

Praying Psalm 23:

For Caregivers

And Those They Care For

Psalm 23

- 1. The Lord is my shepherd. I shall not be in want.*
- 2. He makes me lie down in the green pastures.
He leads me beside quiet waters.*
- 3. He restores my soul. He guides me in paths of
righteousness for His name's sake.*
- 4. Even though I walk through the valley of the
shadow of death, I will fear no evil. For you are
with me. Your rod and your staff, they comfort
me.*
- 5. You prepare a table before me in the presence
of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil.
My cup overflows.*
- 6. Surely goodness and mercy will follow me all
the days of my life and I will dwell in the house
of the Lord forever.*



Caregivers Pray Psalm 23

1. My Shepherd

The Lord is my shepherd. Psalm 23:1a

God, I hope you don't want much from me today. I'm not sure I have anything left to give. Caregiving drains me. Work drains me. Everyone wants something from me.

King David was a shepherd before he was king. He knew the work involved in caring for sheep, just like I know the work of caring for someone who can't care for himself.

David looked to you as his shepherd. It's an appealing picture. Do you really want to be my shepherd; to be my caregiver? Will you care for my needs, protect me, and guide me?

Your word is true, God. Help me believe it. Help me believe that you are my shepherd; that in our relationship, you are the caregiver and I am the care receiver.

What an amazing gift. Thank you.

2. My Provider

*I shall not be in want. He makes me lie down in the green pastures.
He leads me beside quiet waters. Psalm 23:1b-2*

God, what a peaceful picture this is. Sheep resting in a grassy meadow and drinking from a quiet stream while the shepherd watches over them. You truly are a good shepherd.

I need rest and quiet, God. I grab food and water on the run; peace and quiet and rest are harder to come by. Her needs never end, day and night.

While I provide for her needs, provide for my needs, Good Shepherd. Help me see and accept the opportunities you offer: a minute to listen to the birds, a moment to watch leaves dance in the breeze, some music, a phone call with a friend, an evening with a support group.

Taking care of myself often seems like one more burden. Care for me, and help me care for myself so I can care for her.

Lead me to the green pasture and refreshing waters of the words you've written for me in your book, the Bible.



3. Restore Me

He restores my soul. Psalm 23:3a

Good shepherd, it's so hard to watch him. He's not the man he was. He's lost so much. And the future is likely to bring more losses. I can care for him, but I can't make him better.

I can't restore myself either. Even when I try hard to care for myself, the draining is greater than the refilling. And I fear the future will bring greater challenges.

Renew me, my shepherd. You supply my physical needs; restore my soul also. Refill me with more faith in you, with more hope and contentment, with more joy and especially with more love. Restore me so fully that I can share all these things with him and with others.

Thank you for the promise that one day both he and I will be completely restored and renewed, in every way, when you call us home to yourself.

4. My Guide

*He guides me in paths of righteousness for His name's sake.
Psalm 23:3b*

Good shepherd, you lead the sheep on the right paths. What path of right-ness am I to take for your sake?

You put me on this path I now walk; you knew I'd be her caregiver. Thank you for being beside me as I walk it today and each day. Help me do each task "for your name's sake," the way you'd want me to do it, the way I'd do it for you.

A shepherd knows caregiving. Teach it to me as I walk this path. Guide me in the many decisions I have to make for myself and for her. As she and I walk this path together, walk between us, with your arms around both of us.

Thank you, Jesus.



5. The Death of Death

*Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil. Psalm 23:4a*

Good Shepherd, death is more often on my mind since I became a caregiver. The frailty of our bodies, the inevitability and ugliness of death – it's all more real to me now.

Caregiving itself is often like a descent into a dark, lonely valley of decay and loss and death.

You walked this valley, too, Jesus. You faced great pain and suffering, and an agonizing, humiliating public execution. You gave your life, willingly, for my sins. And when you walked out of the tomb, alive, on Easter morning, you defeated death. You declared victory over death, over your death and my death and the death of the one I care for.

Forgive my sin and despair. Forgive me for the times I've wished for release from caregiving by his death. Help me face the reality of loss and decline and the eventual death of us all fearlessly.

Thank you for bringing light to this dark valley.

6. My Protector

*For you are with me. Your rod and your staff, they comfort me.
You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies.
Psalm 23:4b-5a*

Good shepherd, I need protection from the enemies around me – the numbing routines and daily irritations, the health care system hassles and financial worries, my own anger and despair. All these, and more, attack me every day.

I need your presence. I need protection. Rescue me from all that would hurt me and the one I care for. Give me courage to face what I must face and to do what I must do.

Give me such confidence in your protection that I can feast at the table of your goodness even in the middle of my challenges.



7. You Chose Me

You anoint my head with oil. Psalm 23:5b

Good shepherd, I'd rather you not put oil on my head. It would be hard to find time to take an extra shower.

But in King David's time, oil was used for cleaning wounds and aiding healing. It was also used in the installation of a king or high priest to indicate that a person was chosen by God for their position.

But you chose me for my position; you chose me for this caregiving role. With the choosing comes your promises for help in carrying it out.

More than that, though, you chose me to be your child, one of your sheep. I haven't earned that position, and I can't. It's entirely a gift of your grace.

Thank you, Jesus, for choosing me as your own.

8. Your Abundance

My cup overflows. Psalm 23:5c

Good shepherd, before I became a caregiver, I often felt strong and capable. Now I just feel empty so much of the time. But compared to your abundance, I have always been empty.

Fill me, Lord; fill me with what I need right now: more faith in You, more hope for the future, more love for others, especially the one I care for; more peace in my heart, more joy in my face and my words.

