conversations in prayer
The cover photo, ‘Quiet Reflections’, was taken by Paul Armstrong.

This booklet has been produced by the chaplains serving the two Otago tertiary education campuses, the University of Otago and the Otago Polytechnic. It has been edited by Greg Hughson and is published by the Otago Tertiary Chaplaincy Trust Board, who gratefully acknowledge the financial support of the Methodist Church of New Zealand’s Media and Communications Committee and Otago Catholic Tertiary Chaplaincy.

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Introduction

As Chaplains we believe that a healthy spiritual life is very important, and that we need help on our faith journey to develop a lively relationship with God through prayer. It is our role to provide distinctively spiritual support. We believe that spiritual health is essential if we are to experience life in all its fullness.

We are members of diverse tertiary communities alongside people of many cultures and faiths, and yet the one thing which we all share is the human capacity to pray. We hope that the prayers we provide in this book will be of value not only to Christians, but to people of other faiths and to people who currently identify with no particular faith community.

Our spiritual health is intimately inter-connected with our emotional, intellectual and physical well-being. There is a growing recognition in our society today of the importance of spiritual nurture for sustenance and healing throughout our lives.

Our foundational assumption as Chaplains in preparing this resource is that God is with us, and that in relationship with God we can experience life in all its fullness. Words are not always necessary, sometimes they get in the way. But often it is helpful to have words to cling to when prayer is hard to do – or even believe in. In this booklet you will find some words which we pray will nurture your desire and ability to pray your own prayers. We begin by sharing with you our perspectives on prayer, followed by prayers we have written, along with prayers written by students and staff. Please consult the index to identify prayers which may be of particular relevance to your situation and needs.

Intercessory prayer deserves special mention, as it is the form of prayer that almost every one of us resorts to, often in times of desperation. It has been said that there are no atheists in a plane about
to crash, as evidenced by the prayers such a situation spontaneously elicits!

In recent times, as Chaplains we have sent E mails out to all students before exams, offering our prayerful support and encouragement. We have received many positive responses to this initiative, which is a sign of the importance of intercessory prayer. Students have appreciated that we as Chaplains have been praying for them during exams, and at other times of challenge and stress.

– Greg, Mark, Mike, Amy, Paul, Lyn, Rosie and Angel

Lyn, Mike, Angel, Greg, Rosie, Paul, Amy and Mark.
The Purpose and Nature of Prayer

“Intercessory Prayer is the purifying bath into which the individual and the fellowship must enter every day.”

– Deitrich Bonhoeffer

“If we truly love people, we will desire for them far more than it is within our power to give them, and this will lead us to prayer. Intercession is a way of loving others.”

– Richard Foster

“The purpose of prayer is to prepare our own hearts for the in-breaking of God, for the putting on of the mind of Christ, for the burst of awareness, when it comes, that God is not somewhere else. God is here, now, in our hearts.”

– Joan Chittister OSB

“On every occasion of uneasiness we should retire to prayer that we may give place to the grace and light of God.”

– John Wesley

“Prayer is a serene force at work within human beings, stirring them up, changing their hearts, never allowing them to close their eyes in the face of evil, of wars, of all that threatens the innocent of this world. From it we draw the energy to wage other struggles, to transform the human condition and to make the earth a place fit to live in.

All who walk in the footsteps of Christ, while holding themselves in the presence of God, remain alongside other people as well. They do not separate prayer and solidarity with others.”

– Brother Roger of Taizé
Chaplaincy Reflections on Prayer

Greg Hughson:

For me, prayer has to do with being in relationship with God. Prayer nurtures and sustains my relationship with God. Each time I pray, I am acknowledging God’s loving presence with me. Sometimes I offer quick “arrow prayers” to God – requests for help and guidance in specific situations. At other times, especially just before sleep or sometimes during the night, my prayers are more extended conversations with God. At these times, prayer enables me to make sense of the way my life is unfolding in relationship with God.

Prayer with God expands the horizons of our thinking, our living and our actions. As a result of prayer we become more aware of the spiritual significance of our lives.

In prayer to God we can express our deepest needs and we can discern God’s way for our lives. Prayer is not a mechanical process. We cannot manipulate God in any way. God knows our needs before we ask. Through prayer we can have our perspective on life restored and we can find refreshment for the journey of life through being in touch with the Holy One in whom we live, move and have our being.

There is a lot more to life than what we can see with our eyes! There is a sacred and unseen – yet very real – spiritual dimension to life, which we can access through prayer. Prayer is “the way in” to encounter the mystery of God. When we pray, we adopt a “posture of receptivity” towards encounter with God. When we pray, we open ourselves to being more consciously in relationship with our Creator. Christian prayer to God is often offered in and through the name of Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. Through the life, death and risen presence of Jesus Christ, we have access to God in a personal way. Through our faith in Christ, we can experience something of the personal nature of God.
Mark Chamberlain:

Prayer is about relationship – when we pray we express and experience the relationship we have with God. We are all in relationship with God in our own way and in prayer this uniqueness is expressed in the variety and all the personal ways we have of praying. The delightful paradox with all of this is that God prays in us; it is waking up to this which is prayer. It can be about conversation with God, sharing all that has happened or is about to happen in our day.

Prayer is about refreshment – we all live within multi-environments, and some of these ecosystems are polluted with demands, expectations, threats, negativity; prayer is about letting go and being with God as the Ultimate of all reality. We can leave prayer feeling refreshed, and with a new clarity.

Prayer requires space – we need to give time to prayer, it need not be a huge amount of time. The saying “quality rather than quantity” applies here. I mean it is easy to get caught up in the myth that a great amount of time needs to be given to prayer. No, prayer is about discovering the holiness that is already in time. A few minutes here, and a minute or so there can help us to appreciate that God is with us all the time. Space is also about place: sometimes to pray in a garden, or with a view of the changing sky, or beside a lit candle, or before and icon or in a Church, can nourish and support our prayer.

Prayer is about listening – in prayer we stop our chatter and move into a mode of listening, even if for a few minutes. God seldom speaks back in clear defined words. Not so; rather in a sudden thought, or an emerging feeling, or a slither of inspiration or a moment of understanding. We sometimes hear people talk about distractions in prayer, but they are no longer so if we choose to see them as providing our real agenda for prayer.
Prayer is about intercession – we all need help, and frequently we struggle to help ourselves, let alone our friends or family. In prayer we actually admit our powerlessness and ask God to help us. The answer usually involves us helping in one way or another. This part of prayer more than any other expresses our connection with and our solidarity with others. What I find so attractive about this, is that both time and distance are no limitation.

