

ONE-MINUTE
PRAYERS[®]

for
Women with
Cancer

NIKI HARDY



HARVEST HOUSE PUBLISHERS
EUGENE, OREGON

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Cover design by Studio Gearbox

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One-Minute Prayers[®] for Women with Cancer

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Published by Harvest House Publishers

Eugene, Oregon 97408

www.harvesthousepublishers.com

ISBN 978-0-7369-8391-4 (hardcover)

ISBN 978-0-7369-8392-1 (eBook)

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Printed in China



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You're Not Alone in This



The doctor sighed heavily. The tumor they'd found was either cancer or lymphoma, yet I hardly flinched at the news.

"Oh, is there a third option?" I asked calmly.

Maybe it was denial. Maybe it was the anesthesia drugs still coursing through my veins, fogging my brain. Or perhaps the Lord's peace descended just when I needed it. Regardless, I didn't break down. Not then.

Your tears may have flowed immediately, the what-ifs of your midnight worry sessions suddenly morphing into reality. Or maybe you slowly folded into yourself like a deflating bouncy castle. Perhaps you gasped, your hand racing to stifle the eruption of a primeval wail, before gathering yourself to pepper your doctor with a million questions. Or maybe your diagnosis was so unexpected you simply sat, dazed and stunned in shocked silence.

However you reacted—and please know there's no right or wrong way—you're here because you



have cancer, and for that I'm so sorry. It stinks. It just does.

More than anything, I want you to know you're not alone. No matter what cancer chucks your way, I want to journey through this with you, my hand on your shoulder, as we allow God to be our daily companion through these Scriptures, prayers, and words of encouragement.

I know the fear, worry, overwhelm, confusion, and yes, even anger, is very real, so I've been praying for you as I write. Your cancer's probably overshadowing everything right now, but I want you to know something: You've got this. How am I so sure? Because I know God's got you.

My diagnosis came a mere six weeks after I lost my sister to cancer—and just six years after I lost my mom. Still grieving, I felt like it was my turn. So I understand. I fought through chemo, radiation, surgery, more chemo, and enough scans and blood work to keep a fully staffed lab in overtime. As I fought, I needed to hear a few key things every day, sometimes every minute. Now I want to pass them on to you, my friend.

First, though it might seem obvious, I want to make sure you hear this: God is good, and he likes you, and he's 100 percent for you 100 percent of the time. When cancer rips our world apart, it's easy

to think he's mad or punishing us, but that simply isn't true. If we fully understood the enormity of his love, it would blow our minds. So remember, you are loved—passionately and unconditionally.

Second, God hasn't left you. He isn't off helping someone more “deserving,” like the missionary couple you support in Thailand, or Janice at church who leads Bible studies and didn't sleep around in college. Regardless of whether you can see him, feel him, or hear him, God is with you and isn't going anywhere. Saint Augustine's testimony is true for you too: “God is nearer to me than I am to myself.”¹

Last, please don't get in a tizzy about the hows, whens, wheres and whats of prayer. We tend to think “proper” prayers are eloquent, bursting with scriptural references, and uttered in profound faith. But this is a myth. Yes, those prayers are great, but don't let your relationship with God be held back by your humanity: the fear of not praying perfectly, the inability to pray more than a sentence, or the need to simply scream and question God. God's ear is always bent toward us, and the only wasted or “wrong” prayer is the one we don't pray. So my encouragement is to keep it simple, keep it real, and keep it going,² which is exactly what I'm here to help you do.

I'm sure you've got teams of professionals steering you through the medical maze of cancer, and I hope

you have a tribe of trusted friends bringing meals, running kids to practice, and maybe even throwing laundry in the wash. Perhaps a few close friends and a church community have even committed to praying for you. That's wonderful. No matter how pulled together we normally are, we all need people around us when our world falls apart. God is a God of community, three in one, and because we are built in his image, we are wired for community. My prayer is that through this book I too become part of your tribe.

