours. They already are.

What Is Prayer?

Prayer isn't about selecting the most lyrical prose or saying a perfectly selected string of words. It's about entering into the ongoing dialogue the Creator of all things is *already* having with us every day.

When we weep at the grief circling our families, we pray.

When we lament the unjust headlines, we pray.

When we celebrate the joy, beauty, and love around us, we pray.

When we seek our rootedness in Christ alone, we pray.

God requires no sonnets or soliloquies—He just desires our presence. My four-year-old asked me recently if we can see God, and I told him we see God in the way a rainbow appears after a storm, we feel God in the way his sister cups her hand on my cheek, we hear God in the giggles of his brothers as they leap on the trampoline. Across cultures and generations, people have sought answers about how to interact with God. God requires no special sacrifice, demands no magic words or rituals. God just wants *us*.

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Parenthood is sanctifying. It's often said that we do the best we can with what we have—and I believe a life that includes rhythms of prayer is part of that. Just like I call my mom after a particularly difficult day or after receiving exciting news, I can turn to God in my celebrations and sorrows—in the ordinary and extraordinary moments of life.

When we pray, we are transformed. We don't pray to a genie in a bottle but to the One who loves so extravagantly that He entered our reality and made a way to dwell inside us. Inside our blood, our sweat, our tears. He hears the rhythms of our hearts before we ever put words to them.

God isn't just present in the quiet mornings before the kids wake up or in the late nights on our knees. God is here among us, beyond all time and in all time.

As I raise my four kids, I marvel at their joys and sorrows, their glittering ability to see God's beauty in everything, even a dandelion-covered lawn. I ache for God's help as I tend to their hearts, minds, bodies, and souls, even as I'm unsure how to voice what's on my heart. Heavy headlines, packed schedules, the desire to raise kids in God's Kingdom—how can I possibly find the words to pray?

Fortunately, prayer doesn't have to be fancy. We don't have to have just the right words for God to listen. God is already listening. God is all around us, and holy moments live in the ordinary and extraordinary times in our lives.

Why Do We Pray?

We pray because we were created with a sense of awe and wonder, and we need a worthy outlet for those feelings. We pray because as children talk to their parents, so we talk with God. We pray because we ache to raise a generation that refuses to accept the world as it is but believes in a brighter reality rooted in peace and truth.

We pray because we're aware of our shortcomings and believe in a healing God who beckons us with open arms, no matter how far we've strayed. We pray for the inner child in our souls, the one who aches to return home.

We pray because we were made to. We pray because we love our children, and we believe they were knit together by a loving God who lavishes love upon generation after generation, who loves our children even more than we do and knows them better than we could even fathom.

We pray for our children, and in doing so, we know that we, too, will be transformed.

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We pray that they would love the Lord their God with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength.

We pray because if we ache for this transformation for our children, we know it starts with us. Through Jesus Christ, we receive supernatural nurture and cosmic grace. We pray because we need strength for the journey and reminders to rest along the way.

We pray that our children will love their neighbors as themselves. We pray that we will be bold enough to model solidarity with our oppressed neighbors because we know our children are watching. We pray that we will be tender enough to model gentleness to our children because we know our children are watching. We pray that we will be kind enough to care for the stranger because we know our children are watching.

What Are Liturgies?

Maybe you were raised in a tradition where prayer is spontaneous and free, never recited or rote, but you long for the roots that come from tradition and sacrament. Or maybe you have experienced liturgy as dry, dusty prayers written long ago, lacking relevance, emotion, or energy. Or perhaps prayer is something of a foreign concept to you—something that feels a little awkward and uncomfortable. In reality, liturgies are ecumenical—they go beyond denomination—and they don't require a spiritual résumé. Liturgies are a rhythm, a worship, rooted in God's Word.

Liturgies are written prayers that act as a sacred invitation into divine conversation with God. Jesus said that He left us the very Spirit of God, dwelling inside us. Through the Spirit, we can use liturgies as an on-ramp into an ongoing conversation with the Divine as

we go about our days, rising in the morning, kissing skinned knees and helping with schoolwork, interacting with our neighbors, and finally resting our heads at night.