Mike Wright:
Prayer is Invitation and Response – for me, prayer is about invitation and response; God’s initiative and our response to the great mystery that is God (regardless of whoever or whatever you understand God to be). It is an acknowledgement of a divine presence in the world and in my own personal experience of life that is unseen yet very real.

Prayer is Relationship – in praying we assume that God is listening and is interested in what we are saying. This implies relationship. God is not therefore an impersonal Force. Prayer is also about listening and being attentive to the God who has told us God’s greatest desire is to communicate; to express overwhelming love, care and concern for me as a unique individual and as part of the wider human race.

Prayer is Sacred – in communicating with God we stand on ‘holy ground’. We are ‘set apart’ in this incredible event. In prayer we commune with our Creator. The One who sets the stars in place, who oversees the replication of DNA, and who guides the flow of human history chooses to work with us and through us for our good and for the good of all. This is a sacred task.

Prayer is Ordinary – this inviting and responsive, relational and sacred experience that is prayer occurs in the midst of the ordinary things of life. No special place, time, language, stance or mood is required. Simply ourselves and who and what we are in the moment is all that is needed. No issue of life is too big or too small to
bring to God’s attentive ear. No triumph of failure unimportant enough to speak of. Prayer is integrative, inclusive and whole-of-life embracing.

**Amy Armstrong:**
Prayer is spending quiet time, getting to know God and the Spirit that dwells within us, more intimately. When we spend quiet time in prayer, we have an increased awareness of God’s presence – in the world and within our own hearts. Prayer is becoming still on the inside, and when this stillness occurs, we have better perspective on everything because we are more closely attuned to God. We see and hear more clearly and have an increased capacity to love. Even making decisions can be easier. To sit quietly with God and feel the love that he has for us – this is prayer.

‘My sheep know my voice’, says Jesus. And the result of silent prayer is increased peace and the ability to recognise his voice in the world. When we sit and listen to God, we get to know that voice better and are able to hear it more clearly amongst the noise of our daily lives. It’s like when you spend a lot of time in the peace and quiet of the bush, you get to know the calls of the native birds quite well. And then one day you are walking in the midst of the bustle of campus and you hear the sharp and melodious call of the Grey Warbler or the Bell Bird. You are quite surprised to hear it in a different place, but you know it in an instant. And it is because you spent so much time in the quiet of nature, getting to know it intimately almost without realising it, that you recognise it. And the sound is so sweet and so soothing, that you stop and reflect, becoming calmer on the inside. And now you see campus differently than you had a moment ago. It’s the same with the kind voice of God. God is always there, speaking to us, loving us and guiding us. An important part of prayer is to calm and quiet your soul long enough to hear what God is saying to you.
**Paul Armstrong:**
Prayer is being. It is the most essential state. It is the very presence of my self to Christ. It is in this place, where I am unconcerned with my own self, just in the fact that I am, that I am with Christ. To let go, to let be. To simply exist. This is in fact the purest form of being. This is prayer.

**Lyn Meinders:**
Prayer is the most important part of my relationship with God. Prayer is a continual open line to God. For me it is like a phone conversation – sometimes I speak and sometimes I listen. I need to listen when God speaks to me or prompts me to do something. In the same way God listens to the requests I make.

Likening prayer to a ‘telephone’ conversation means that I never ‘hang up’. I have the line open 24/7. Saying ‘amen’ for me is hanging up the phone line and I don’t want to do that.

Sometimes the thoughts that I have could only be God … they are so ‘far’ out there, that I am not sure I could think of the things myself. However, they will inevitably lead to an encounter or appointment which is always a two way blessing. That is why prayer, and having the line open to God at all times, for me, is so very important.

**Rosie Victor-Hoogland:**
*Do not be afraid – I am with you! I am your God – let nothing terrify you! I will make you strong and help you; I will protect you and save you* (Isaiah 41:10).

For me prayer is simply talking to God. I believe that God wants us to communicate with Him. I think praying is like talking to my best friend. It’s easy to talk to someone when I know they love me unconditionally!
When I pray I usually begin by asking forgiveness for my sins and then I talk to God about my needs. I hand over all my worries and cares to God, for He cares for me. I thank Him for taking care of me and my family. Also, I often thank God for Jesus’ death on the cross for me, for us, to give us eternal life.

Sometimes I use prayers from prayer books which help me to talk with God about different needs. Most recently I have been using the prayer below. This prayer has helped me a lot in my to walk with God:

**HEAVENLY FATHER,** help me to wait patiently for the answers to my prayers. Increase my faith to know that when I pray, you hear the cries of my heart and will answer in your perfect timing and your perfect way. Help me to continue to pray and not to give up, no matter how long it takes, or how many obstacles the enemy throws in my path. Amen.

**Angel Mnyanyi:**

*Don’t worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank Him for all He has done. Then you will experience God’s peace, which exceeds anything we can understand* (Philippians 4:6-7).

To me prayer is important time I spend being conscious in the presence of God, and of desiring to know and love Him more each time.

Ideally when we pray each day, we discover something afresh about our beautiful God. We see praying as not only something we set aside a particular time for each day but as something we can do as we run, eat, work, walk, driving ,wait for appointments and yes, even sleep. With this we know God will be our constant companion.
With prayer, it makes me able to turn to Him so easily when I most need Him in those most difficult and discerning moments.

Although I can pray at any time, there are two times that are very important in my Christian journey: the first is the first thing I do when I wake up. I put myself into God’s care for the day and ask Him to teach me and show me what His will is for me and to people that I meet and also to give me His grace to do it, and I thank God for the rest of the day. The second is at the end of the day when I view the day, thanking God for it, confessing my failures and sins, and ask for forgiveness, and putting myself into His hands and the angels’ care for the night.
A Morning Prayer

Kia ora my Friend God.
I give to you the voyage of this day,
that to be which is already yours,
adding to it my rejoicing,
You are the wind: fill up my sails.
You are the water: run fast beneath my keel.
And I will sing in the wind
and dance over the water,
God my Friend, oh God my Friend.
You are the light: enfold me,
You are the darkness: embrace me.
You are pain: hollow me.
You are love: overflow me.
The storms of change are you,
and the peace of tranquil waters.
You are all these things Friend God,
and I thank you. Amen. Amen.
May I journey without fear
through all your seasons.
In emptiness let me find fullness.

