

ONE-MINUTE PRAYERS[®]

for
Men with
Cancer



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INTRODUCTION

If you're holding this book, I presume you've unwillingly joined the club no man wants to join—the brotherhood of men with cancer. If so, you're far from alone. Estimates from the American Cancer Society report that 40 percent of men will receive a cancer diagnosis during their lifetime. Presently, more than 18 million Americans, both men and women, have been diagnosed with cancer. By 2050, cancer cases in men will rise from 10.3 million to 19 million globally. No doubt about it, cancer is epidemic these days. Such a large company of fellow travelers, and yet when we hear the words, “It’s cancer,” we somehow feel alone, separated from our friends and relatives who remain cancer free.

The good news is that, according to the American Cancer Society, the death rate from cancer has decreased 25 percent since 1991, which means 2.1 million deaths were averted during those years. Cancer *is* survivable. Early detection is an important factor. So is the chosen protocol recommended by your oncologist.

But another often overlooked factor is *prayer*. That's what this book is about. These short prayers are designed to help you along the way on your cancer journey, whether you've been recently diagnosed or whether cancer has become a longtime, recurring companion.

One factor many of those with cancer have found helpful is forming a support team. This is a group of trusted people who will be pulling for you, possibly advising you, helping out with practical matters when needed, and, of course, praying for you. I suggest your support team include your medical advisers (oncologist, primary care doctor, and perhaps a nutritionist), a few close family members, praying friends, including some of your close brothers in Christ, your pastor, and acquaintances who are cancer survivors themselves.

As you proceed through your cancer treatment, keep your team informed, solicit their advice (but always seek confirmation from your medical advisers), and tell them your specific prayer (and practical) needs. Let them help shoulder the burden, just as the four friends of the paralytic in Mark 2:1-5 became a support team by lowering their friend through the roof into the presence of Jesus, who then healed the man (verses 11-12).

I, too, would like to be on your support team as one who is praying for you. As this book is published, please know that I'm praying for every reader to overcome their

fears, wisely choose the best treatments, and, most of all, trust God with the outcome.

You might ask, *How can short one-minute prayers accomplish much in my fight against cancer?* My reply is that the effectiveness of true prayer is not dependent on its length. Plus, my hope is that these prayers will serve as a jump-start to your own prayers. As you conclude a prayer on each page, I hope you'll add your own heart-felt words for as long as they continue to come. Prayer can accomplish much!

A personal example of this is my mother, who was diagnosed with ovarian cancer. She decided to forgo surgery and opted for chemotherapy. As we prayed for her, Mom's oncologist reported remarkable results. In fact, he used that very word—"remarkable"—to describe her improvement. Later, he ended her chemo treatments before the final scheduled session, saying that in all his years of treating cancer patients, he had never recommended such a decision before. Mom eventually did pass on from her cancer, but it was at age 92 and after the extra time God gave her through her successful chemo treatment and our prayers.

My own cancer of the prostate (one man in eight will be diagnosed with prostate cancer) was discovered early and dealt with through surgery. Again, there was much prayer on my part regarding my future. I well remember

the early days of my diagnosis and the uncertainty I was facing. So, yes, I know the fear. I know the anxiety. I know the discomfort. I understand it all.

Before you begin, there are three things you should know about this book. First, the prayers are from a decidedly Christian perspective. That is, they are prayers for men who know their eternal destiny once they pass from this life, whether from cancer or from some other cause many years from now. If you have any uncertainty about your eternal destiny, I urge you, in childlike faith, to trust in Christ as your Lord and Savior now. The apostle Paul tells us in Romans 10:9, “If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.” Once you have trusted in Christ, there is no need to fear death. You have his promise of eternal life, as recounted in the familiar words of John 3:16: “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.” If you have believed in him, you will live even after you die.

Second, these prayers are for any man with cancer, no matter whether your prognosis is terminal or promising.

Third, since there are several common concerns we have as we face cancer, several themes are repeated in the following prayers. We’re continually praying *against* fear, depression, and discouragement. We’re praying *for*

courage, strength, and—God willing—a return to good health.

You'll find that each page has a title theme at the top, followed by a relevant Scripture, a reminder about the day's theme, and then the day's prayer.

I hope these prayers will open up a pathway of courage for you as you battle with cancer. God bless you as you walk the cancer path.



HOPE

Surely there is a future, and your hope will not be cut off.

PROVERBS 23:18

When we men hear the word “cancer” used in reference to us, it’s a natural response to assume the worst. We wonder if our will is up to date, how we will tell those we love, and whether or not we will have much pain. How much time do we have?

Such worrying, though natural, is premature. In recent decades, the cancer survival rate has increased enormously. A cancer diagnosis is no longer a certain death sentence.

More importantly, God is in control. He sees your situation. He is with you now and will be with you through your treatment. Isn’t that a great reason to hope? Make hope in God your anchor through your cancer journey.