Whatever tradition you grew up in or find yourself in (or don't find yourself in) now, the prayers in this book are reimagined liturgies that draw from the vibrant, varied fabrics of the broad

Christian faith. I find comfort in the patchwork quilt of my own faith journey. When my Baptist grandmother married a Catholic, they raised a Lutheran daughter who married a Methodist and raised me Presbyterian. I fell in love with the son of a Baptist pastor and started to make my faith my own, feeling God sewn into the seams of modern church



Liturgies are threads
that bind us together,
weaving our tears and
our laughter together.

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plants and old wooden pews, pulling the threads until I found myself back in the liturgical rhythms of my childhood.

Liturgy, the prayers of worship at times of celebration and lament, roots us in the ancient truth that God dwells in us and beside us. That we are called beloved and our children are called beloved, and that we are each a pebble in an ocean of deep, abiding love. Liturgy anchors us as the waves of real life wash over us. We pray in the mundane; we pray in the unknown; we pray when we have nothing left to give. Scripture tells us that the Spirit intercedes for us with wordless groans. God knows our ache. He sees us and will not leave us or our children.

I find deep comfort in knowing I'm not alone in my prayers—that others have prayed, are praying, and will pray these same words. Liturgies are threads that bind us together, weaving our tears and our laughter together. In liturgy, we're tied to our common humanity.

How to Use This Book

Henri Nouwen said that the key to praying is . . . well, praying.¹ Use these prayers in the morning before the chaos of the day begins. Or keep this collection on your bedside table, ready to flip open when your world is finally quiet. If you're like me, you'll have time to pray for five whole minutes while you wait in the carpool line or get stuck in a long commute.

Everything we have is a prayer—all we do, all we are. Prayer is a habit. And the more we practice entering into ongoing dialogue with God, the more we—and, in turn, our children and our very worlds—will be changed.

These prayers are modern liturgies, written with the love of God and neighbor embedded in every stanza. They're created to guide you into an intentional time of prayer for your children and the world they live in. These prayers are for parents who will not bury their heads in the sand during pain or suffering, because we know we are created and pursued by a God who is present in the pain. These prayers are for finding the sacred in the ordinary struggles and victories of raising children today. These liturgies are for the poor and the privileged, for those full of faith and those barely hanging on. Take comfort in knowing that though these prayers are deeply personal, they're also communal, read and recited by other parents across denomination and background.

This collection of prayers and liturgies is written from the perspective of a parent and sometimes from the communal perspective of a body of believers. An index in the back will help you find prayers by topic and theme.

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Some liturgies, like the prayers for ordinary moments or prayers for nurturing faith and character, are general offerings you can pray daily. Others are for more specific situations. Pray them alone or with a partner, a friend, or a family member. Pray them at a church service or a baby shower or a birthday party.

These are prayers to celebrate birthdays and baptisms, as well as when your son stands alongside a bullied classmate or when your daughter tries something new, even when she's scared. These prayers are for when your child grieves the death of a grandparent or a goldfish, as well as lamenting the day your child comes home shaking because they had to participate in an active shooter drill at school.

You'll even find some prayers to pray along with your kids. The words in this book aren't meant to replace your quiet, everyday conversations with God but rather to help you when you could use a map on your journey. I've also found written prayers helpful for praying on behalf of a loved one walking through a certain joy or time of suffering, helping me grow in empathy and compassion for a situation I myself may not have personally experienced. You may find that you want to read some blessings over a child as a situation arises or find comfort in the solitude of reading them alone.

I should mention up front that this is not a book of cotton-candy prayers that ignore the raw realities we live in every day. Praying like that will rot our teeth. These are prayers to chew on. Prayers to pray when you're overwhelmed with emotion and when you feel nothing at all.

These words of lament and celebration, of the ordinary and extraordinary, reflect the joys and sorrows of generations of parents. These prayers and liturgies are rooted in the ancient truths of God's Word, big enough for all of us.