In imprisonment let me find freedom.
Render me passive in your will
and I shall be most active,
moving with you in everything,
seeing you in everything
knowing you in everything.

– Joy Cowley, Aotearoa Psalms
Evening Prayer

Lord, it is night.

The night is for stillness.  
Let us be still in the presence of God.

It is night after a long day.  
What has been done has been done;  
what has not been done has not been done; let it be.

The night is dark.  
Let our fears of the darkness of the world and of our own lives  
rest in you.  
The night is quiet  
Let the quietness of your peace enfold us,  
all dear to us  
and all who have no peace.

The night heralds the dawn.  
Let us look expectantly to a new day,  
new joys,  
new possibilities.

In your name we pray.  
Amen.

© A New Zealand Prayer Book
Maori Perspectives on Prayer / Karakia

“Karakia was extremely important to them [ancestors] as a tool for maintaining good spiritual, and thereby bodily health. To them spirituality is the taproot of all things, and all activities, including intellectual pursuits, were attended by appropriate karakia.”


“If the spiritual things are attended to, all will be well with the physical.”

– T.W. Ratana

He inoi mua i te kai
(Karakia before food)

E te Atua, whakapaingia mātou me ēnei kai, kua homai e koe kia ora ai mātou. Mā tō mātou Ariki, mā Hehu Karaiti. Amene.

Opening Prayer/Morning Prayer

E te Atua, tēnei anō mātou āu pononga te inoi nei ki a koe, kia tata mai koe ki a mātou i tēnei wā, hei āwhina, hei arataki i a mātou, kia whakakorōriatia ai koe i roto i ā mātou mahi katoa. Ko koe hoki te Atua, e ora nei, e mana nei i āu pononga i ngā wā katoa. Amene.

God, we come before you in prayer, be close to us today (at this time), care for us, lead us. We praise you and offer to you, all of our work and activities today. You indeed are God who sustains us, and empowers us in all things. Amen.
Closing/Evening Prayer

E te Atua, tēnei anō mātou āu pononga te whakawhetai atu nei ki a koe mo āu manaakitanga katoa ki a mātou i tēnei rā, tae noa mai ki tēnei haora; he mea timata, he mea mahi, he mea whakaoti hoki i roto i a koe; kia whiwhi ai mātou ki te oranga tonutanga; ko Ihu Karaiti hoki to mātou Ariki. Amene.

God, we come before you to praise you and thank you for all you support and care this day right up to this very hour; you, in our beginning, our work, and you at our completion also. May we gain everlasting life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amene.

He karakia mō ō tātou kāinga

(Prayer for our homes & families)

E te Matua kaha rawa
te kaihomai o te aroha me te rangimarie
Kia noho mai ō mātou kāinga
manaakitia mātou me ō mātou whānau
A, arahina hoki mātou i ngā rā katoa e ora ai mātou
Ko Ihu Karaiti hoki tō mātou Ariki. Amine

Almighty Father
giver of love and peace
be with us in our homes bless us and our families,
and grant us your guidance
all the days of our lives
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

– Richard Kerr-Bell
Karakia Mō Ngā Tūroro

(A prayer for peace and healing the sick)

E te Matua i te Rangi

E inoi ana mātou ki a koe kia whakaoranga tēnei/ēnei pononga āu e māuiui nei. Whakamāmātia ngā taimahatanga kei runga kei a ia/rāua/rātou.

Tiakina hoki rātou i roto i ngā hohipera, i ngā kāinga hoki, otirā rātou e mōhiotia ana e mātou i tēnei wā. Homai o ringaringa tapu ki ngā turoro kia whakawatea ngā hara o te ao. Kia ora ō rātou tinana me ō rātou Wairua.

Kei te haere tonu ngā tuku whakamoemiti me ngā whakawhetai ki a Koe. I roto i te ingoa o ātū Tama a Ihu Karaiti. Amine.

– Printed with permission from
Rev. Maureen Martin, Dunedin Hospital Chaplain
**A Prayer for Families**

Dear God, thank you for my family. Thank you for the love and the care that I have received from them all. Even though we may be far away from each other geographically, we nevertheless still feel deeply connected. Thank you that all families are different and that my family is uniquely special. I realise that no family is perfect. Help me to value the strengths, and deal with the inadequacies of my family. Amen.

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**A Prayer for Growth in Faith**

Help me, loving God, to be open to growth in faith, for I am not a baby anymore. I know that you long to lead me deeper and deeper into the mystery of your love and grace. Grant me courage to grow. It would be so easy to stagnate and to opt only for simplistic answers, when I know I am called to engage all my heart and mind and soul in your service. Amen.

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**A Prayer for Understanding**

Loving God, sometimes I find it so hard to understand what is going on. When people annoy me and life is hard, help me to trust that you are with me and that you can help me to move beyond mere tolerance to true compassion. Grant me wisdom to know what to say and what to do. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.
A Prayer for Concentration

God help me to be present to what I need to be present to, unscramble my creative mind and make it possible for me to concentrate. Time is this wonderful gift you keep giving to humanity; with you beside me I can make full use of this gift.

A Prayer for a Broken Relationship

You offer healing when all else seems to fail. You are most visible in vulnerability. My heart is heavy with this broken relationship. There was so much to hope for and now I am confused. May your healing hold my heart steady and thus enable me to recover.

Trauma

God, you know what has happened. You were there as you are here now. We are without words and all wisdom feels empty. In some way, reach beneath our shock and pain, support us through these hours, days and all days to follow. You did say, “I am with you till the end of time”. Be with us now.

A Prayer when under Financial Stress

God, your promise to us is peace. I need this peace, here and now. Bring peace within me when I am anxious about my finances. Fill me with peace because with the wealth of your peace I can achieve whatever I need to achieve. God, your promise of peace offers me an horizon beyond despair and I know you are with me.
A Prayer for Healing
My body is your gift to me. I know that when I am well I can take this gift for granted. The grace of sickness is in knowing the miracle of wellness. Your healing is what I need. Allow your refreshment to bring new energy into this body of mine. I know that you will help me to be aware that you are near.

