

spring 2022

for today's Christian nurses
& midwives

spotlight



- praying for patients?
- where will your prayers take you next?
- thank God for nurses & midwives



spotlight

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inside

- 4 the Lord's Prayer in action
- 7 praying for patients: will I get struck off?
- 10 a royal priest in royal blue
- 12 where will your prayers take you next?
- 14 devotion: our eyes are on you
- 16 time to lay on hands
- 19 burial
- 20 breath prayer
- 23 Ephesians 3:16
- 24 found sleeping
- 26 customer service complaint
- 28 leaving so soon?
- 30 colleagues forever changed by Jesus
- 32 thank God for nurses & midwives
- 35 under the spotlight: nursing overseas
- 38 liturgy toolbelt: waiting for birth

editorial: prayer

We don't need to look further than Jesus himself to realise that prayer is all about **relationship** with our Heavenly Dad. It's

us turning to him in our need, with all our hopes, for direction and strength. This is not a technique, a duty, or a religious exercise. Rather what God wants is for us to connect with him in whichever way works for us. You are uniquely made, and you will have a unique style and way to pray that suits you best. You might connect well with God through structured prayer times, reading psalms, or communally at prayer meetings. Or you might best connect quietly over a cup of tea, sitting in your favourite chair, or out strolling along the beach.

We've tried to include a broad range of prayer experiences in this edition of *Spotlight*. We look at the joys of answered prayer and the challenge of unanswered ones.



Pippa Peppiatt, CMF Head of Nurses & Midwives

Pippa trained as a nurse. She has planted a church for students with her husband, set up a charity for street kids in Uganda, and has been a Friends International Student Worker.

Different healthcareers have shared their precious experiences with us. Our desire is to explore together how to bring prayer into our daily care at work.

We hope that somewhere in this *Spotlight* you'll find an article that will inspire you, a way to pray that may motivate you, a written prayer or liturgy that you can use. We hope that your heart and spirit will be drawn to commune with Abba father.

Be blessed and be praying!


Pippa Peppiatt

Pippa 

keep updated

Keep up to date with on our events like National Student Conference or NAMfest at cmf.org.uk/nurses/events.

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action



the Lord's Prayer in action

Esther Hughes takes the
Lord's Prayer to work

I've recited it countless times, and I can probably reel it off half-asleep post-nights, but as I travel into work today, I slow my pace a little and reflect on the gift of the Lord's Prayer¹ in my own words.

Heavenly, holy, Dad! I need you close and listening Lord. As I breathe in...and out..., I know Father God that you are giving me each breath. You are so big, it's incomprehensible. You created the entire world, yet you know me intimately and intricately. As I utter and stutter, in words formed and unformed, I stand in awe of you who, in a word, created the mountains and seas. I know you love me and love to listen to me.

Lord, help me to recognise your holiness. Help me to revere you and remember that your name is to be hallowed! I shouldn't be able to come into your presence God, never mind speak to you. Help me not to misuse your name but like the angels singing 'holy, holy, holy', I'll attempt to express how glorious you are Jesus!

Lord, you are more powerful than any ruler. You are in charge, and I submit to you. Creator and sovereign over not only us, but the wind, the waves, and the entire cosmos. God, I acknowledge that you are King of my

life and my workplace, this city, this nation, and this universe. Lord, as I meet and speak to people in all kinds of situations today, I pray that your kingdom would come, that others would come to know you as their King. I long for your return and your Kingdom to fully come, Jesus.

God, as I worship you as both King and loving father, I surrender to your will for my life. I trust you and your plans. Thank you for the privilege of walking in Jesus' footsteps as he faced the cross and cried 'your will be done!'. God, please give me strength and insight today, as I serve you and as I cry out to you. When I ask you to change my situation or take it away, please help me to pray in earnest 'Your will be done!' and trust you. Thank you that you promise to work for our good and for using me in your plans. What an honour!

Lord, turn down the volume of the worries and concerns buzzing in my brain. Please give me your essential, sustaining nourishment that I need for this day; the physical, mental, and spiritual strength for today's tasks. Please remind me of your presence and truth as I serve you here, God. Keep me going in this wilderness and on this journey – one day at a time – towards eternal rest with you.

*As I utter and stutter,
in words formed and
unformed, I stand in
awe of you who, in
a word, created the
mountains and seas*

Lord, the culture around me can be so bitter. I am battered by the waves of stress. I fall back into my 'flesh' and out of step with your Spirit. I dishonour you and my colleagues in a multitude of obvious and subtle ways all the time! I don't always view my patients as you do – as precious, valued and made in your image. Please forgive me. Help me come to you quickly, Father God, and remember your Son's sacrifice and your mercy! Thank you that you accept me and invite me back every single time! Help me to quickly forgive others and act from a place of forgiveness and peace.

