



Discomforted Comforter



Lord God,
When what You ask of me
As a caregiver
Creates discomfort
Remind me
That love
And sacrifice
Are practically synonymous
And that
On that score too,
You paved the way.

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∞

No One Cares for One at a Time

My parents
Or my children
Or other people's children
Or my day job
Or the medical needs,
God?

The question is haunting.
Which one needs me most
Right now?
Which is more important?
How can I ever know for sure?

My Child,
Do you think I know all things? Even this?

Yes, Lord.
Then here's an idea.
Follow My lead.

∞

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Guide Me



“Guide me, O Thou Great Jehovah”

Once sounded like

A cry for You

To illuminate my path, God.

Today it leaves my lips

As a plea

For You to guide me

In the best ways

To accompany

Those I care for

On their journeys

While deftly navigating mine

And conducting myself

In such a way

That they're grateful

For the company

And I'm grateful

For the privilege.

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I'm Only Human



God of All
Only Wise God
I'm feeling my humanness more acutely
As the ones in my care
Increasingly need me
But I still need them.
You who sees what I can
And what I can't
Help me listen for
Your direction
Your whispered cues
So I don't misstep while
Trying to keep them from falling.

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Caregiving Without Regrets



Father God, hold our hands
As we tenderly care for others' needs
 So we clench no fists
 But rather link arms.
Father God, hold our lips
As we give of ourselves
 So we spit no words
 That build regret.
Father God, hold our hearts
 So we risk no breach
 In our family's fortress.
Father God, hold our attitudes
 So we love well
 Those entrusted to us,
 Those depending on us.



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The Impossibly Hard Conversations



God of inextinguishable Light
And Life,
May Your Love
Pave the path
We must travel
To meet at the conversation table
To talk about Unspeakable things
That so often mark
The offenses both we
And those in our caregiving circle
Must bear.

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A Prayer for Sweetened Memories



Jesus, calm my charge's soul.
Wrap him, wrap her
In your swaddling embrace
Where the Comfort is so strong
And the hold so secure
That they can't remember
The sting of irritants.
May they recall
How You answered their need
And forget
All but the warmth
Of Your love
And mine.



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A Prize Too Compelling



If left to myself, Lord,
To my self-protective ways,
I'd hold onto
My well-deserved resentments
Until my dying day.
But the beauty of Your love
For me
Leaves no
Viable
Option
Other than
Loving and forgiving.
Peace
Is too compelling
A prize.

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Caregiver's Ode



I wanted to keep you safe.
I forgot that laughter made you feel safe.
I wanted to keep you healthy.
I forgot that joy is better than adding
a medication.
I wanted you to feel comfortable.
But the pillow I bought did less than the
“Andy of Mayberry” rerun we shared.
I wanted to serve you.
You needed to tell your favorite joke.
Again.
I wanted you to be happy.
The joy of the Lord is still our strength
(Nehemiah 8:10).

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Who They Once Were



Father God, help me celebrate
The tenacity
That made my parents
Survivors,
The perseverance
They passed on
To me.
Guide me
To use it well,
In ways that
Respect my heritage
And honor You.

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Do You See, Lord?



Jesus, turn Your gaze to me
Look at me intently
And speak Your words of comfort
Over me
And those who need me.
Jesus, turn Your gaze to me
Look at me intently
And calm my troubled heart
That cares as it should
But carries what You volunteered to bear.
Jesus, turn Your gaze to me
Look at me intently
And I in turn
Will look to You
In this season
And always.
Let me hide myself in Thee.

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A Harvest of Gratitude



Help me, God, to see this season
As a season of thanksgiving.
Grow my gratitude
To full maturity,
A ripe harvest
Of thankfulness.
And show me ways
To express it
So those in my care are blessed
And You retain the glory.

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Because You Do Not Change



Ageless One,
I never knew
That aspect
Of Your character
Would hold
So much Comfort.
You, Ageless One,
Unchanging One,
Be for those in my care
All that they need,
All they're missing,
All they've lost.
And the same
For me.
Amen.