A Prayer for Wisdom
God, giver of all good gifts, grant me the gift of wisdom. May I reflect on my experiences and learn from them and know that you are with me. May I see with clarity where you are leading me and make decisions that are wise and life giving. May this gift of wisdom bring me peace and Holy Spirit be my guide.

A Homesickness Prayer
God, where are you? I feel so alone and long for a connection with home. God let me know you are with me here in this place. Help me to rest in you and find comfort in your presence. May I know that you care for me and hold me in the palm of your hand. God be with those people I miss in the place that is home. I know that we are held in the circle of your love and that we will meet again soon.
Exam Pressure

O God, take my anxiety and replace it with peace.
Take my stress and replace it with calmness.
Take my confusion and replace it with a clear mind.
Help me to be quiet within and be aware of the knowledge I have
Help me to be confident that I will do well
Help me to believe in myself and at the same time know that it is
with your help that I will succeed.
For “I can do all things through God who strengthens me.”
(Phil.4:13)

A Journey Prayer

God, be with us on our journey and keep us safe from harm. Keep
those who drive attentive to the task and mindful of the safety
of those in their care. God, travel with us and let us be aware of
the beauty that surrounds us. This journey will lead us to another
place and other people . . . Keep us patient and aware of others
on the road. May they too be aware so that all may arrive at their
destinations in safety.
A Prayer as we begin Tertiary Study

Dear Lord, thank you so much for bringing me here to teach me. You never send us on a journey on our own without going with us. You always give us so much to hold on to and you never fail to bring people across our path to help us, encourage us and guide us.

Thank you so much for the promises that you give us in your word. You tell us”Ask and it shall be given”. You also tell us that you will recall to our remembrance the things that you have taught us. (John 14 v 26)

Lord, as we start this journey we ask that you will guide us, encourage us and give us the strength to learn what you want to teach us. When we are confronted by tests and exams, help each one of us stand on your promise that you will indeed recall to our remembrance the things you have taught us.

Lord I thank you for the exciting things I am going to learn and achieve on this journey, with your help!

Amen
A Tree-Planting Prayer

Loving and gracious God we give you thanks that we can gather together to honour ……………… and to plant this tree today. We pray that as we place this tree in the ground and surround its roots with good soil, we will have a deep sense of being grounded in and surrounded by your eternal love – a love from which nothing in all of creation can separate us.

Bless this tree we pray, which we plant now in memory of ………………

As this tree grows, may we grow in love for each other, and in love for you.

And whenever we return here, may this tree enable us to remember ………………, who is now at peace in your gracious care. Amen.

A Prayer in the Dark

God I feel like I am walking in the dark. I cannot see the road ahead.
I don’t know what to do or where to go. Do I keep walking? Do I stop and wait?

Please bring the light of your presence to warm my heart, to guide my feet, and to give light to my path.
Touch me so that I know you are with me.
Call my name so that I can hear your voice.
Give me your wisdom so that I can know the path you have for me.
Tell me again that you will be with me always.
I love you God. Amen
Discernment of Career

God of Wisdom, help me to listen to my deeper self and be aware of the gifts you have given me. Help me to be aware of the circumstances, events and people that you put in my life that help lead me to where you are calling me. May the stirrings within my heart and mind urge me to make choices that will bring me peace and fulfilment and a generous spirit.

Healing of Memories

I sit here with so many memories. Some I don’t want to remember because all I can feel is the pain, the anger, the loneliness, the …

God, help me to embrace that pain, acknowledge it and feel it. I know, Jesus, that you too had pain. So we share this. God help me to say goodbye to this painful memory. Jesus, you touched and healed many people (recall some). Heal me, O God, and let me feel your healing touch and your gift of peace. Let me feel your embrace and healing care. May I be able to look now to the hello that has followed the goodbye and give thanks.
A House Blessing Prayer

One of the earliest customs in the Church was the blessing of the home. It has to do with acknowledging that the house or flat is more than simply that; it is, after all, the place where we live and it becomes our home.

To bless our flat is a tangible way of saying that this place is our home. A blessing is about saying yes to the presence of God and to our need for a safe place for rest and well-being. We suggest that the blessing best begins outside the flat and proceeds through each room of the flat. A bowl of water for sprinkling and a candle can be helpful symbols for this occasion.

We give thanks God for all land, for the land of Aotearoa, and especially for this, our portion of this gift. May we know that we can never own – but best remain – guests, of this gift of earth.

We give thanks for thresholds, all the different transitions of our lives. May all who enter through this doorway be received with peace and respect and all who leave do so with a blessing.

We pray for …………… whose room this is. We pray that they will study well and sense your gift of peace. May this be a place of rest.

We thank you for water, our rivers and lakes. May this bathroom be a place of refreshment and health.

We thank you for food and drink. For all the delightful creations that will take place here this year. We pray for this table and all who will eat here. May this be a place of nourishment.

We give thanks for this lounge room. A place for conversation, laughter and discussion. May this be a space that is treasured by all who live here. Amen.
Prayers written by Students

Three prayers by Jacqui Jones

1. Teach me to be still

Father God, teach me to be still.

In the Summer of promise,
when excitement runs high and opportunity beckons,
when friendships are new and joy is fresh –
Teach me to be still.

In the Autumn of preparation,
when my heart longs for home and the reality of work hits me,
when irritating habits of my flatmates begin to take their toll
– Teach me to be still.

In the Winter of weariness,
when exams are looming ever nearer and money is tight,
when the rain oozes into all corners of my very soul and a cup of Milo is nectar – Teach me to be still.

In the Spring of hope,
when the end is in sight and friendships are sweet,
when the beach and the sun lure me out of the library –
Teach me to be still.

Teach me to be still, Father
For in every season, it is always in the stillness that You are found.

Amen.
2. A Procrastination Prayer

Dear God
Today I’ve been procrastinating again.
So many in the world would love to attend university,
yet I complain at the workload in front of me.
Thousands struggle to rise above illiteracy and yet I resent the readings assigned to me.
Many wish they had a reason to get up in the mornings, yet I grumble about my early lectures.
Please remind me this day that the gift of studenthood is precious indeed. May I never take it for granted.
Amen.