Lord, I know that I'm in a spiritual battle and need you to protect and deliver me from traps and temptations to sin. Please keep me from giving in to the devil's lies and evil ways. Please equip and guide me today and help me to be faithful to you.

*I thank you Jesus for crafting a template of prayer on which I can orientate my heart, mind and words towards our Father who made us, and made us to know him. ✨
Amen.*

Ester Hughes is a staff nurse and works part time as a CME Staff Worker for nurses and midwives

reference

1. Matthew 6:9-13



patients

PRAYING FOR PATIENTS:

will I get struck off?

Pippa Peppiatt looks at what the Bible and professional bodies do and do not say

Many choose a nursing career motivated by a calling to serve God through caring for the sick and suffering. Christian values and a Christian worldview have shaped the underlying ethics and practice of our profession and the NHS as a whole. Morning and evening prayers and grace at mealtimes were a regular feature of life on the ward well into the 1960s, and all patients and staff would have joined in. Today, the values and ethics by which we practise have changed considerably, and any expression of faith in the clinical setting can risk censure.

any expression of faith in the clinical setting can risk censure

One question I'm repeatedly asked is, *'Am I allowed to share my faith and pray with patients? What if I get struck off?'*

Legally, you **are** allowed to talk about your faith and pray with patients if it's done in the right way, which we'll have a look at. But even if legally you're covered, you may well become unpopular, marginalised, and talked about. Some colleagues and some relatives of patients may have axes to grind and take offence even when a conversation or prayer is initiated and welcomed by a patient. We need to be prepared for opposition and consider if we're willing to pay the cost.

The NMC code makes it very clear that we should not be pushing our faith on people in our care:

*20.7 make sure you do not express your personal beliefs (including political, religious or moral beliefs) to people **in an inappropriate way**.*[emphasis mine]¹

Expressing our beliefs *inappropriately* means in a coercive manner or exploiting a patient's vulnerability. We would all agree with that – Jesus never pushed himself on anyone. He always responded to requests, asked people what they wanted, acted with permission. However, the code **implies that there is room to express beliefs appropriately**.

Pray with people, but *at their request*. Respond to people's questions with compassion and respect.

The overarching principle for us is summed up by 1 Peter 3:15b: *Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.*

However, no one will ask you questions about your faith or for prayer unless they know that you are someone for whom a faith in Jesus is important. It's easy to give small clues to indicate that you are a person of faith. Although the wearing of a cross necklace

is usually prohibited at work – not on religious grounds but rather for Health & Safety reasons, most trusts do still permit the wearing of a lapel badge. Wearing a small cross, dove or ichthus badge, or a CMF lanyard, could stimulate interest in patients and colleagues. As could raising the fact that you enjoyed worshipping at church and the love of your church community when you talk about what you did at the weekend (in response to asking them first what they usually do at weekends and hoping they enquire back!). Maybe ask your patient if they have faith to help them at a tough time like this, or a supportive community to return to?

Jesus was the master of the skilful use of questions; he was able to draw people out. We can learn to use questions like Jesus did, to help patients open up and maybe lead to a conversation or an invite for you to share your own hope.

None of these little ‘faith flags’ require any response from those around you and should never be forced. But they do open the door for people to ask questions or even to ask for prayer.

Don’t be frustrated that such opportunities don’t arise every day. You honour God in the

way you do your work, it’s not just about verbally testifying to him. But do pray! God is the one who opens hearts and creates opportunities. Pray as you go to work. Silently pray for your patients and be open to any opportunity.

And have confidence that faith **is relevant** to healthcare. There’s bags of research showing that faith positively affects health outcomes in patients.²

God is on our side. We may have to count the cost of sharing our faith in the workplace and praying for patients, but what a joy it is to honour him, to share the hope we have, and to see him at work! 🙏

Pippa Peppiatt is CMF Head of Nurses & Midwives

references

1. The Code. *Nursing & Midwifery Council*, 31 March 2015, updated 10 October 2018. bit.ly/3La1eUj
2. Randall D, Bunn A. health benefits of Christian faith. *CMF file*. 44. 2011. cmf.li/3lvnyGg



poem

a royal priest

in royal blue

Bex Lawton marvels
at our priestly calling

It's the 14th century before Christ
 A man cautiously pulls back a curtain
 Steadies his nerves
 Breathes deep and steps in.
 Friends who aren't allowed to come in
 Wait outside
 They crane their necks
 Hoping to catch the jingle of the bells he wears
 The jingle that tells them 'He still moves'
 That the priest has survived,
 He's still alive.
 They listen for the jingle of acceptance
 As he enters the Holy place.
 He is in the very presence of Yahweh, the Lord
 God Almighty.