Fill me from your abundance. Fill me so abundantly that it overflows my cup and runs out from me to others, that I share that faith, hope, love, peace and joy with the one I care for and others who need it also.



9. The Forever Life

*Surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. Psalm 23:6*

Good shepherd, I'm always busy but the hours sometimes seem to drag. My days are so repetitive and monotonous and unending. I'm isolated; surrounded by headaches and heartache.

But here you promise that 'goodness and mercy will follow me.' And when I look for them, I can see them: the robin that sang outside the window, the timely call from a friend, the helpful nurse.

Open my eyes to see more of your mercies and more of your goodness. Thank you for your promise that there is more for me than the life I have today, that I can anticipate a life filled entirely with your goodness. Let the joy of that life to come bring color to today's life.



Those Who Need Care Pray Psalm 23

1. My Shepherd

The Lord is my shepherd. Psalm 23:1

God, are you my shepherd?

I appreciate the people who care for me, but so many of my friends and family are gone. Some are dead; some live far away. Others are near but don't have time for me. There are so few people I can count on. Can I count on you?

King David was a shepherd. He knew how to care for sheep. He trusted you to be his shepherd. Your word is true, and I know you'll be my shepherd, too.

You'll care for me. You'll give me what I need. You'll protect me. When I can't keep going on my own, you'll carry me.

Yes, I really can count on you. Thank you, God.

2. My Provider

*I shall not be in want. He makes me lie down in the green pastures.
He leads me beside quiet waters. Psalm 23:1-2*

God, I can't take care of myself any more. I rely on others for the simplest things. I hate that.

But I don't mind relying on you. You are my shepherd. A shepherd takes the sheep to places with good grass for eating and calm water for drinking.

You've always provided for me, God. When I was growing up, you provided through my parents. When I was working, you provided through many others—farmers and truckers, roofers and mechanics, even the people who brought electricity and water to my home.

Now you provide through caregivers. Thank you. I still wish I could take care of myself, and my caregivers aren't perfect. But you are a perfect shepherd, a good shepherd. Thank you for always providing what I need.



3. Restore Me

He restores my soul. Psalm 23:3

Good shepherd, I wish I could be whole again.

Things are changing, sometimes slowly, sometimes quickly. Many things that once were easy are now difficult or impossible: things like walking, seeing, hearing, remembering. Even sitting down and getting up again is hard.

Can you restore me?

One day you will restore my body. Thank you for that promise. Till then, restore my soul. Give me more faith, more hope, more joy and, especially, more love. As my body weakens, make my soul stronger.

4. My Guide

*He guides me in paths of righteousness for His name's sake.
Psalm 23:3*

Good Shepherd, there are so many long and empty hours in my day. I can no longer do so much of what I once did.

What kind of path are you leading me on? I can hardly walk sometimes. Where do you want me to go and what do you want me to do?

Thank you for the caregivers who walk this path with me. Help me be agreeable; help me give them an encouraging word.

Help me give a smile to anyone who needs it. Help me see where I can do some small thing for someone else.

Even when my path doesn't go beyond my room or beyond my bed, thank you for walking with me.



5. The Death of Death

*Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil. Psalm 23:4*

Good Shepherd, I know that valley of the shadow of death. That shadow is over me a lot. Sometimes I long for death. Sometimes it frightens me.

Jesus, you know about death, too. You knew your days on earth would end in a painful and public death. But you went through it. And when you walked out of the tomb on Easter, alive, you declared victory over death. Death no longer has the last word. You do.

So I don't need to fear death. I can face it with you beside me. You will take me through it to be with you in those beautiful green pastures and by those quiet waters forever.

6. My Protector

*For you are with me. Your rod and your staff, they comfort me.
You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies.
Psalm 23:4-5*

Good shepherd, I see so many dangers around me. There are the caregivers who don't understand or don't care; the stuff people leave on the floor that gets in my way; the failings of my body and my brain. Every day I feel threatened.

Like a shepherd guarding the sheep, keep an eye out for me. Help me handle the problems I can. Protect me from the things I can't handle.

Help me give you the fears I have of greater troubles in the future. Thank you that I can feel safe in your keeping.



7. You Chose Me

*You anoint my head with oil.
Psalm 23: 5*

Good shepherd, it feels so good when someone puts lotion on my feet or back; it's a soothing, comforting and refreshing touch.

When David the shepherd was made King, he was anointed with oil on his head to show he was chosen by you. Sounds odd to me, but I'm sure it meant a lot to him.

Thank you for choosing me as your lamb, your child. I don't deserve it. I haven't always been good. But you chose me anyway, because you are forgiving and loving. So I can always be soothed and refreshed by you.

Thank you.

8. Your Abundance

My cup overflows. Psalm 23:5

God, I feel like a dry and empty shell. I used to feel full – strong and capable. But compared to you, I have always been empty.

Please fill my cup today, good shepherd. Give me what I need for today. Then, give me some more, as you promise here, so that it runs over the top of my cup. I will share the extras with other people. There are many who need it, and many who don't know to look to you to get their cup filled.

Thank you.



9. The Forever Life

*Surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. Psalm 23:6*

Good shepherd, sometimes my life seems to drag on and on. Then sometimes I wonder how all the years went by so quickly.

I wonder what the rest of my life will be like; better maybe? Or more of the same? Or maybe worse? I wonder how long this life will last.

Thank you for the promise of life forever in your house, with you. Thank you for the promise of mercy for all my wrong doings, my sins. Thank you for your unending goodness.

Thank you that this good life with you begins now, today. Thank you that the next part, the yet-to-be part, whenever it begins, will go on forever and be the best yet.

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