3. A Prayer to the Lord of Blue Skies and Grey Days

Lord of the blue skies and the grey days
Help me to appreciate both the sunshine and the clouds,
King of the daylight and the night-time hours
Show me the value of both work and rest,
God of the triumphs and the tragedies
Teach me to always give thanks,
Knowing that You too were once human and You understand.

Lord God, today I may meet someone who doesn’t have anything to smile about. Please help me to share my joy.
Or there may be one who simply needs a hug.
Let my arms bring comfort.
Perhaps there will be a friend in the midst of anxious busyness.
May I bring them a taste of peace.
And there is bound to be at least one who has never heard of Your love. O God, make my life a sweet fragrance to them today.
And when sleep beckons at the end of the day, help me to glory in the knowledge that You deign to use me – flawed as I am – to season the lives of others with joy and comfort and peace and love. Amen.

– Jacqui G Jones © 2001

A Prayer in the Midst of Challenge and Competitiveness

God, we come to You in humility in the midst of our struggles. We cry out to You in this time of academic challenge and competitiveness and ask for Your help. You have said that You are a God of the impossible, and that all things can be done through You. At times this task before us seems impossible, so we call to You, asking You to work in us and through us, and to give us success in all that we do. We know that You have a plan for our lives, and we ask for Your strength to help us when the going gets tough. We also want to bring before You those who are seemingly in competition with us. We ask you to bless them also, and bring them success and prosperity in all that they do. We thank You for Your great love and faithfulness toward us. In Your name we pray. Amen.

– Heidi Pendergrast, Tertiary Students’ Christian Fellowship
Prayer of Thanksgiving

Dear God,
Thank You
What more can I say?
What more is there?
You know my heart’s cry
You know all the bad, all the hurt
You know all my lies, all my tears
You know me, You know all of us,
All about all of us
And You love us still
So I must thank You
I must and I so want to as well in every language
And above all that of my heart
That language which has no words
But has been touched and now is held
By You who are love. – Grace (2013)

A Homesickness Prayer

God, we cry out to you in this difficult time of separation from family and friends who are dear to us. We believe You have a plan for our lives, and that is why we are here, but the feelings of separation and homesickness are still hard, and we ask for Your strength to see us through this time. You have promised in Your word that you will be a father to the fatherless, and that is how we feel right now. You also promised that You are always watching us, keeping us from harm, and Your joy will be our strength. Lord we want to claim these promises now, in the name of Jesus Christ, Your Son. Keep us in the knowledge of Your love and the assurance that You will never leave us. We pray this in Jesus name. Amen.

– Heidi Pendergrast, Tertiary Students’ Christian Fellowship
Prayer for Healing

Lord God, I’m not as healthy as I was, and life is not quite so hectic as it was. Getting better is nice, but trying to get better is tiring. You yourself admitted that you’d heal whoever humbly and faithfully asked. Plus, I think I’ve had enough time to re-align myself with where You want my life to go. Please heal me, and let me know if I start getting too self-absorbed. It’s amazing how rest reveals what we really think, and what You’re saying. I know what You’re doing, and that it’s good. Thank you. Amen

– Kat McBeath (2006)

God, I struggle. Lots. With whether I will get what I want or not. And it’s not that you disagree or anything, but You do recognise the fragility of what I want and the permanence of me. You know what You’re doing. Thank You. Lead me. Amen.

– Kat McBeath (2006)
A Prayer for a Time of Transition

Dear God, we pray for all those who are filled with restlessness, knowing that change, which comes to all of creation with the passing seasons, will soon come to them.

We pray for all who fear change, preferring the safety of the predictable to the challenge of the unknown.

We pray for all who are embarking or preparing to embark on journeys, whether these be physical journeys or spiritual journeys. We ask that you guide them and protect them always.

We pray for all struggling with their sense of calling, especially those considering new vocations. We remember all refugees, uprooted from their homes.

May you guide and direct all graduating students, trying to discern a path in life.

May you comfort and give counsel to all recently bereaved and recently divorced people, and to all who have had to move away from loved ones.

Loving God, we commit all of these, both near and far from us, known and unknown to us, into your hands. It is in times of transition that we truly realise our need for your grace. Sustain and transform, through your love, all who encounter the winds of change.

– Kelly Johnson-Hill
An International Student’s Prayer of Transition

Heavenly Father,

When I feel distressed, help me to remember your comfort.
When I feel alone, reassure me of your presence.
When I feel like a stranger in another land,
help me to realise I am too just a foreigner on this earth.

When I feel like I cannot grasp the new culture that I am in,
refresh my heart and give me a daily understanding of your love
and grace so that I may love the people that You have brought
across my way. I thank you for the opportunity and the sacrifices
that were made for me to be here. I pray for your wisdom and
understanding in relating to these people and that You will bless
me with good friendship in my time here.

I pray that I may glorify your name by how I live and also in my
studies. That I will learn to share with the people here, not only
the testimony of Your work in my life but also the gift of a new
culture. Sharing with them different ways of seeing and doing things.

Help me never to forget your commandments and to meditate on
them at all times. For your word never changes regardless of the
situations I am in. Let it be my lamp unto my feet and the light
unto my path.

In Jesus’s precious and holy name, Amen.

– Joyce Hoo, Overseas Christian Fellowship
A Pacific Island Student’s Prayer

My Lord God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit, I praise you for the gift of my Pacific Island heritage; for the gift of Your Gospel to lead and guide me through my earthly pilgrimage; for the traditions, customs, dances, people and food from Your bounty. Thank You God for your many Blessings!

Help me Lord to acclimatise quickly to the Dunedin weather and to settle into the Otago tertiary scene as I begin my journey into academia. I have left the protection of my family, friends, and the island breeze, to build on the knowledge You have already gifted me. I entrust myself into Your care.

The road will be bumpy, please grant me the grace I need to face the challenges so I will always be moulded in Your glory.

I offer to You my successes and failures for You to bless them so I may continue to learn. Help me to be faithful to You Lord and my studies.

In times of need, give me the courage to seek You and others for their support and prayers.

Amen.

– Pesamino Tili
Prayer for Time of Departure

God of all being, I come to you in your glory
Seeking for your blessing, and comfort.
Take us into your care, under your wings of love
Take us safely to where you want us to be.