But he doesn't enter for himself alone
 Did you spot them?
 Amongst his clothes of dignity and honour
 The twelve stones on his breastplate
 Can you make out the engraving?
 He carries the names of Israel's families
 He wears them over his heart before God
 As a memorial before him.
 He carries all of Israel on his heart into God's
 presence.

And now,
 Me.
 21 centuries after Christ
 A chosen one
 A royal priest in royal blue scrubs
 Again, clothed in dignity and honour
 But now clothed in Christ himself, wow!
 I come boldly...can you believe it?
 I waltz in with all the familiarity of a daughter
 crawling up onto her dad's lap
 And I'm in.
 In the presence of the same Yahweh,
 The very same Lord God almighty
 Fully accepted. Fully welcome.
 And, you won't have spotted them
 But I too have twelve names I carry
 From our twelve bedded adolescent unit in
 Oxford.
 Twelve patient's names
 Twelve stories of sickness and brokenness
 I too wear their names over my heart before him
 In his presence I intercede for them
'Your kingdom come,
Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven'
 In the name of the Father, the Son, and the
 Holy Spirit
 I pray,
 Amen 🙏

Bex Lawton is a paediatric nurse in Oxford, CMF's Associate
 Head of Nurses and Midwives and 'Poet in Residence'

where will your prayers take you next?

Sue Holcombe shares
some of her prayer
adventures with God

I remember when I was a young student reading about Mother Theresa; she was asked how she kept going doing the work that she did in Kolkata amongst the beggars and homeless. She said that she saw Jesus in the children deserted by their families, Jesus in the sick and starving, Jesus in the poor and homeless. When she saw Jesus in this way, she was really ministering to him by serving these people.

Being the ministering hands of Jesus and showing the love of God by caring for others comes with great cost but also with great reward.

prayer walking

Have you ever considered walking the ground and praying for the space where you work? Some time ago I and one of the people in our hospital prayer group decided to walk the ground of the Trust and pray over the space we inhabit as God's people. We wanted to ask God to be present everywhere in our hospital and to pray for God's presence to be there in tangible ways. It took us a while and we did it over a couple of weeks praying on each floor of the hospital. We asked God to fill the place with his presence and prayed for each of the specialist areas and each of the teams working on those floors.

I will never know what difference our prayer walk made but I know that it encouraged us!


need to pray for someone?

Sometimes it's a slight prompt in our inner being and often you don't even know the patient very well. What happens when God puts a patient on your heart to pray for, but you haven't really had a chance either to talk to them or they aren't able to tell you? That happened to me a few years back. There were two patients I had very little to do with, apart from settling them comfortably in their beds. One was unconscious and very ill and not expected to make it through the night; the other was extremely anxious and

unable to communicate very well due to his dementia – he was very negative and very scared. I prayed for these two patients. The next day I could not have been more surprised. The unconscious lady was sitting up in bed completely transformed and was discharged home a few days later. The other patient sadly passed away peacefully that night.

I am thankful to God that I am not responsible for the answers to my prayers – just responsible for praying in the first place. God then takes care of the rest. 🌟

Sue Holcombe is a nurse and CMF's Associate for Whole Life Faith



devotion



our eyes are on you

In a new regular feature
Onahi Idikwu shares a
devotional to help us connect
what we read in the Bible
with our experience at work

A

s winter has progressed, has it sometimes felt like you are part of an under-staffed and under-resourced team of nurses sent to face a vast army?

Well, if you have felt that pressure, you are not alone.

I have been encouraged recently by the account of Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah facing an overwhelming situation, to which his response is *'Our God...we have no power to face this vast army that is attacking us. We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on you'*. (2 Chronicles 20:12)

This verse come at the end of a powerful prayer offered up by Jehoshaphat. The Bible records that once told of the mighty army coming against him, he was alarmed. However, note that this did not drive him to panic but rather he resolves to enquire of the Lord.

As Jehoshaphat prays, he calls to memory that he serves the mighty God of heaven, the ruler of all the nations. We can be encouraged that this is the same God we serve. He recalls God's faithfulness and expresses complete dependence on him. May this also be the

posture of our hearts when work feels overwhelming and we do not know what to do, may our eyes be fixed on God and may we find strength from leaning on him.

God instructs them, *'Do not be afraid or discouraged because of this vast army. For the battle is not yours, but God's'*. (2 Chronicles 20:15b)

In faith the king leads his men into battle singing praises to God. When they get there, they see that the Lord has indeed gone before them.

And he also goes before you. Hallelujah!

Question: In which situations does it feel like you're coming against a vast army?