You'll also find a section of breath prayers inspired by Scripture. I've found these short meditations helpful to me as I go through the day. Whether I'm scrolling Twitter, loading the dishwasher, tackling a work project, or playing LEGOs with my kids, these are simple prayers to memorize. Simply pray the *inhale* words as you breathe in and pray the *exhale* words as you let your breath go. These simple meditations help root us in our bodies and souls, hearts and minds. They reset us to the Spirit of God, who is with us always, even when we forget that sacred truth. And bonus? These short prayers help us memorize Scripture. These breath prayers are simple, easy to remember (or jot down), and they can be helpful to pray with our kids, too.

All Shall Be Well

Parenting is challenging. This we know. May we accept the invitation to step into God's upside-down Kingdom, the now-and-not-yet, where the first will be last and where the little children are always welcome.

We move fast; these prayers help us slow down. Our worlds are loud; these prayers help us get quiet. Our children are full of wonder and mystery; these prayers help us grow in compassion for *all* of who our children are.

We pray because we need help. We pray because we stand in awe. We pray because we are grateful.

We pray because we are mothers and fathers. We are daughters and sons.

Let us pray.

Kayla Craig
Fall 2021



A Blessing to Begin

God, bless the hopes and anxieties,
The joys and the longings
Within us as we raise our children.

Bless the late nights
And the too-early mornings.
Bless the daily chaos
And the quiet moments, too.

Bless the growing hearts and souls
And their embodied hope.
Bless the future so full of promise,
And bless the past so full of grace.

Bless our belly laughs
And our bitter tears, too.
Bless the celebrations held
And the lessons hard won.

Bless the groans
When no words will form.
Bless the daily reshaping of our
 hearts
And the renewal of our minds
As we reshape and renew the world
With each act of love.

Bless the spirit inside us
That won't give up on Your love.

Romans 12:2



PART ONE

Prayers for Family Milestones

I'M NOT SURE HOW the *night before birthdays* has become such a thing in our family.

When we whisper the last bedtime story and tuck in the final covers, my husband and I sneak into the kitchen to blow up dollar-store balloons, balance on kitchen chairs to twist and hang streamers, and pull hidden gifts from under the bed. It's never fancy, and I often reuse birthday banners, but it always ignites a sense of anticipation. We're bone weary and brain exhausted in the throes of parenting four young children, but this ritual of coming together, of anticipating our kids' delight and surprise, builds excitement in our hearts.

We find ourselves reflecting on the day we met our birthday child—marveling at their growth, reflecting on what has been, and wondering what might be. The sprinkles I shake on the cupcakes become a prayer, and suddenly I'm remembering the moment I first laid eyes on them, praying over their spiritual journey in Christ. My searching for the last bit of Scotch tape to wrap a present is a prayer for their creativity and sticky fingers.

Celebration is a crucial tenet of the Christian life (see Philippians 4:4). We don't need grand parties or opulent gifts—even simple moments can serve as an invitation to remember, to enter into divine conversation and reflect on the joys of the complicated, curious humans we get to raise.

Parenting in times of celebration invites us into the present reality that the Spirit dwells among us. We know intimately that sorrows fill our lives, but the Christian life is also marked with much rejoicing, too. There are the big moments, of course, such as the birth of a child. But celebration also comes in the delighted squeal of a child at a new seedling sprouting from a cup of dirt or a flourishing touch on a finger painting or a teenager's first paycheck.

I'm inclined to focus on God and prayer when life is challenging. When I'm aware of my lack, I'm aware of my intimate need for God's provision and love. But when life feels celebratory, I'm likely to forget—to leave an invitation unspoken for the Creator of all

TO LIGHT THEIR WAY

good things, the Savior who sets the table (see Luke 22:14-16) and turns water into wine (see John 2:1-11). A Jesus who says take and eat (see Matthew 26:26). A God who is the orchestrator of the Year of Jubilee (see Leviticus 25:1-13).

When we pray for our children, when we mark our times of celebration, we're entering into the ancient tradition of worshiping a perfect God who is the very definition of parental love. These prayers of celebration include spiritual, developmental, and familial milestones—and also the small, sacred victories that are so easy to forget.

As parents, we need no reminder that our babies are worth celebrating. May we remember that this is how the Maker of all things feels about us, too—beloved simply because we are His children. Worthy of love simply because we *are*. And then may we accept this truth as a cause for celebration.

