

P R A Y E R S
f o r a W I D O W ' S
J O U R N E Y

GAYLE ROPER



HARVEST HOUSE PUBLISHERS
EUGENE, OREGON

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PRAYERS *for a* **WIDOW'S JOURNEY**

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Published by Harvest House Publishers

Eugene, Oregon 97408

www.harvesthousepublishers.com

ISBN 978-0-7369-8894-0 (pbk)


ISBN 978-0-7369-8895-7 (eBook)

Library of Congress Control Number: 2023938675

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Printed in Colombia

23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 / NI / 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1



*To the strong and stalwart women
who wake up every morning to a life they did not choose,
yet who press on with the Lord to find a life that can satisfy.*



You let men ride over our heads;
we went through fire and through water;
but you brought us out to a place of abundance.

PSALM 66:12



...though our outer self is wasting away...



I am a displaced person, Father, a refugee, an alien trying to grasp the customs and nuances of my new homeland. I never wanted this life upheaval, but a war broke out. There were no guns or missiles or IEDs in my war. Rather, I faced illness and brokenness and death.

I may not be trudging the road with my belongings on my back or tied to the roof of my car, but I am wandering as disoriented as any refugee from violence. May I not lose heart, Father God, as I choose to trust You to renew me day by difficult day.

*So we do not lose heart.
Though our outer self is wasting away,
our inner self is being renewed day by day.*

2 CORINTHIANS 4:16



...*I will not leave you comfortless...*



There's a gigantic hole, Lord. A cavern. An abyss, empty and black. Ugly.

That may sound like overkill, like overstatement, but is it? The large part of me that my husband filled with his love and his presence has been ripped away. I look the same. I sound the same. I am not the same. The married part of me has disappeared. Poof! Gone. All that's left is silence and pain.

What will fill that gaping chasm that used to teem with life and love and purpose? Only You, Lord. Only You who will never leave me comfortless.

I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.

JOHN 14:18 KJV



...heal me, O LORD...



I'm so disappointed, Lord. You didn't heal him. You took him. You didn't have to. You are Jehovah-Rapha, the God who heals. But you didn't heal despite our prayers. I had to watch him fade away in front of me. Oh, I know he would have died sometime—we all will—but did it have to be now? I need him. Our children need him. Our grandchildren need him.

But You said no. You said You are all I need. All we need. I'm choosing to trust even though I don't understand. Now, will you please heal us in our grief?

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

JEREMIAH 17:14



...when I remember you upon my bed...



Lord, I am alone in our wide, wide bed. If I sleep on his side, will I feel closer to him? I move over, cuddle into the pillow that still smells of him, but no. I am still alone in what is now *my* wide, wide bed.

During the day I can keep busy and redirect my thoughts. But in the dark of night in this bed we shared, where we talked, whispered, loved, and even turned our backs, I feel alone.

Lord, please hold me. I need to feel Your arms about me for the night is dark indeed.

*When I remember you upon my bed,
and meditate on you in the watches of the night;
for you have been my help.*

PSALM 63:6-7



...when I am afraid...



Lord, how easy it is to imagine all that could go wrong. My money won't be enough. My car will break down. My health will fail. My family will be too busy for me. My friends will forget me. My church won't care about me. I'll grow old alone and always be alone. And then there are the big issues like war and famine, global warming and natural disasters. Evil.

Remind me, Lord, that even if my worst fears come true, You are always there. No, not *there*. *Here*, beside me. With me. I can put my trust in You.

*When I am afraid, I put my trust in you.
In God, whose word I praise,
in God I trust; I shall not be afraid.
What can flesh do to me?*

PSALM 56:3-4



...will not walk in darkness...



Lord, I'm caught in that widow's fog people talk about. It's like a white mist swirling about me, making the world vague. It surrounds me the same way I see pictures of real fog shrouding a mountaintop or enveloping a valley. I can't see through the emotional mists. I can't think clearly to make the choices and decisions that my situation requires. Voices, often frustrated with me, come as if from a distance.

I want to do what's wise and right if I can only decipher what that is. Help me see through the mists, O Lord. Let the light of the Son burn away the fog.

*I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me
will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.*

JOHN 8:12



...not neglecting to meet together...



Lord, I sit in church and watch all the couples. One laughs softly together. Another sits shoulder to shoulder. The stiff posture of those two telegraphs their anger. Did they have an argument on the way? We used to be all those couples: loving, agreeing and disagreeing, our two hearts one, even on the bad days. It's not the fault of the still-couples that they make my heart ache.

I've come broken into this ark of worship with all the two by twos. Help me remember that even in community, worship is the act of one with One. I still qualify.

*Not neglecting to meet together,
as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another,
and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.*

HEBREWS 10:25



...hear the voice of my pleas...



Most days loving him wasn't a hard choice. He was a loveable and loving man. But there were the days I'd shake my head. *Really? Him?* I don't doubt he had days thinking the same about me. But we loved. Fiercely.

Now that he's gone, what do I do with the love I used to lavish on him? How do I manage without the love he freely gave me? How do I learn to live with this gnawing emptiness that was once filled with being us?

O Lord, hold me tight lest I break under the burden of my loss.

*Hear the voice of my pleas for mercy, when I cry to you for help,
when I lift up my hands toward your most holy sanctuary.*

PSALM 28:2