Question: How can you use prayer and praise to be fixing your eyes on God in those situations this week? ✨

Onahi Idikwu is a paediatric and neonatal nurse and a CMF Associate Staffworker building up Christian nursing and midwifery networks across London



time to lay on hands

Georgie Coster gives us a glimpse of working on an intensive prayer unit

What's the first thing you do when you start your shift? When I started working in ITU, I quickly learned the routine: handover, bed-space check, patient assessment. Your day can't begin in earnest until those three things are done. So much to check – the ventilator settings, the parameters on your monitor alarms, how many of your lines are due to be changed? And while those things can be merely eyeballed, there comes a point in the assessment where you have to get 'hands on'. What's your patient's capillary refill time? How do their radial pulses feel? What do you hear when you put your stethoscope to their chest? Your eyes alone can't give you all the answers.

About six months ago, I was praying with my church family in our midweek meeting. Suddenly there was a thought in my head that had never been there before. Generally, if a thought comes to me *whilst in prayer* and it feels like it hasn't originated in my own brain, I can be fairly certain that God is speaking to me. Don't ask me what I was praying about at the time because I couldn't tell you. Perhaps my focus was wandering from the topic of our communal prayer (this is highly likely) and had relocated to the next day's shift. Perhaps,

ahead of time, I was imagining stepping onto the unit, taking handover, and starting my initial assessment. Perhaps I was wondering who I'd be assessing, and how sick they would be. But while those usual pre-shift anxieties lined the runway like old friends, a brand-new thought had landed in their midst. When the patient assessment demands 'hands on', it's time to lay on hands. Crystal clear. In fact, it seemed so blindingly obvious, I couldn't believe I hadn't thought of it before. Laying my hands on my patient is essential to carrying out a comprehensive examination. And it provides a wonderful opportunity to lay my hands on them – in the biblical sense – and pray. Apprehension about tomorrow's unknowns turned unexpectedly into a strange excitement. I really wanted to try this out.

One of the questions you ask when you hear about a new admission is 'how sick will they be?'. The answer in this case: An out of hospital cardiac arrest. Sedated and ventilated. I begin, as always, with a full assessment. When the time comes, I palpate the radial pulse. It's strong. It's regular. I'm happy. But I'm going to stay here a little longer. Keeping two fingers on his wrist, I place my other hand on his upper arm. With a face that I hope says 'nothing strange going on here guys I'm just palpating the radial pulse

laying on hands and praying for my patient has become an intuitive part of my initial assessment

very thoroughly', I pray to my heavenly Father for the unconscious man in front of me.

Lord, please touch his body. May he have no need of this ventilator. Please bring complete healing. And I pray that as he recovers, you'd reveal to him who you are. Help me to look after him to the very best of my ability today. Would we please have no disasters or emergencies. Stop me from making a mistake or doing anything to cause him harm. Amen.

Later that morning, I stopped the sedation. That afternoon, I removed the tube that connected him to the ventilator. When I

walked off the unit that evening, he was awake and breathing with oxygen. I was ecstatic. I had known the privilege of laying hands on a critically ill patient and asking on their behalf for the God of the universe to intervene. Then, over the course of the next twelve hours, I watched him grant my request. What could be better?

Since then, laying on hands and praying for my patient has become an intuitive part of my initial assessment. That's how I begin my shift. Are they always off the ventilator before I go home? Absolutely not. However, I have seen God answer my 'patient assessment' prayers time and time again in wonderful ways. ITU can be a scary place to work. My knowledge is often lacking, my skills need a lot more honing, and I can easily feel the weight of my inadequacy. What can I possibly offer these desperately ill patients? Well actually, when I'm on shift, I carry the presence and the power of the living God onto the unit with me. I may be the only person who will pray for that patient when their life hangs in the balance. What an honour.

Georgie Coster is a staff nurse in a Critical Care Unit

poem

burial

Bex Lawton grieves
unanswered prayers

I want to be clear
Today we're just burying a body
Just the frame of a young girl

And yes, I'd cared for her
Bathed her in bed for six months
Changed her pads
Fed her by tube
And kept her as comfortable as I could

And yes, I'd fallen in love with her
Wept for her
Prayed and fasted for her

But, it's just her body we're putting
into the ground

I won't leave anything else in the grave today

My faith that God can perform miracles
is not tucked in there with her
My hope that his kingdom is coming
on earth as it is in heaven
My belief that he listens to our prayers
and loves to answer them
I won't somehow let any of them topple in
And get buried deep under the dirt
Left behind as we all get into our cars
and drive away from this church

No, it's only her body we're burying

The rest I'll cling on to
Hold on tight to

Because I'm going to need them for tomorrow 🌻

practice

breath prayer

Jane Colling takes us
through the ancient
practice of breath prayer

Illustration: Sarah Louise Bedford

Breath prayer is an effective and easy method of prayer that brings us closer to God, making us aware of his presence. For he is closer than our breath, and helps bring peace and regain perspective.

