

BIG WESLEY LIBRARY ♦ PRAYER



BEDTIME & *Night* PRAYERS

*Prayers for children, families and anyone who lies awake, with the
Psalms that have carried God's people through the dark*

WESLEY A.M.E. ZION CHURCH

1500 LOMBARD STREET · PHILADELPHIA · SINCE 1820

PRAYER

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THE END OF THE DAY IS A HOLY TIME. THE WORK IS DONE, THE house is quiet, and whatever happened today — good or hard — is finished. For as long as there have been believers, God's people have closed the day the same way: by handing it back to Him.

This booklet is for that moment. There are short prayers for little ones, prayers for parents and grandparents to pray over a sleeping house, and prayers for the nights when sleep does not come. Each one is written in plain words. Read them as they are, or let them start you off and keep going in your own words. God is not grading your grammar.

*I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou,
LORD, only makest me dwell in safety.*

PSALM 4:8 · KJV

IN PLAIN WORDS

David wrote this psalm when people were against him and he had every reason to lie awake. He still lay down in peace. Not because his problems were gone, but because he knew Who was watching the house while he slept.

WHY WE PRAY AT NIGHT

Jesus prayed at night. The Gospels tell us He often went off alone in the evening to pray, and that before the hardest night of His life He prayed in a garden while His friends fell asleep. Night prayer is not a children's habit we grow out of. It is something the Lord Himself did.

A bedtime prayer does three simple things. It **thinks** God for the day. It **lets go** of what we cannot fix before morning. And it **trusts** God to keep us and the people we love through the night.



Whatever the day held, the night belongs to the Lord too.

PRAYERS FOR *little ones*



Short and simple is best for young children. Let them fold their hands, close their eyes and say the words after you, a line at a time. In a few weeks they will be saying them on their own — and one day, teaching them to their own children.



AN OLD PRAYER, LOVED FOR GENERATIONS

*Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray the Lord my soul to keep.
Guard me, Jesus, through the night, and wake me with the
morning light.*

AMEN.



THANK YOU, GOD

*Thank you, God, for this good day, for my food and for my
play, for my family, every one. Keep us safe till night is done.*

AMEN.



Children learn to pray by praying next to someone who does.



A PRAYER FOR WHEN I'M SCARED OF THE DARK

Jesus, You are bigger than the dark. You see me even when I can't see You. When I'm scared, help me remember that You are right here, and You don't ever go to sleep.

AMEN.

Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.

PSALM 121:4 · KJV

TELL YOUR CHILD

The Bible says God never gets tired and never falls asleep. So you can sleep, because He is awake. That one idea has comforted more frightened children than any night-light.

FOR PARENTS & GRANDPARENTS

PRAYING OVER A *sleeping house*



Many parents and grandparents have a quiet habit: after the children are asleep, they stand in the doorway, or lay a hand on a small head, and pray. You do not need to wake them. God hears a whispered prayer as clearly as a shouted one.



OVER MY CHILDREN

Lord, here are the children You gave me. You loved them before I ever held them. Watch over their bodies while they sleep, and over their hearts while they grow. Where I fell short today, cover them with Your grace. Make them brave, make them kind, and let them know, all their lives, that they belong to You.

AMEN.



FOR OUR WHOLE HOUSEHOLD

Father, bless this house and everyone under this roof. Guard our doors and our windows. Guard our minds from fear and our hearts from bitterness. Where there was a sharp word today, bring peace by morning. Where someone is sick, bring rest. Where someone is missing, bring them home. We put this house in Your hands tonight.

AMEN.

A FAMILY HABIT WORTH STARTING

Before lights out, go around the room and let each person name **one thing they are thankful for** and **one person they want to pray for**. Then one person prays for all of them. It takes three minutes and it changes the feel of a home.

FOR THE LONG NIGHTS

WHEN SLEEP WILL NOT COME



Some nights the mind will not stop. The bills, the diagnosis, the child who has not called, the argument that keeps replaying. If that is you tonight, you are in good company. Much of the Book of Psalms was written by people who could not sleep.

PSALM 121 · A SONG OF DEGREES

121 I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. ²My help cometh from the LORD, which made heaven and earth. ³He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth thee will not slumber. ⁴Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep. ⁵The LORD is thy keeper: the LORD is

thy shade upon thy right hand. ⁶The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night. ⁷The LORD shall preserve thee from all evil: he shall preserve thy soul. ⁸The LORD shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore.

KING JAMES VERSION

IN PLAIN WORDS

This psalm was sung by travelers on the long walk up to Jerusalem. Look how many times it says *keep*: the Lord keeps you, He keeps your going out and your coming in. A keeper is someone who stays on watch. You can put the watch down tonight. Somebody else has it.



