

KEEPING WATCH



Prayers
for the
Families of
Military
Personnel

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INDEX

The prayers in this little booklet are topical. We encourage you to read through this index now (and to leaf through the booklet) to help you find the prayers you need to pray when you need to pray them.

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INTRODUCTION

The eyes of the Lord range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him. **2 CHRONICLES 16:9**

Our God is indeed “keeping watch” over us all. During this time when your loved one is on duty in the armed forces, you are probably already “keeping watch” with God, so to speak. This book is intended to help you in that holy watch. Our hope is that, by saying the prayers, reflecting on the hymns and reading the words of Scripture found in this book, your watch might find its focus in our watchful God—a God of great compassion, justice and might. Indeed, may God’s watchful eye bring strength and encouragement to you and your loved one in the military.

Please note that several of these prayers are of a personal (even an emotional) nature. As such, they required the use of personal pronouns (he/she, hers/his). Do not hesitate to adjust the wording to reflect you and your loved one—even to the point of inserting his or her name.

GOD IS KEEPING WATCH

(FROM PSALM 139)

O Lord, you have searched me and known me.
You know when I sit down and when I rise up;
you discern my thoughts from far away.

You search out my path and my lying down,
and are acquainted with all my ways.

Even before a word is on my tongue,

O Lord, you know it completely.

You hem me in, behind and before,
and lay your hand upon me.

If I ascend to heaven, you are there;
if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there.

If I take the wings of the morning
and settle at the farthest limits of the sea,
even there your hand shall lead me,
and your right hand shall hold me fast.

O CONQUEROR CHRIST

O Conqueror Christ, Satan is unseated, sin's stranglehold is released, the grave stands open, and death is dead! All undone by your undying love—a love made evident on the cross, and sealed in your glorious resurrection. You are Conqueror, indeed!

And you have made me, I am promised, MORE than a conqueror. For you have laid the spoils of your battle at my feet. Spoils as precious as forgiveness, joy and life eternal.

Now my loved one does battle, O Christ. And I do not. He defends me. And I stand to reap the spoils of his brave labor—spoils as rich as “freedom” and “safety.” Protect him, O Conqueror. And encourage me to see in his work a reflection of your own. Amen.

*Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ... No, in all these things **we are more than conquerors** through him who loved us.*

ROMANS 8:35, 37

ALWAYS FAITHFUL

O Lord, you have been faithful in your promises to help me. You have been faithful in sending your Son to save me. You have been faithful in caring for me ... and for my loved one, who now serves her country in the military. Guide her, O ever-faithful Christ, and help her to be always faithful in her commitment to you, to her country and to her fellow service people.

*In you, O LORD, I seek refuge; do not let me ever be put to shame; in your righteousness deliver me. Incline your ear to me; rescue me speedily. Be a rock of refuge for me, a strong fortress to save me. You are indeed my rock and my fortress; for your name's sake lead me and guide me, take me out of the net that is hidden for me, for you are my refuge. Into your hand I commit my spirit; you have redeemed me, **O Lord, faithful God.***

PSALM 31:1-5

PEACE

Prince of Peace, keep me ever mindful that peace is the goal. Make my loved one mindful of that goal ... and all military leaders ... and our nation. Bring to justice, I pray, all who threaten peace in this, your world. Do so by peaceful means when possible. And when military might is the means by which your good gift of peace must be spread, make it swift and humane. Bless even all military personnel, O Lord, under the great umbrella of such a grace that blesses all peacemakers. Bring to reality the vision of a serene world in which all service people are ready, at rest and at peace. Amen.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven. MATTHEW 5:9-12A

WORRY

I am worried, O Christ. Military action is escalating. My loved one is called to the fray. And my concern has turned to worry. Even fear.

First of all, calm me with the reassurance that worry does not equal a lack of faith. It is merely evidence of my great love and concern. I know that you displayed worry (even fear) the night you were betrayed. That night your sweat ran like blood. Your love led you to such worry. Yet your faith never flagged.

Secondly, protect my loved one by YOUR great might (rather than MY weak worry). He rests, I know, in your protective hands.

And finally, O Christ, soothe my troubled soul with calming words and sweet: “My peace I give to you.” Hold even my turbulent heart in your hands. Amen.

*Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. **Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.** JOHN 14:27*

PRIDE

It is more than the uniform, O God—or the straight back, the squared shoulders, the determined chin, the unvaried gait—that give me this strong sense of pride. I look at this loved one of mine and my heart feels large. I am so proud.

Proud that she STANDS for something. And that the something which she stands for is a special something: “One nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.”

It is something that is larger than her, larger than her small frame should be able to contain. Yet I see it reflected in her eyes.

Even as I see your strong love reflected in her eyes. For she is your child, as well—a CHRISTIAN soldier. She stands for YOU. Your Holy Spirit inhabits her.

It is something larger than her. And I am so proud. Amen.

As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.

GALATIANS 3:27



THIS PRAYER BOOKLET FOR FAMILIES OF THOSE IN THE MILITARY includes topical prayers to be prayed at any time or at specific times related to the service of their loved ones. Comforting words from Scripture and hymn verses are also included to help in difficult times as a constant reminder that God is always keeping watch over us.



This book, along with many other *Creative Communications for the Parish* products, is available on **amazon**kindle and **nook**
by Barnes & Noble

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