Some say breath prayers originated from the contemplative way of life led by the Desert Fathers and Mothers as long ago as 200AD. One approach they used was repetition of confession on the exhaled breath, and acceptance of forgiveness on the inhaled breath. In the New Testament, Paul stirs us in 1 Thessalonians 5: 16 - 18 to '*pray without ceasing*'. We can do this by making prayer part of our everyday natural rhythm - just like breathing.

We wake - we pray, we eat - we pray, we travel - we pray, we work - we pray, we sleep - we pray. May the breath/spirit we breathe be the breath that God first breathes into us. We aim for prayer to become as natural as breathing. Using a biblical truth or a verse from a hymn as a breath prayer is a meditation that God finds sweet and acceptable (Psalm 19: 14) and brings us into communion with him.

putting prayer into practice

Imagine when you were young, sitting close to a good friend and whispering something special to them. Try lowering your voice and imagine sharing a treasured secret with God. This is the privilege of breath prayers, repeating with confidence to our loving Heavenly Father the truth of his living Word.

'Lord, I love you; Lord, you love me.' 'Father, I am yours; Jesus, you are mine'

In clinical practice sometimes we know the challenges ahead of us: having to break bad news, a poorly child, a person in pain. In these situations, breath prayers can help us slow down and gather strength from the Holy Spirit. You will not only go into the problem better equipped, but '*the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus*'. (Philippians 4:7)

phrases of truth

Think of a couple of short phrases of truth, repeat them under your breath God-ward as you prepare yourself.

(Inhale) Lord, you're near me

(Exhale) Lord, you hear me

(Inhale) May the light of your presence...

(Exhale) shine through me to others

(Inhale) Peace and joy of God...

(Exhale) flow through me to others.

Breath prayer is a tried and tested method of prayer. Why not make it part of your spiritual toolkit? God will honour your simple actions and make his presence more tangible to you as you meditate on his truth. 🌿

Jane Colling works as an Advanced Nurse Practitioner in a general practice.

I pray that
out of his
GLORIOUS RICHES
he may _____
_____ STRENGTHEN
_____ you
with power
through his
~ spirit ~
in your inner
being

EPHESIANS
3:16

found sleeping

Victoria Hutchinson shares tips on how to watch and pray

I love Jesus' disciples and their raw humanity. With their flaws and failings. I love that they are chosen by Jesus; hand-picked by him, in spite of their wonderfully relatable lack of vision and focus. I can hear Jesus' exasperation as he finds them sleeping for the third time and I know, hand on heart, that my eyes too would have been heavy. Willing spirit. Weak flesh. 'Couldn't you keep watch with me for one hour, Victoria? Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation'

As healthcare professionals we are often exhausted. Shifts are always long and demanding. And that's physically, emotionally, and mentally. I'm sure you will relate to the heavy eyelids as you try to pray at night. Sometimes your body is falling asleep even before your head hits the pillow.

And our student nurses and midwives are filling every spare moment on top of all this, with research, assignments, and portfolios. And then we feel guilty and sorry, and we beat

ourselves up because we know (we really know) that communication with God is our very bread of life.

This time of communication is the time of communion. Precious for our souls. Essential life-giving source. It is in prayer we say to God with every fibre of our being and every breath that we have:

I surrender.

I adore.

I worship.

I depend.

I trust.

I need.

So, what can I offer as a solution and in answer to this? Here are some thoughts for us all, with our disciple-like, weak flesh:

Have a special cushion that you throw on the floor to sit on or kneel on when you pray. This simple act provides a focus and special prayer space.

Find a book of prayers that you cherish, and use one of these when your mind is too busy, tired, or fraught to find your own words. Or read a psalm.

Buy a notebook and write to your Heavenly Father. Prayer is communication. Prayer can be spoken aloud, inner silent thoughts, or written words. Plus, the very act of writing will keep you awake.

Find a favourite worship song/hymn. Google the lyrics and read them aloud and then listen to the song. Many worship songs are prayers in themselves.

Arrow prayers (short quick prayers) throughout the day have their own place. Any time we communicate with God, in whatever way, we are acknowledging his sovereign power.

And remember: Jesus' love for you is not dependent on whether you fall asleep mid prayer – he wants to hear your voice. He delights in the heart that desires to speak to him. A vicar once said to me, as I struggled with this, *'surely this must be the best way to fall asleep; mid conversation, with Jesus' name on your lips'*. 🌸

Victoria Hutchinson is a Continuity of Care Team midwife in the Midlands

complaint

mad!

no!

why
not
?

bored

customer service complaint

Bex Lawton

looks at the funny side
of complains about
unanswered prayer

not in the
mood

Too
busy

sad!!

is
any one
listening
?