Dear Lord, I need hope. I need to believe you surely have a future for me. I pray for the kind of hope only you can deliver. I pray for hopeful signs to come my way from those caring for me. In all that lies ahead, give me strength to endure and come out the other side of my treatment. This, Lord, is my earthly hope. But you, Lord, are my eternal hope.

YOU'RE ON A JOURNEY

The LORD went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead them along the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night.

EXODUS 13:21

When the Israelites made their long, tiresome journey through a rough and unwelcoming land, God was with them...leading them...providing for them. Just as he does today for us as we travel through the desert of cancer.

God, I need a sheltering pillar of cloud along my way as I take this journey I did not choose. Lord, I need you to light my path with a pillar of fire during the darkest nights. Make the road ahead safe for me, as these are unknown paths I travel. Go before me in every aspect of my treatments. Give wisdom to my doctors and caregivers. Give patience to my family. May I have the necessary faith to take this journey and arrive safely on the other side of cancer. As I travel, I pray you'll introduce me to new companions on the journey—including other men who are on the same long road. Bring us safely through, Lord.

ALLOW YOURSELF TO GRIEVE

In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials.

1 PETER 1:6

Cancer is a trial of the first order. Questions abound. Anxiety looms. Emotions run high. One of those emotions may be grief. We sense a loss, even when the prognosis is favorable. We were healthy men...and now we are not. Our world shifts.

Please know that grief is a normal part of what you're going through. Allow yourself time to grieve and to process this turn of events. God understands.

God, I feel like I've momentarily lost my way. I've also lost a form of happiness that came from being healthy. In the midst of my trust in you, I still feel a profound sense of grief at my diagnosis. Thank you for understanding how I feel. Even Jesus must have felt some sense of grief when he prayed that if it were possible, the cup of crucifixion might pass from him. I have a cup in front of me—a cup from which I would prefer not to drink. Still, as with Jesus, I accept your plan for my life. I will grieve... and then I will move ahead with courage.



USED BY GOD

*If anyone serves me, he must follow me;
and where I am, there will my servant be also.
If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him.*

JOHN 12:26

We who are believers in Christ follow him wherever he leads—even into the chemo room. No matter what we are facing, we must be where our Father is and continue about his business.

Father, I'm your servant. I follow you wherever you lead. Right now, I follow you into a battle with cancer. Here I will learn much and experience suffering, but I will be in the company of Jesus, the one who suffered for me. I pray that in following you onto this battlefield, I will find a purpose in my present hardships. I pray that while I'm here, I will serve you as best I can. Show me how to honor you in the midst of cancer. Show me how I can be used by you during this time.



QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.

JAMES 1:5

A cancer diagnosis usually elicits several questions. Most often we ask, *Why me? Why now?* God's ways can be mysterious and beyond finding out. We may never know *why* something bad happens to us. However, at such questioning times, we can ask God for wisdom in how to handle our diagnosis, and he will answer day by day.

Lord, cancer is so rampant these days that I shouldn't be surprised it has come knocking on my door. Still, I wonder why I have to endure the suffering that cancer brings. So, Lord, I pray that you will help me understand what part this chapter in the book of my life will play in the story you've written for me. I pray that in understanding, I'll be more patient, and in gaining wisdom about my cancer, I'll know how to proceed wisely. Lord, please show me the way. Please impart wisdom generously.

PRAYER AS MEDICINE

*Heal me, O LORD, and I shall be healed;
save me, and I shall be saved,
for you are my praise.*

JEREMIAH 17:14

In our eagerness to hope that the current treatment for our cancer will be successful, we might overlook our greatest weapon in the cancer-fighting arsenal—prayer. We must keep asking, keep seeking, keep believing for God's hand in our healing. Keep prayer uppermost in your fight. Praise God if healing comes...and praise him if it doesn't. Remember to never blame yourself for "not praying hard enough." We may safely offer even small prayers, and they will be heard by our very big God.

Lord, I pray with Jeremiah, "Heal me...and I shall be healed." God, keep your faithful hand on my body. Bring health and healing to my bones. Lift my pain; help me to endure whatever lies ahead. You, Father, are my praise. You are the one I worship. You are the healer of my body and my soul. Strengthen me, Lord. Bring me great peace as I travel this journey. "Save me, and I shall be saved."



PRAYING FOR YOUR SUPPORT TEAM

*By wise guidance you can wage your war,
and in abundance of counselors there is victory.*

PROVERBS 24:6

Your support team consists of all those who are helping you in your fight. That includes your doctors, chemo nurses, radiologists, family, friends, pastoral staff—any of those you’ve enlisted to aid you in your cancer battle. Pray for them often. Ask God to give them wisdom and to guide you effectively.

Father God, thank you for helping me assemble my support team. I pray for each member, considering them to be chosen by you to help me in my fight. May you give each of them wisdom. Help me listen when they offer me their objective counsel. May they not be afraid to be honest with me, even if the news isn’t what I want to hear. At all times I pray they’ll be my encouragers and in no way discourage me or bring me down. Help me be discerning when you bring a new team member my way. May each team member be chosen by you to guide me. And please, Lord, be the captain of my team.