Living in celebration does not mean we wait until things are perfect to rejoice—it means we are aware of God's inherent goodness. We're awake to glimmers of extraordinary wonder in our comings and goings.

May these liturgies of milestones, family celebrations, and tiny victories remind us that we feast with God as we enter into the spiritual adventure of parenting and praying for our daughters and sons.

A Prayer for Pregnancy

You are the author of life, O God.
Through You all life is made.
Through Your wonder and Your love,
You are making all things new,
And we thank You
For the new life growing in the womb
right now.

How is it possible, O God,
That You invite us into this wonder?
We pray for peace to flood our hearts
As we prepare to welcome
A new little one into our family.

As we hear the rhythm of the heartbeat,
Our hearts leap with anticipation
In expectation of what's to come.
Help us prepare to parent
And open wide our hearts
To love with abandon exactly who You
created this baby to be.

We pray for a pregnancy rooted in health,
And if complications arise
With an unexpected change or diagnosis,
Help us to make life-honoring decisions
Rooted in love and not fear.
Surround us with supportive community,
And guide doctors, nurses, and midwives

As they walk us through these nine
months.

As this baby grows and develops,
Dancing in the womb,
We praise You for the mystery of life
And the whispers of Your love
In the artistry of our intricate bodies.

As this child's brain forms in the womb,
We pray that they will
Love You with all their mind,
Growing in wisdom
And never hesitating to ask "Why?"
Or "Why not?"

As this child's heart grows in the womb,
We pray that they will
Love You with all their heart,
Growing in compassion
That overflows to everyone they meet.

As this child's eyes develop in the womb,
We pray that they will
Love You with all their soul,
Growing in mercy
To see the hurting and forgotten.

As this child's hands and feet sprout in
the womb,
We pray that they will
Love You with all their strength,
Growing in gentleness,
Following Your paths of peace.

TO LIGHT THEIR WAY

We pray for peace as bodies grow
and shift
To make room.
Provide comfort of body
And soul.
Keep us focused on the anticipation,
And help us not to get distracted by
nurseries we don't need
And parties with things we don't want.

As we trust in You,
May we also trust our bodies
In pregnancy, labor, and delivery.
In the groans, be near, O God.
In the pushes and pulls, be near, O God.
In the deep breaths and soaked brows,
be near, O God.
Be near as we cry out to You.

Lord, we know that each baby born on
this earth
Is Your beloved
And reflects Your image
In every eyelash fringe and fingerprint
swirl.
And yet access to a safe birth
For mother and baby
Is not a reality for everyone.
We pray that You would make a way
For us to support
And advocate for mothers in our own
community
And around the world
To have births that are

Safe, honoring, and dignifying,
Across every race and economic status.

In our worries, remind us to rest
In Your love that overflows
Like a mother nursing her baby.
Help us remember that You love this child
Because You are love,
And You love our sons and daughters
More than we ever could.
We pray that You would help us
Turn our pregnancy fears to You,
For You hold our children,
And even us,
In the very palm of Your hand.

Lord, help us trust the process of creation.
Thank You for the sacred gift
Of being cocreators with You.

*Ecclesiastes 11:5; Ephesians 3:16-19; Psalm 139:13-14;
Isaiah 49:15-16*

A Prayer for Birth

O God, we pray for new life bursting
forth—

For the first breath of a baby
And the tiny cries echoing through time
and space.

O God, we pray for the moment skin
meets skin—

For the exhales of a parent
And the loud cries echoing through time
and space.

O God, this world groans like a laboring
mother.

We need embodied hope, and we see a
glimpse of it

In the pursed lips of a newborn,
In the tiny fingers and toes.

O Spirit, hover over this newborn life,
As You did in the womb.
Surround this beloved baby
With care and with comfort.
Surround this beloved family
With community and with courage.
Remind us that parenting is
A sacred offering of body and soul.
May love surround this baby and family
In all the stages of life,
In all the joys and the sorrows.

We pray this in the name of Jesus Christ,
Who entered our world through a
mother.

We thank You for Your promise of hope
everlasting.

We thank You for Your goodness and
truth.