God
who?

To whom it may concern,

I like to think I've always had an eye for a bargain, so naturally I was excited to come across the three-for-one Trinity, 'The best a man can get. Choose Godhead three-in-one for a closer save'.

However, early this month I placed an order for healing (X-Large) and a multipack of happiness and wellbeing, but they've not been delivered yet. This is despite me using 'In Jesus name' before Amen at checkout for guaranteed special delivery. I must confess that I wouldn't call myself a loyal customer, I use 'prayer' from time to time. But quite

angry

no
one at
home

honestly, I've been disappointed with the results despite *Pete@TheRockHardDisciple* and *Paul@Epistle.Fo.Shizzle*'s customer 5* ratings. I had hoped that this simple transaction would be a smooth process. Can I remind you that the customer is always right?

Please let me know if there's just been a delay on my order, or if I need to place it again with a louder voice maybe? I saw that you don't take Amex, but do you still take animal sacrifices? Unfortunately, I am vegan, but I'm sure I've got half an aubergine and a Taste the Difference medley of Mediterranean vegetables in the bottom of my fridge. I would be happy to chuck them on the barbeque for you, if it gets the job done.

I would say that I'm looking forward to hearing from you soon, but that might imply that I'm in the mood for listening, and I'm really not. I'm far too busy. Frankly, all I want is results and I'm tired of waiting.

Mostly yours,

Christian Whingebag

P.S. Can I suggest that you get on with developing a phone app? I want to get my prayer order done whilst slobbered out on my sofa with half an eye on Netflix, the way I do my other online shopping. That would be far more convenient for me, thank you.

waiting

My beloved child,

I am delighted when people pray, I love hearing from you. However, it sounds as though you may have mistaken me for 'Prime' not 'Divine'. I do not guarantee next day delivery, but guarantee that I am Love, I am Good, and I am Faithful. To be honest, I prefer to operate prayer as a two-way conversation. It's relational not transactional. I invite my followers to explore and get to know me better, whilst also embracing my mystery and otherness. Please accept my open invitation to keep asking and keep seeking.

I love you unconditionally,

The Great I AM ✨

Thanks
X



leaving
so soon?

moving into research

Rosie Housman shares
an alternative to clinical
nursing

If you feel that hospital clinical work no longer suits you, why not consider shifting roles, instead of leaving nursing or midwifery altogether? It was a few years ago now when having dinner with a few close nurse friends from university that I realised I was the last one of us, five years into our nursing careers, still doing shift work. I loved

clinical nursing and looking back I think I was expecting to stay in A&E for longer.

However, as many do, I finally came to the end of my capacity for shifts. The relentless energy and mental alertness that is needed for a full twelve hours had taken its toll and I wanted my evenings, weekends, and stability back.

I began looking for jobs in infectious diseases (a long-standing area of interest) and landed a nurse role in HIV and sexual health research. It could not have been more different from the emergency department. Instant gratification was replaced by slow-paced research and data collection. However, I quickly found in a very different speciality that I had more autonomy, and more time with patients and colleagues as I settled into a more laid-back atmosphere.

Research is a unique type of nursing. You are allocated to work on various trials, either on your own or as part of a team depending on the scale of the research and are then responsible for the study both clinically and on the regulatory side of things. This involves setting up, screening, and recruiting patients, and following through until closing the trial. Research is tightly controlled for very good reason. Everything is closely kept to standards in line with ethical guidelines and protocols.

However, you also get the rewards of working in the field. Seeing a patient respond to a new drug or getting a new vaccine approved is a great feeling. During the pandemic for example, all our work all turned towards COVID-19. It was satisfying knowing that while the hospitals were full and responding to the imminent pressures, we were also working

hard towards future treatments and vaccines to help bring hope to the situation.

Research was a great option for me to have a better work-life balance. This was at a time when the weight of nursing and shifts felt heavy and working within a speciality of interest means there is always something to keep you 'ticking'. I had very mixed feelings about leaving clinical, not just due to losing the friendships and comradery, but also because you could always walk from a busy shift knowing that you helped someone directly (however clichéd that may sound!). And I loved that feeling.

However, the relief of moving to an area of nursing where you're still making a difference, but with reasonable and realistic expectations was very tangible. It also definitely helped that the move was into HIV research – a speciality that I already had an interest in.

There are many areas of nursing that don't involve shift work and are still fulfilling and interesting – maybe you could consider a move into one of these areas and put to use all your years of training and experience, instead of leaving the profession? 🌟

Rosie Housman works as a research nurse in the UK

testimony

colleagues
forever changed by

Jesus

Georgie Clark tells her
story of answered prayer
for her colleagues


My friend Jenny and I felt God call us to pray for our workplace back in 2006, so we began to pray together in our lunchtimes once a week. We were open with our team about what we were doing. Some of our colleagues even asked for prayer!

