

# Prayer at the Time of Death

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When death is near, the pastor and other leaders should be notified so that the church's ministry may be offered to the dying person and the family.

The service that follows may be adapted for use when leaders and/or loved ones are prevented from gathering or are unable to be with the dying person. A photograph or other symbol of the one who is dying may serve as a point of focus for the service. Participants, including the dying person, may be connected by telephone or video.

When a pastor, chaplain, or other representative of the church is not present, anyone may serve as leader for this service. Medical personnel may use a portion of the commendation ("N., depart in peace ..." and/or "Into your hands, O merciful Savior ...") when others are unable to be with the dying person.

## Key to Abbreviations:

*BCW = Book of Common Worship (WJKP, 2018)*

*BCW-PE = Book of Common Worship-Pastoral Edition (WJKP, 2018)*

## OPENING SENTENCES

*The leader greets worshipers:*

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

*One of the following verses from scripture is said:*

- 1 If we live, we live to the Lord, *Rom. 14:8*  
and if we die, we die to the Lord;  
so then, whether we live or whether we die,  
we are the Lord's.
- 2 God is our refuge and strength, *Ps. 46:1*  
**a very present help in trouble.**
- 3 Praise be to the God and Father *2 Cor. 1:3-4*  
of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
the Father of mercies and God of all comfort,  
who comforts us in all our sorrows,  
so that we can comfort others in their sorrow,  
with the consolation we have received from God.

## PRAYER

*This or a similar prayer is said:*

Eternal God,  
keeper of our days,  
look on N., whom you created in your image,  
and claimed as your own through baptism.  
Comfort *her/him* with the promise of life eternal,  
made sure in the death and resurrection of your Son,  
Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

*All may pray together the Lord's Prayer.*

**Our Father in heaven  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Save us from the time of trial  
and deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours  
now and forever. Amen.**

**Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name,  
thy kingdom come,  
thy will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread;  
and forgive us our debts,  
as we forgive our debtors;  
and lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom,  
and the power,  
and the glory, forever. Amen.**

#### COMMENDATION

*One of the following or another prayer (BCW 774, BCW-PE 390) is said:*

- 1 Gracious God, by your mercy sustain N.  
Help *her/him* now to trust your goodness  
and claim your promise of life everlasting.  
Cleanse *her/him* of all sin, remove all burdens,  
and grant *her/him* the sure joy of your salvation,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**
- 2 Almighty God, by rising from the grave,  
Jesus Christ conquered death and leads us to eternal life.  
Watch over N. and come to *her/his* aid.  
Give *her/him* a vision of your eternal realm of glory,  
where pain is gone and death shall be no more;  
through Jesus Christ the Lord of life. **Amen.**

*The leader then lays a hand on the head (or a photograph) of the dying person and says:*

N., depart in peace,  
in the name of God the creator who formed you;  
in the name of Jesus Christ who redeemed you;  
in the name of the Holy Spirit, the comforter who sanctifies you.  
In communion with the saints and all the heavenly host,  
may you rest in peace, and dwell forever with the Lord. **Amen.**

*The leader continues:*

Into your hands, O merciful Savior,  
we commend your servant N.  
Acknowledge, we humbly beseech you,  
a sheep of your own fold,  
a lamb of your own flock,  
a sinner of your own redeeming.  
Receive *her/him* into the arms of your mercy,  
into the blessed rest of everlasting peace,  
and into the glorious company of the saints in light. **Amen.**

*The following prayer is then said:*

O Lord, support us all the day long,  
until the shadows lengthen and the evening comes  
and the busy world is hushed,  
and the fever of life is over,  
and our work is done.  
Then, in your mercy, grant us a safe lodging,  
and a holy rest, and peace at the last;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

#### **PRAYER FOR FAMILY AND FRIENDS**

*One of the following, or a similar prayer, may be said for the family and friends of the dying.  
Those present may be invited to offer other prayers.*

- 1 Almighty God, our creator and redeemer,  
you are our strength and our hope.  
You have given us N.  
to know and to love in our pilgrimage on earth.  
Uphold us now as we entrust *her/him*  
to your boundless love and eternal care.  
Assure us that not even death  
can separate us from your infinite mercy.  
Comfort us in our anguish,  
that we may know your sure consolation  
and live in confident hope of the resurrection;  
through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**
- 2 Lord God, look kindly upon us in our sorrow  
as this life is taken from us,  
and gather our pain into your peace.  
Be with us in our grieving, and overcome all our doubts.  
Awaken our gratitude for your gifts of love and tenderness,  
and grant us your wisdom.  
We pray through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**
- 3 Lead, kindly Light, our only hope in darkness.  
Heal the wounds of sorrow and renew our trust in your goodness.  
Enable us to be grateful for the ties that bind us to N.  
Renew our strength each day to seek your will  
and lean upon your mercy.  
Keep us ever in the communion of saints  
and in the promise of life eternal,  
through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

#### **BLESSING**

*The following or another blessing (BCW 151–53) may be given:*

The Lord bless you and keep you.  
The Lord be kind and gracious to you.  
The Lord look upon you with favor  
and give you peace. **Alleluia! or Amen.**

*Num. 6:24–26*