Help us Lord on our journey.
We know that you will not abandon us
Uplift our hearts to be closer to you all the time.

Lord Almighty we look upon you in hope
That you may grant us the knowledge
Of knowing you forever and ever.
In your glorious name we pray. Amen


Prayer of Hope

Living God, we pray in your Holy name
Please reassure us that you are everywhere and anywhere
We pray that you will pour down your blessings upon us
So that we may feel closer to you
We ask that you may fill us with hope and understanding

We come to you with open minds
In the hope that your Holy Spirit will be upon us
Till we meet again in your paradise
In your glorious name we pray. Amen.

A Student’s Prayer for Healing and for those who Mourn

Our most righteous Heavenly Father, we ask thee to comfort those who are sick and afflicted at this time. Bless them dear Lord that thy Holy Spirit may be poured out upon them and if it is thy will, that they may be healed. That they may know, our most righteous Heavenly Father, that through divine intervention they are saved and that thy Holy Spirit may prompt them to return to the fold.

We ask a blessing also, Lord, to be upon those who are in mourning that they may be comforted by thy Holy Spirit and that thy Holy Spirit may prompt them to remember that if they follow the Lord’s commandments they will indeed meet with their lost ones once again.

These things, Father, we thy children truly pray for this day, knowing Lord that we do love thee with all our heart, mind and strength. We humbly give this prayer in the name of thy blessed son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.

– Keith Tarsau, Former Tumuaki Te Roopu Maori
Gospel Reflection

You brought good news to the poor
Who are the poor …… in my city ?
…… in my country ?
…… in my world ?
How do my actions affect them ?

You gave food to the hungry
Are there any hungry …… in my city ?
…… in my country ?
…… in my world ?
How can I feed them ?

You empowered the unjustly rejected
Who have I rejected …… in my city ?
…… in my country ?
…… in my world ?
Am I able to embrace them ?

– Amanda, Student Christian Movement

‘To the poor God dare not appear except in the form of bread and the promise of work.’

– Mahatma Gandhi
Your Kingdom Come on Earth

God, I want to be a radical disciple of Jesus this year in Dunedin. If I pray for the poor in Church, let me choose in favour of the third world farmer when I stand in the supermarket deciding what coffee to buy.

If I pray for the Earth in Church, let me act for the Earth when I try to decide if I can be bothered to recycle my rubbish.

If I pray that more people will come to you, let my love and gentleness and integrity as a Christian be such a good advert for you that people might want to learn more.

Lord, help me be a radical disciple of Jesus.

– Esther, Student Christian Movement
The Student’s Psalm

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not flunk;
He keepeth me from lying down when I should be studying.
He leadeth me beside the water cooler for a study break;
He restores my faith in study guides.
He leads me to better study habits
For my grades’ sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of
   borderline grades,
I will not have a nervous breakdown,
For thou art with me;
My prayers and my friends, they comfort me.

Thou givest me the answers in moments of blankness;
Thou anointest my head with understanding,
My test paper runneth over with questions I recognise.

Surely passing grades and flying colours shall follow me
All the days of examinations;
And I shall not have to dwell in this University/College/Polytech
Forever!

Amen.

– Anonymous

Prayer from the Addicted

God, why do I do these things? I don’t want to stop; in fact, I want to continue forever happily ever after, but I do want to want to stop. Sorry. Help … !
Prayer to Love as Christ loves us

Lord, I acknowledge that I’m far from perfect
Lord, I pray that I will see people as you see them
To see beyond the what and see the who.
To understand them, to love them for who they are regardless of every life choice past and present.
I pray God that you bless me with the ability to love truly as Christ loves me. Amen.

Prayer for Peace of Mind for the Future

God, I do not understand what your plans for me are.
So I pray for peace of mind. I know that you have my best interests at heart. So I pray you guide my footsteps on the path of life you know I need to take and I pray for peace that surpasses all understanding. Amen.

Prayer for Needs

Lord, I know that often in life I always pray for my wants as opposed to my needs. So I pray for the needs of my life, on all levels, whether it be financial, emotional or spiritual health.
Lord, I pray you bless me with my needs even the ones I do not know about. Amen.

Angela Loosli (2013)
Prayer following the death of a friend

Lord, there are plenty of questions that I have. I wish I knew why death exists in the first place and I wish I knew why you took someone so dear to me?
If death can't be changed at least I wish you could have at least changed its timing.
Why does it have to happen now?

Why does someone so young have to die now?
I will never fully understand why this has happened, but I'm grateful for the time we did share.
Birthdays, anniversaries, moments like these will never be the same.
So many memories. I still smile when I think about these moments.
However sometimes I do cry, and in these times I remember

Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted
(Matthew 5 vs4)

Lord, my heart is not stone, I do cry and I am weak, but I can’t cry forever.
So I pray ask that you make me strong and that you give me the strength I need to move on.
My friend has gone but I know its not forever.
We will meet again.

Farai Katiyo (2013)
A New Zealand Christmas

the smell of cows
damp wool
warm sunlit hay
dewy grass
hot corrugated roof overhead
the first warm breeze of the day
within the hayshed
the joy of morning began
even the mice leapt, just for fun
and up in the macrocarpa
a trio of magpies warbled melodiously
the bright blue sky of New Zealand lay overhead
and all of creation stretched
from the back paddock
to the dog in the kennel
and there, in this place of great beauty
Christ came!

– Paul Armstrong
Classic Prayers

The Prayer of Saint Francis

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace;
where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek
to be consoled, as to console;
to be understood, as to understand;
to be loved, as to love;
for it is in giving that we receive,
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
and it is in dying, that we are born to eternal life. Amen.

– Saint Francis of Assisi

A Prayerful Hymn

Love divine, all loves excelling,
Joy of heaven to earth come down,
Fix in us Thy humble dwelling,
All thy faithful mercies crown.

Jesus, Thou art all compassion,
Pure, unbounded love Thou art;
Visit us with Thy salvation,
Enter every trembling heart

– Charles Wesley
The Serenity Prayer

O God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.

– Reinhold Niebuhr

The Lord’s Prayer in English and Maori

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
    your kingdom come,
    your will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours
now and forever.
    Amen.