After a short time, having tried to listen to God as well as ask him for things, we felt stirred to step out in faith and start an Alpha course for our work colleagues. We decided to do this by meeting at the hospital after work once a week to watch the Alpha videos together. To be honest, no-one had spoken to us about Alpha, or even seemed vaguely interested in doing the course. Nevertheless, we diligently prayed and obediently advertised it. It felt like a real step of faith because right up until an hour before we were due to begin, no-one had signed up! Then at the last minute, two girls in our office told us they'd like to come along.

By week three of the Alpha course, one girl had recommitted her life to Jesus, praise God! And the other girl had met Jesus, for the first time in an amazing encounter. She told us, that she'd found herself in some physical danger and prayed to Jesus for the first time,

asking '*if you're real, Jesus, please could you help me now?*'. Her testimony is that she felt a man appear by her side and walk her to a place of safety. She knew instantly in her heart that this was Jesus. She spoke of walking and talking with him for nearly an hour, enjoying the peace, protection, power, and presence of the living God. She knew then that her life had been forever changed by a God who loved her unconditionally.

Well, Jenny and I were so ecstatic! Our faith was so encouraged by the privilege of being able to walk with her as she continued to grow in her relationship with Jesus. We kept on meeting at lunch once a week and praying together. Within a year, we'd run another Alpha course at work, as our friend had told all her friends about Jesus, and they too wanted to know more. It's such a privilege to pray in our workplace and see God moving in such powerful ways, changing lives, and inviting us into what he's already doing.

He's so good! Amen! 

Georgie Clark works as an Occupational Therapist



prayer

thank God for
**nurses &
midwives**

Pippa Peppiatt updates us on the
whys and hows of praying for our
professions this May

two weeks
of prayer
1-14 May 22

When we first thought of the idea of encouraging prayer for all of those in nursing and midwifery, we hardly expected the response we got. Our initial idea was simply to encourage as wide an audience of believers as we could to pray for those in the caring professions and to give thanks to God for all that they do.

It turns out that a lot of people out there really do value what you do.

When first launched, nearly 6,000 people were reached through the social media campaign, and we had nearly 500 engagements or responses to the prayer posts that went out daily during the week. We had messages of support from all over the world, requests for hard copies of the flyers and bookmarks from all over the country. Groups of nurses, doctors, and home groups in churches were all praying for nurses and midwives across the UK and beyond.



As Christian nurses and midwives, we have so many ways to have a positive influence in our workplaces, professions, and in wider society. So many opportunities to live out and share the good news of Jesus with everyone we meet. Praise God that we have the Holy Spirit to equip us and an army of saints praying for us!

I've been even more aware of the need for prayer covering for our frontline workers these last two demanding years, as we've battled Covid. It reminds me of a previous war – one that occurred a few thousand years ago when the Amalekites attacked

God's people and Moses needed the support of his community to keep battling and winning the fight.¹ As long as Moses kept his hands raised to the Lord, the Israelites were winning. But Moses grew tired, and his strength depleted as time went on.

He got physically weary. I'm sure there's been times when this is how you've felt as you've given out at work until you were exhausted?

In God's grace he provided Moses with Aaron and Hur to stand alongside him.

And in God's grace, he's provided you with both a CMF community and a prayerful church family. So, let's inform them of the need and give them the blessing of being able to share in the fight by praying for you!

God hears the prayers of his people,² and he answers those prayers.³ Whether you can see it or not, those prayers have made a difference. So, because we want to see God at work in nurses and midwives, in our professions, and our health service, we will be holding another fortnight of prayer.



The week for midwives is from Sunday 1 May to Saturday 7 May 2022 (coinciding with 5 May International Day of the Midwife), followed by the nurses' prayer week from Sunday 8 to Saturday 14 May (12 May being International Day of the Nurse).

Please put this in your diary now and encourage your own church to get involved!

You can download posters for your noticeboard at work and church and a preview of the prayer fortnight at: cmf.li/TG4NM

references

1. Exodus 17
2. Psalm 17:6
3. 1 John 5:15



UNDER THE SPOTLIGHT:

nursing overseas

Noor shares prayer stories from her time in the Middle East. Due to the sensitivity of her work, she writes under this pseudonym, meaning light

Spotlight: *Hello Noor! Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed for our Prayer edition of Spotlight, we really appreciate it. Tell us, why did you become a nurse?*

Noor: I wasn't a Christian when I became a nurse. I can only say it was the Lord's plan for me. I was going through a difficult period and my confidence was very low. I wasn't sure there



was any point going to nursing school but decided to try. God opened a wonderful door for me, and I loved being a student nurse. I have never looked back since. That was 22 years ago! Since then, God had taken me on countless adventures, sharing Christ all over the world in Asia, Africa, Australia, and Europe, in prisons, slums, jungles, hospitals, orphanages, local communities, deserts, refugee camps, and currently in the Middle East.