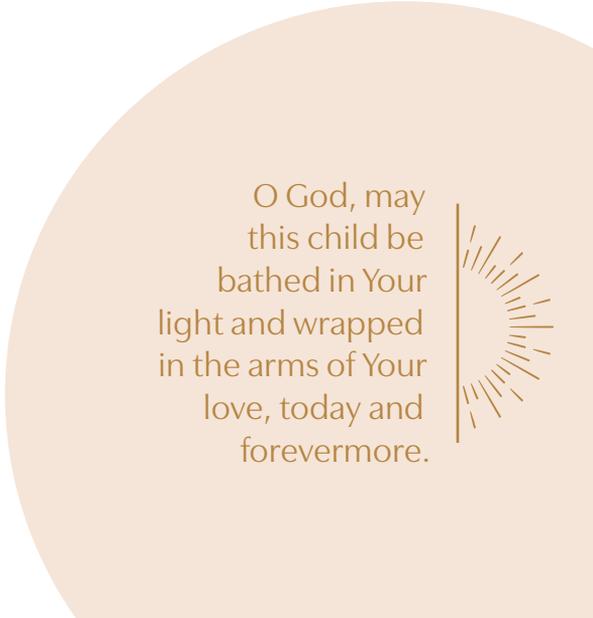
Remind us of Your heavenly nurture
And the human nature that You chose.

O God, may this child be bathed in
Your light

And wrapped in the arms of Your love,
Today and forevermore.

Deuteronomy 32:11-12; Psalm 18:1-2; 1 Peter 1:3; James 1:17

O God, may
this child be
bathed in Your
light and wrapped
in the arms of Your
love, today and
forevermore.



A Prayer for Baptism

O God of Living Water,
We come to You on the day of this
child's baptism
In celebration of Your promise,
In communion with Your people.

O Lord, we thank You
For the sacred act of baptism,
By grace alone.
As we watch the water droplets form
and fall,
We remember Your story—
You, who created the universe
And made Your dwelling among us,
Living and dying and rising again.

Cleanse our hearts, O Lord,
As we pray for this child.
Refresh our spirits, O Lord,
As we pray for this child.

On this day, we see our reflection in
the water
And affirm that through baptism in
Jesus Christ,
We lay down our ways for Yours,
Forsaking the rhythms of the world
For the heartbeat of Your Kingdom.
Meet us in the water, O Lord.

Wash us with Your mercy.
May this moment in front of You
And Your people gathered
Mark a new beginning
Of a life set apart and made new.

O Christ, You entered our world
And conquered death
For the sake of this child.
May we love this little one
As You first loved us.

We thank You for Your covenant love
That flows like a mighty river.
We gather as an act of faith
And in celebration of Your faithfulness.

May [child's name]'s steps lead back
to You.

Reveal Yourself in each person
They meet along the way.
We pray that Your great love
Will overflow in our family.
We pray that Your Holy Spirit
Will pour out in
The sisterhood and brotherhood of
believers.

May this time seal in our hearts
A celebration of what You have done
And will do.
Be with us as this baptism marks
a preparation
For the work of Your Spirit.

PRAYERS FOR FAMILY MILESTONES

May this water and this child
Act as a visual reminder
That [child's name] belongs to You.
Be their ever-present fount
Of refreshment and renewal.

May every baptism remind us
Of our own spiritual journey,
And whisper into our hearts
Our own spiritual identity.
May we be reminded of what
Our parents or church families
May have prayed over us
As the water covered us.
Over and over again,
May we be pressed into mission
By our baptismal identity.

Lord, we pray that this child
Will know they are covered by
the water
Of Your grace and truth.
May they have a spiritual memory
Of a foundation rooted in faith
Through Jesus Christ.
May they feel in their very soul
Love from a well that won't run dry.

On the day of this baptism,
We thank You for Your presence
In us and among us.
Go before [child's name],
And when they have the choice,
May they always choose love.

We pray that these baptismal prayers
Will remind us that we belong to
each other
And to You, O Lord.
We pray for this baptism
In the name of the Father
And of the Son
And of the Holy Spirit,
Amen.

