

A Book of (Un)common Prayers

Extraordinary Prayers for Ordinary Occasions

The Stillspeaking Writers' Group

*Hearing God where you live
(and other surprising places)*

Introduction

Many of us associate prayer with certain times—in worship, before a meal, the moments before we go to sleep. And when our hearts turn to prayer we may find ourselves turning to subjects that seem, well, prayerful, such as world peace, or healing for a friend, or forgiveness for ourselves. Already there are collections of prayers that address such times and circumstances, so we turned our thoughts—and prayers—elsewhere. If prayer is seen as an expression of our ongoing relationship with God, then every time and circumstance is an occasion for prayer. It is that conviction that gave rise to this booklet. We call it *The Book of (Un)common Prayers* because the occasions for prayer addressed



here—such as “When You Are Running Late” or “When You Cannot Pray”—may not have occurred to you before. There is also irony in the title of this booklet, as well, because the prayers address circumstances that are very common in our lives.

We hope that you will keep this booklet close at hand and use it in the variety of circumstances addressed here. But we also hope that, over time, your own prayers will be more fully interwoven into your common daily life in a most uncommon way.

MARTIN B. COPENHAVER

for the Stillspeaking Writers' Group

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When Sunday Feels Far Away

O God, give me a sense of the spirit on weekdays. Make holy the way I do the dishes, run the errands that try to run me, manage my intimate life. Let those sneaky moments of joy become more powerful than those ever-present moments of obligation. Let taking care of my daily schedule have a holiness to it. And if not something so big, let it be less of a pain in the neck. Amen.

— DONNA SCHAPER



When I Am Tempted to Whine

God, I know you don't like whiners, and neither do I. But guess what? I'm afraid I may be becoming one. And I don't want to be one of those people. I don't like being around whiners, and I don't really like being around myself when I am acting like that. Oh, I know you don't always expect me to be cheery. But when all I have are complaints, regardless of circumstances, mold my heart and refashion my thoughts in the shape of gratitude. Just so you know how determined I am: if you do not answer this prayer, I promise not to whine about it. But I may offer just a tiny complaint. That's okay, isn't it? Amen.

—MARTIN B. COPENHAVER

When the Seasons Take Your Breath Away

Praise be to you, O God, for your created world and especially for the quartet of the seasons: winter's bright-blue chill and death. Spring's new-green and growth, summer's sweet ripeness and bright, and autumn's bittersweet hastening and gathering. Thank you for this amazing rhythm and its reminder that we live always before you and by your sustaining seasons.

—ANTHONY B. ROBINSON



When Chores Have Piled Up

Dear God, why can't laundry do itself?
When you were creating the universe, couldn't you
have arranged for the leaves to stay on the trees?
It seems like I spend more time loading and
unloading the dishwasher than I do sitting at the
table.
The dogs want to go out, the cats want to be fed . . .
And the children want both those things and more.
Will there be any time for me?
The chores have piled up.
The chores have piled up.
The chores have piled up.
But chores are not my life.
They are just a piece of it.
I will tackle them as I am able.
One at a time.
And I pray that will be good enough.
Amen.

—LILLIAN DANIEL

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