S: Did you always want to work overseas?

N: I have always loved to travel, however, as a young Christian I read Isaiah 6:8, '*And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?"*'. I instantly knew that the Lord had called me to serve him in a new country and learn a new language, although at the time he had not yet revealed where.

S: How do you pray as part of your nursing care?

N: Every day I praise the Lord for the new day to serve him, asking for opportunities to share nuggets of my faith at least three times at work, whether that is mentioning God, Jesus, Christianity, Church, or my support community. People are surprised I can openly talk about my faith in the Middle East. Of course there is

wisdom in knowing how to do this, but there is spiritual hunger here. I continually pray for doors to be open, to meet 'people of peace', and to be the salt and light of Christ.

Whenever I meet a local lady, I have a simple prayer: *Manzil, Majlis, Matbakh*. Which means house, sitting room, kitchen. I use this to pray that I might be invited into her house, as this is a sign of trust and honour. Then, that I would sit in her sitting room to form friendship. And finally, that I would be invited into the kitchen as her sister, as this is where the 'real' family members go.

S: What answers to prayer have you seen that have particularly encouraged your faith?

counties, they can now work, hold parliamentary positions, and in recent years one country finally allowed women to drive. All these are things we have prayed into.

S: And there are new adventures on the horizon for you, aren't there?

N: Yes, I'm currently preparing for a long-term move to Iraq.

S: Wow! How can we pray for you as you transition?

N: I have been serving in the Middle East since 2009. The Lord has answered so many prayers. Firstly, the number of Jesus-loving people coming to serve here has increased. It's been so encouraging to see the number of people with spiritual interest. Many are dismayed and disillusioned and they seek true love and peace.

Numerous Bibles have been downloaded in the local language. Online seekers have been connected to key believers in their home countries and lots of people have reported dreams and visions of Jesus. Although it's still a relatively small number, people are still coming to faith. Also, as women's rights have improved in nearly all Middle Eastern

N: The language, religion, culture, weather, and political instability are daily challenges, and I consistently feel out of my comfort zone. Forming long-term lasting friendships with local ladies is not an easy task. Many Iraqis have been displaced, their loved ones killed, persecution continues, and there are a lot of mental health issues. Please pray that I can be as equipped and strengthened as possible, and can obtain a visa to stay long term. Also pray for my family left behind, especially my niece and nephews.

S: It would be our pleasure to pray for you Noor, we are honoured to have you as part of our CMF Nurses and Midwives fellowship. May God bless you. 🌸

A pregnant woman is lying on her side on a bed with a teal sheet. She is wearing a white tank top and blue patterned pants. Her hands are resting on her belly. A large, semi-transparent blue circle is positioned behind her, partially overlapping the text. The background is a light blue color with several smaller, semi-transparent blue circles scattered around.

liturgy
toolbelt

waiting for birth

Victoria Hutchinson adds to our liturgy toolbelt; prayers crafted in the still to equip us in the busy

Liturgy for waiting for birth

O holy and awesome creator
Abba Father, papa
Thank you for this time for these
precious hours and minutes
Given to us, to give to those,
who you have made.
To mother and to child

In the dimmed lights of a birthing room
Or the cluttered homeliness of a front room
In the bright spotlights of theatres
Or the smoky space of a mud-walled hut
In the anxiety, in the calm
In the noise and in the silence
In the power of contractions
Or the skill of the surgeon.
Lord, may we mop brows as you washed feet
Rub backs, hold hands, whisper words
Encourage, pray, uphold, and keep.
Keep safe, these your children
Knitted together in the womb, each one by you
Ordained by you.
Yours.

For every midwife, *mid wif*, with woman
Waiting and watching
Listening and waiting
At this holy moment, pre-birth
Precious and precarious

Holy Spirit in us
Our advocate, help us to advocate
To be their voice when utterance fails
To be the hands they can trust
And the eyes they can hang on to
When powerful waves overtake
And the enormity of this thing so normal
Threatens to overwhelm.

Give us attentive eyes, attentive ears,
attentive hands
With your knowledge in our fingertips
And knowledge of you on our lips.

Be in the room with us
Your presence, your peace, perfect
Palpable in that sacred space
Just as you always have been
Across all generations.
A genealogy that leads us back to Jesus
And has brought us forward to this time, to
These precious hours and minutes, waiting.

Lord, this moment is yours
We commit this mother to you
We commit this infant to you
We commit ourselves to you
We commit this time of waiting into your hands.



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nurses & midwives