Ephesians 4:4-6; Acts 2:39; Galatians 3:27-28

A Prayer for Baby Dedication

O God, we thank You for the arrival
of [child's name].
On this day,
We dedicate this beloved child to You.
We stand before a community of believers
And before Your throne,
And as we hold this baby,
We pray that they would know they
are loved
Deeply and unconditionally
By their family
And by You, O Lord.

May this little one grow to walk in paths
of peace,
Run the race set out before them,
And lie down in Your green pastures
When they're tired, O Lord.
May this child grow in truth and in
gentleness,
In wisdom and in grace.
May this child dance with abandon
And never be afraid to cry.
May they be rooted in love
And live with open hands and heart.

Help us raise this child
To choose peace over violence

And empathy over judgment.
Give us the gift of community
Anchored in Your love.
Give us the gift of others
Who will act as a compass
When we need Your help
Or when our child has lost their way.
May they follow You
And proclaim the miracle of who
You are
In all they create,
In all they say,
In all they do.

We thank You for the gift and privilege
Of raising this child
And ask for Your help
As we journey through this life
together.
Guide us like a star in the sky;
Illuminate the way
So we can parent [child's name]
With the mercy and grace
That comes from You and You alone.

We commit to raising this child to
know You
As the living God.
We know that in You, all are given life.
You have created this child in love,
And we commit to raising them in
that love,
Surrounded by the body of Christ.

PRAYERS FOR FAMILY MILESTONES

Thank You for [child's name].
Thank You for our family.
And thank You for our sisters and
brothers in Christ.

We pray this in Jesus' name,
Amen.

Hebrews 12:1-3; Psalm 23:2; Ephesians 2:10; Isaiah 44:24

May this child dance
with abandon and
never be afraid
to cry. May they
be rooted in love
and live with open
hands and heart.



A Prayer for a Child's Birthday

O God, Creator of time
And Creator of us,
For this child we pray.

We remember the day
We welcomed them into our hearts,
The way they felt in our arms,
And how life together fell into place just so.

O God, we light the candles,
Our faces aglow around the table,
And we sing together,
Joining in a melody of memories
And hopes for the future.

For this child we pray
That as the years go by, they will know
They are loved and wanted and treasured
Just as You made them.
May they feel secure in their place in
the world,
And as their body and mind grow,
Whisper in their heart Your great love.

We look at the carousel of snapshots
Held tightly in our hands
And ache for our babies to be ours forever.
But we know, Lord,
That while we love in a way only
a parent can,

Deeper and wider than we ever dreamed,
Our children are not ours at all.
They are Yours, Lord,
And Yours alone.

In the coming year,
May our child feel the sun upon their face,
And may they know what it is to sit in
the dark
So that they may grow in wisdom.
May they wipe the sweat of justice from
their brow,
And may they know what it is to ask
forgiveness
So that they may grow in mercy.
May they be surrounded by kindness
and gentleness,
And may they know what it is to be
patient
So they may grow in grace for others.

O God, on this birthday,
Bless and keep this child.
May they always hold the wonder of
youth within their soul.
May they always grow more into the
person
You've created them to be.
May they walk in Your goodness
And stand in Your truth.
May they feel the love that swirls all
around them
And hangs in the air and fills their lungs
As they close their eyes to make a wish.

PRAYERS FOR FAMILY MILESTONES

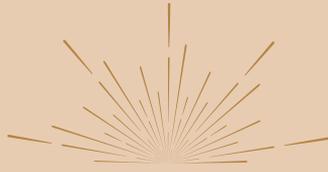
For this child we pray:
Be with them as they embark
On the adventure of the coming year.
Grant them holy mischief and sacred
shenanigans,
And permit them to rest.
When they stumble,
May they know Your healing touch.
Be with them as they enter new chapters,
And when they feel their story taking an
unexpected turn,
May they know that You never stop
writing.

For this child we pray
And ask that You would go before them
So that goodness and mercy
Will follow them all the days of their life.

Luke 10:30-37; Ephesians 6:10-18; Psalm 23:6

O God, we light the
candles, our faces aglow
around the table, and we
sing together, joining in a
melody of memories and
hopes for the future.





We look at
the carousel
of snapshots
held tightly
in our hands
and ache for
our babies
to be ours
forever.