FOR A WORRIED MIND

Lord, I cannot fix this tonight. I have turned it over and over, and it is still too heavy. So I am setting it down in front of You. Take what I cannot carry. Quiet the voice in my head that keeps counting what could go wrong, and let me hear Your voice instead: "Come unto me ... and I will give you rest." I am coming.

AMEN.

Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

PHILIPPIANS 4:6-7 · KJV

1

BREATHE AND NAME HIM

Breathe in slowly and say, in your mind, *"The Lord is my shepherd."*
Breathe out: *"I shall not want."* Repeat it until your breathing slows.

2

HAND OVER ONE WORRY AT A TIME

Name each worry out loud or in your head, and after each one say, *"Lord, this is Yours now."*

3

PRAY FOR SOMEONE ELSE

Worry shrinks when we pray for another person. Think of one person who is also hurting tonight, and pray for them.

4

REST ON A PROMISE

Choose one verse from this booklet and say it slowly, over and over, as you lie still.



Many of the Psalms were written by people who could not sleep.

FOR WIDOWS, THE SICK, & NIGHT WORKERS

PRAYERS FOR *those who are alone*



WHEN I GO TO BED ALONE

Lord, the house is quiet, and I feel it. I miss the voice that used to say good night. Thank You that I am never truly alone, because You are near to the brokenhearted. Hold me tonight the way You have held me every night before. And give me strength for tomorrow.

AMEN.





FOR THOSE WHO WORK THROUGH THE NIGHT

Father, I pray tonight for the nurses and the doctors, the drivers and the guards, the cleaners and the caregivers, everyone who works while the rest of us sleep. Keep them alert and keep them safe. Give them patience with every person they serve, and bring each of them home in the morning.

AMEN.



FOR THE SICK AND THE HURTING

Lord Jesus, You healed the sick at the end of the day, when the whole town gathered at the door. Tonight I bring You everyone I know who is in pain: in hospitals, in nursing homes, in their own beds. Ease their pain, calm their fear, and let them feel Your hand on them in the dark.

AMEN.

SCRIPTURE FOR THE NIGHT

PROMISES TO *sleep on*



1

I laid me down and slept; I awaked; for the LORD sustained me.

PSALM 3:5

David wrote this while running for his life. He still slept, and he still woke up. God kept him.

2

When thou liest down, thou shalt not be afraid: yea, thou shalt lie down, and thy sleep shall be sweet.

PROVERBS 3:24

Rest is a gift God gives to people who trust Him. You do not have to earn it tonight.

3

He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

PSALM 91:1

To *abide* means to stay. When you stay close to God, you live in His shade, the way you would rest under a great tree.

4

Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

MATTHEW 11:28

Jesus' invitation is for the tired. He does not ask you to fix yourself first. Just come.

5

For his anger endureth but a moment; in his favour is life: weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.

PSALM 30:5

Hard nights end. Tears are real, but they are not the last word. Morning is coming.

6

It is of the LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness.

LAMENTATIONS 3:22-23

God's mercy is new every morning. Whatever went wrong today, tomorrow you start fresh with Him.

A SHORT *evening order*



If you would like a simple pattern to follow each night — the way churches have prayed in the evening for centuries — here is one that takes about five minutes.

1 LIGHT A LAMP OR A CANDLE

Say together: *"O Lord, the day is done. Stay with us, for it is evening."*

2 READ A PSALM

Psalm 4, Psalm 23, Psalm 91, Psalm 121 or Psalm 134. Read it slowly, out loud if you can.

3 LOOK BACK ON THE DAY

Thank God for what was good. Ask forgiveness for what was not. Forgive anyone who hurt you.

4 PRAY FOR OTHERS

Name the people on your heart, one by one.

5 PRAY THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, which art in heaven... (Matthew 6:9-13).

6 A BLESSING TO CLOSE

Say together the blessing below, then rest.

THE BLESSING · NUMBERS 6:24-26

6 The LORD bless thee, and keep thee: ²⁵The LORD make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: ²⁶The LORD lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.

KING JAMES VERSION

SIT WITH IT

What is one thing from today I want to thank God for?

What am I carrying that I need to hand over to Him tonight?

Who is one person I will pray for before I sleep?



A LAST WORD BEFORE SLEEP

Into Your hands, Lord, I give my body, my mind and my spirit. Into Your hands I give the people I love. Into Your hands I give tomorrow. Keep me while I sleep, and wake me ready to love You and serve You again.

AMEN.



*“I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou, LORD,
only makest me dwell in safety.”*

PSALM 4:8

WESLEY A.M.E. ZION CHURCH

“Big Wesley” · The Freedom Church · Founded June 6, 1820

SUNDAY SCHOOL	9:30 AM
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SUNDAY WORSHIP	11:00 AM
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