E tō mātou Matua i te rangi, Kia tapu tōu ingoa.
    Kia tae mai tōu rangatiratanga.
    Kia meatia tāu e pai ai ki runga ki te whenua,
    kia rite anō ki tō te rangi.
Homai ki a mātou aiane i he tāro mā mātou mo tēnei rā.
    Murua o matou hara, me mātou hoki e muru nei
    i ō te hunga e hara ana ki a mātou.
    Aua hoki mātou e kawea kia whakawaia;
    engari whakaorangia mātou i te kino.
Nōu hoki te rangatiratanga, te kaha, me te korōria,
    Ake, ake, ake.
    Amine.
Let nothing disturb you,
Let nothing frighten you,
All things are passing away:
God never changes.
Patience obtains all things
Whoever has God lacks nothing;
God alone suffices.

— St. Teresa of Avila

Prayer Against Anxiety and Depression

Lord,
when all is darkness
and we feel our weakness and helplessness,
give us the sense of Your presence,
Your love, and Your strength.
Help us to have perfect trust
in Your protecting love.
Bless us with your strengthening power,
so that nothing may frighten or worry us,
for, living close to You,
we shall see Your hand,
Your purpose, Your will through all things.

— St. Ignatius of Loyola from The Notre Dame Book of Prayer
Prayers from other Faiths

A Hindu Prayer
Almighty God, creator and sustainer of all that is truly good, Destroyer of all evil; I bring myself, the family of mankind and this physical world in front of you, and experience your healing power of love. You, the perfect One, are spreading rays of harmony, peace and happiness over me and all the World. Your healing vision falls on us all, especially those in authority, inspiring us to seek only peace and unity and an end to all suffering.

A Muslim Prayer
Praise be to Allah, the Sustainer of the Universes, Most Gracious and Most Merciful. Master of the Day of Judgement. You alone we worship, and to You alone we pray for help. Guide us to the right path, the path of those whom You have loved, not the path of those who have received Your anger, not those who have gone astray.

A Jewish Prayer
We pray O God, for wisdom and will, for courage to do and to become, not only to gaze with helpless yearning as though we had no strength – so that our land may be safe, and our lives may be blessed.

A Sikh Prayer
In peace while up standing, In peace even when seated. This realisation makes me fearless. Our master, the Lord, is our Protector. He knows all that is in our hearts. I sleep without anxiety and wake up without anxiety.
A Buddhist Prayer

May we, living rightly, come to know the Truth, that, abiding in peace, we may bring peace to all beings; for everything is changing, nothing is our own, and not seeing clearly we perpetuate the disease of the world.

A Baha’i Prayer

O people of Justice! Be as brilliant as the light and as splendid as the fire that blazed in the Burning Bush. The brightness of the fire of your love will no doubt fuse and unify the contending peoples and kindreds of the earth.

General Prayers

A Prayer for Courage

O Lord, so many sick, so many starving,  
So many deprived, so many sad,  
So many bitter, so many fearful.  
When I look at them  
My heart fails.  
When I look at You  
I hope again.  
Help me to help You  
To reduce the world’s pain  
O God of infinite compassion  
O ceaseless energy of love.

– George Appleton
A Prayer for Healing

Jesus, I ask you to enter into my heart and touch those life experiences which need to be healed. You know me so much better than I know myself. Therefore bring your love to every corner of my heart. Whenever you discover the wounded child, touch her/him, console him/her and release her/him.

Walk back through my life to the very moment when I was conceived. Free me from those things which may have exerted a negative influence at that moment. Bless me as I was being formed within my mother’s womb, and remove all barriers to wholeness which may have affected me during those months of confinement.

Grant me a deep desire to want to be born, and heal any physical or emotional trauma which could have harmed me during the birth process. Thank you, Lord, for being there to receive me into your arms at the very moment of my birth, to welcome me onto the earth, and assure me that you would never fail me or desert me.

Jesus, I ask you to surround my infancy with your light and touch those memories which keep me from being free. If I needed more of a mother’s love, remind me that “there is a mother’s heart in the heart of God”. I ask her to hold me close, to rock me, to tell me stories and fill in those empty parts of me which need the comfort and warmth only a mother can give.

Perhaps the child inside feels deprived in the area of a father’s love. Lord let me be free to cry “Abba, Daddy” with every part of my being. If I needed more of a father’s love and security to assure me that I was wanted and loved very deeply, I ask you to hold me and let me feel your strong protective arms. Give me renewed confidence and courage to face the trials of the world because I know my father’s love will support me if I stumble and fall. Walk through my life, Lord, and comfort me when others were not kind. Heal the wounds of encounters which left me frightened, which caused me to retract into
myself and erect barriers to people. If I have felt lonely, abandoned and rejected by humanity, grant me, through your healing love, a new sense of worth as a person.

Jesus, I give myself to you, body, mind and spirit, and I thank you for making me whole. Thank you Lord.

– Henri Nouwen
Keep Me in Touch with My Dreams

O Lord, in the turbulence and the loneliness of my living from day to day and night to night, keep me in touch with my roots, so I will remember where I came from and with whom; keep me in touch with my feelings, so I will be more aware of who I really am and what it costs; keep me in touch with my mind so I will know who I am not and what that means; and keep me in touch with my dreams, so I will grow toward where I want to go and for whom.

O Lord, deliver me from the arrogance of assuming I know enough to judge others; deliver me from the timidity of presuming I don’t know enough to help others; deliver me from the illusion of claiming I have changed enough when I have only risked little, that, so liberated, I will make some of the days to come different.

O Lord, I ask not to be delivered from the tensions that wind me tight, but I do ask for a sense of direction in which to move once wound, a sense of humour about my disappointments, a sense of respect for the elegant puzzlement of being human, and a sense of gladness for your kingdom which comes in spite of my fretful pulling and tugging.

O Lord, nurture in me the song of a lover, the vision of a poet, the questions of a child, the boldness of a prophet, the courage of a disciple.

O Lord, it is said you created people because you love stories. Be with me as I live out my story.

– *Ted Loader*
A Prayer for Christian Unity

God, source of hope,
We praise you.
We thank you for your gift of salvation in Christ.
We thank you for all those, our brothers and sisters through the one baptism into Christ,
who call upon you as the source and giver of life.

We thank you for the hope of new life in Christ for ourselves, our churches, and the whole creation.