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A Creative Difference



Creator God,
For whom inventing worms
That make silk
And bee regurgitation
That becomes sweet honey
And foxgloves
That provide medicine
That regulates
A human heartbeat
Were no great challenge,
Feed me ideas
Daily
For how I can make a difference
In others' lives.

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When Names Escape Them



Father God,
You know my name.
You'll always know my name
And who I am,
That I'm Your child.
Forever.
Protect my heart
From mortal blows
If the day should come
When the one I call Mom
Or the one I call Dad
Or the one I call my child
Or my patient
Or friend
Doesn't remember what to call me.



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Worthy



God, thank You for loving us
When we had nothing more to offer
 Than our devotion,
 Fickle as it can be.
Thank You for infusing us
 With worth
Because of Your Son's Sacrifice.
 Move through us
 By Your Spirit
So that our faces,
 Words,
 And hearts
Convincingly express
To the ones we care for
Their inexpressible worth
 To us
 And to You.

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Lord, I'm Lost Again.



Adrift.
Bereft of words.
No.
More than that,
Bereft of good words
That will warm
Another human soul,
Light a spark
Of recognition.
Ease the pain.
Infuse peace.
And I tire,
I admit it,
Of carrying the full burden
Of hope.
But I hear You say,
"Come
All who are weary."
I hear
Your Voice.
And it comforts me.

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Choosing to Serve



Of the things
That occupy my time, Lord,
Serving others
For their sake
And in Your Name
May be
The most honorable
Challenging
And soul-satisfying
Of all.
But I cannot do it
Not any of it
Without You.

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Shaking Free from Guilt's Grip



Father God,
Caring for someone who's hurting
Or needy
Or broken
Or all three
Is consuming,
It's an inconvenient time
For guilt
To demand my attention.
So with Your help
I'll let You handle it
When it insists
On camping
In my heart.





Lean On Me



Lean on Me
Has never meant
So much
As it does now, Lord
When You whisper it
Over my weary soul.

Lean on Me
Has never meant
So much
As it does now, Lord
When You whisper it
Over their tired soul
Through me.

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When Caring for Aging Parents



With me even here, Lord?
When I have to turn my eyes away
Because my parents' hands tremble
And I know they will not stop?
With me even here, Lord?
When he can't remember how to swallow
And I'm coaching my father
In a task he cannot master?
With me even here, Lord?
When my mother tells me
She wishes she'd been able
To have children?
With me even here, Lord?
When I'm performing tasks
Better suited to a newborn
Than a parent?
Even here?
"Lo, I am with you always"
(Matthew 28:20 NASB).



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Picking Berries



God, let me be
The berry-picker
Who wisely glances back
From where she's been
To see the hidden bursts
Of storied color
Tucked among the leaves
Of caring for another.





It Is Good




“I need a rocket-launcher, Lord,
against this vile Goliath.”
And God gave David five small stones.

“I need a larger army than the 30,000, Lord,
to defeat this enemy.”
And God gave Gideon
300.

“I need a way to ease my patient’s pain, Lord.”
And God gave
A photograph,
A bottle of fingernail polish,
A song,
A handful of fresh-picked blueberries,
A sun-dried pillowcase.
And God saw that it was good.

Help me, too,
See that
It is good.



When Death Ends
Our Caregiving
But Not Our Caring

How do I describe
The depth
Of this peace?
Who but You, Lord,
Could prepare a heart
For a moment like this
When the veil between earth
And heaven
Is transparently thin?
I see.
And yet,
I cannot see.
I'm grateful
That You do.

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The Common Thread



The common thread
Woven through
 Humanity
Unbreakable
 Inescapable
Unavoidable
With no regard
 For status
 Or ethnicity
 For race
 Or education
For accomplishment
 Or lack of it
 For gender
 Or politics
 Or age
 Is grief.
Grief unites us.
 Makes us one.
We have that in common.
 Help me remember, Lord,
We all have that in common.

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When Caregiving Ends



It wasn't until
I stood there
At the end of it all
That process
I thought
I couldn't survive
It wasn't until
I knew my work was done
That I believed
I could actually do it
It wasn't until then, Lord,
Wrapped in Your love
As a comfort for my loss
That I knew, really knew
You would be
All I needed.

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