I've purposefully structured these prayers into easily navigable sections so you can find what you need when you need it most. Feel free to pick and choose, dip and dive, and even hang out in one section for as long as you like. These devotions are for you, and there's no right or wrong way to use them. Scribble in the spaces, read the prayers out loud, or change up my words to make them your own. Do whatever you need so talking to God becomes easier. The important thing is that you invite God in, however that works best for you, even if you're not sure he's there. He knows what you're going through and longs to walk through this with you.

If cancer taught me anything, it's that life doesn't have to be pain-free to be full. I pray this little book helps you discover that too.

When You're Feeling...

Afraid



May your *love* always
outshine my darkest fear.





Meeting Fear Head-On

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

PHILIPPIANS 4:6-7

If only God would wave his mighty hand and banish our fear forever. How strong and courageous we'd be! God doesn't want us to feel afraid, but when we do, more than anything he wants us to come to him in the midst of it. He doesn't stop fear's stampede. But he does provide all we need to meet it head-on: prayer, petition, and thanksgiving. Here, knee-deep in our relationship with God, is where we find the peace that guards our hearts.

O Lord, I wish you'd just take my fear away! But I confess, if you did, I'd probably not come to you as much. So in my fear I return to you in prayer—worshipping and praising you, giving thanks for who you are, for what you've done and all you will do. I cry out for all I need. You promise to guard my heart with your peace, and today I need it, Lord. Surround and protect my fragile, fearful heart.



He Is with You

Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the LORD your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you.

DEUTERONOMY 31:6

Unfortunately, fear isn't something we can simply decide to ignore or shed absentmindedly like a sweater on a warm summer's day. It follows us around unbidden.

On the verge of finally entering the Promised Land, the Israelites were paralyzed by the size of the enemies they faced. God told them to be strong and courageous, and he says the same to you as you face cancer. You too can be strong and courageous. You too can rise above fear and terror. Why? Because just as God was with the Israelites, he is with you, and he will never leave.

Lord God, I'm scared. Really scared. I can't shake the fear overwhelming me, confronting me at every appointment, scan, treatment, and conversation. It keeps me awake and overtakes me. Lord, thank you for being with me. Thank you for never leaving me, ever. Because of your presence, I don't need to be afraid. Today, Lord, whatever cancer enemy I face, remind me of your continued presence. Give me your courage and strength to face it head-on, with you.



Leave Your Fears with God

Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

1 PETER 5:7

If you're anything like me, you tell God your worries. You probably even try to give them to him. But sooner or later you snatch them back and begin turning them over in your mind—repeatedly, relentlessly. A fisherman casts his fly into a flowing stream and reels it in again and again and again, but God tells us to cast our fears on him once and for all. To leave them with him and walk away. How? In the strength of his love and care. So let's throw our anxiety on him today and then turn and walk away, confident he loves us deeply.

Lord, I know I'm not great at telling you my fears, and the worst at leaving them with you before sneaking back to pick them up. Forgive me. It shows I rank my ability to take care of things higher than yours. I'm sorry. I trust your love. I know you care about everything that keeps me awake at night. Today, as I choose to give it all to you and walk away in the strength of your love and care, may I know your perfect peace.



Stop Spinning

The LORD will fight for you; you need only to be still.

EXODUS 14:14

Moses and the Israelites were camped on the banks of the Red Sea, the Egyptian army bearing down on them. There was nowhere to go, nowhere to hide. In their fear they mumbled and complained. Surely all was lost? When they cried out to God, he didn't tell them to run, fight, or even hide. He simply said, "Be still." He wanted them to keep silent and to be calm. When we stop spinning anxiously in fear-fueled circles, silence our complaining, lay aside our plans of attack, and sit calmly in his presence, he fights for us. What a wonderful thought.

Lord, forgive my anxiety and complaining. It's so much easier to worry, grumble, and fret through a hundred different what-if scenarios than to sit still in your presence. My fears shout louder than your still, small voice—I feel so helpless. And I confess, worrying can feel more productive than sitting still, even in your presence. But with you, all is not lost. Lord, calm my fears. Meet me in the stillness. Fight for me.