We thank you that you have made us one.

We long to live as one.
Forgive our divisions,
and empower us in our work to overcome them.

In the joy of the resurrection to eternal life we pray, Amen.
Three Prayers by John Hunt

1. A Celtic Kiwi Poem Prayer
   I’m tired, I’d like to run away.
   I’ve had enough of pain today.
   But I will stay and see it through,
   Yes, to myself I will be true.
   I can be the kauri tree,
   I have the love of God with me.

2. God’s Love
   O God, you have a parent’s love for me
   O God, you feel my pain and weep for me.
   O Christ, you faced the crucifixion pain.
   O Christ, you faced the worst and overcame.
   O Spirit, touch me with your healing peace.
   O Spirit, hold me, and the pain will cease.

3. A Shower Prayer
   As, O God, I take my morning shower,
   Let your love refresh my spirit,
   Let your presence warm my heart,
   Let me be your blessing to my neighbours through the day

   As, O God, I take my evening shower,
   let your love wash from my shoulders
   hurts and heaviness,
   let your cleansing presence bring me peace,
   let me rest contented in your care throughout
   this night.
Two prayers by Elena Poletti

1. A Candle in the Wind
A candle in the wind,
my hope in you flutters and flickers,
blown here and there
now smoky, now blazing high.

Shield me, hold me firm,
that the tiny glow,
so frail, so feeble,
may burn steady,
rising in constancy
to you, its own true light.
Amen.

2. Like the Kea and the Kiwi
Lord, at times you raise us high above the hills, like the kea, wings
flashing in the sun. At times you remind us that we are of the earth,
like the kiwi, searching in the dark. Help us always to know the joy
and comfort of your love, to work for change where we can, and to
remain faithful and hopeful in prayer.
Amen.
The Millennium Resolution
Let there be Respect for the Earth,
Peace for its people, Love in our lives,
Delight in the good, Forgiveness of past wrongs,
And from now on, A new start.

Prayers for Peace

The International Prayer for Peace
Lead me from death to life, from falsehood to truth.
Lead me from despair to hope, from fear to trust.
Lead me from hate to love, from war to peace.
Let peace fill our heart, our world, our universe.

Quaker Meeting
Present in meeting
Whole holy present
Here in meeting.
Present to Thy light.
Held in the arms of thy love.
Know, know that self
Which is both Thine and mine,
Present to that self
Which demands nothing.
Present in Thy presence.
My speech stammers softly,
It hides, it breaks.
Thy speech is clear,
It is gathered and gathers.
In meeting, I am gathered
In your arms, in your womb.

– Marvin Hubbard from The Journey (April 2012)
A Prayer for Peace

Gracious God of Peace,
Lovingly embrace, we pray,
Our deepest desires for peace
With your sustaining directivity.

Channel your Shalom and your power
Into the vacuum of our apathy.
Inspire us by your Spirit
To express your care.

Enable us to address the complexity
Of our reckless dash towards extinction.
Grant us the capacity to conquer the destructiveness
Within and around us, with your peace.

O Holy Source of Life,
Set us free to be instruments of your peace
That this land of yours and ours might rise
with Christ. Amen.

– Greg Hughson
A Prayer for Peace and Liberation

Lord, we pray

◆ For peace in the world and the liberation of all people,
◆ That the leaders of the Churches may tirelessly seek visible unity among Christians,
◆ For honesty in political life, for justice in society,
◆ For those who toil to earn their daily bread,
◆ For those without work or resources,
◆ For those with no family or home,
◆ For those who suffer from loneliness or abandonment,
◆ For those who are oppressed or maligned,
◆ For those who work with the poor, with foreigners and with the excluded.

Living God, however poor our prayer is, we search for you with confidence. And your love carves out a way forward through our hesitations and even through our doubts.

You have blessed us, living God; you bury our past in the heart of Christ and are going to take care of our future.

Amen.

– The Taizé Community, France
A Concluding Prayer

Now I say to you in conclusion,
life is hard,
at times as hard as crucible steel. (Mmm)
It has its bleak and difficult moments.
Like the ever-flowing waters of the river,
life has its moments of drought
and its moments of flood. (Yeah)
Like the ever-changing cycle of the seasons,
life has the soothing warmth of its summers
and the piercing chill of its winters. (Yeah)
But if one will hold on,
he will discover that God walks with him (Yeah. Well)
and that God is able (Yeah) to lift you
from the fatigue of despair
to the buoyancy of hope
and transform dark and desolate valleys
into sunlit paths of inner peace. (Mmm)

— Eulogy for the Martyred Children
Martin Luther King Jr., 1963
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Evening Prayer, from A New Zealand Prayer Book: He karakia Mihinare o Aotearoa, Collins.
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The Prayers from other faiths were obtained from the Week of Prayer for World Peace resource for 2001.
Useful Prayer Books and Books on Prayer


Hybels, Bill. Too busy Not to Pray – slowing down to be with God, IVP, 1988.


Recommended internet website access addresses:
http://www.dunedinmethodist.org.nz/archive/dvot.pers.htm
http://www.otago.ac.nz/chaplain
http://homepages.paradise.net.nz/calebvc/prayers.html
http://www.eriebenedictines.org/daily-prayer
http://www.worldprayers.org/
http://www.sacredspace.ie/
http://www.bbc.edu/bc_org/prs/stign/prayers.html
http://www.sgm.org.nz
http://www.dunedininterfaith.net.nz
http://www.pray-as-you-go.org
http://www.loyolapress.com
Bookshops

- **Manna Christian Stores**: 235 Moray Place, Dunedin. Phone 477 8819. Email: dunedin@manna.co.nz
- **Catholic Bookshop**: Moran Building, 8 The Octagon, Dunedin. Phone 477 6342.
- **Epworth Bookshop**: PO Box 6133, Wellington. Phone 0800 755 355. Email: sales@epworthbooks.org.nz Web: www.epworthbooks.org.nz
- **Pleroma Bookshop**: Freepost 609, Postshop, Waipukurau. Freephone 0508-988-988. Email: order@pleroma.org.nz
- **UBS – University Bookshop**: 378 Great King Street North, Dunedin. PO Box 6060, Dunedin North 9030. Email: ubs@unibooks.co.nz Website: www.unibooks.co.nz

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