

## **Mothering Sunday**

Prayers and worship resources on the themes of 'Mothering Sunday' – updated March 2020



Mothering Sunday can be an especially difficult and painful time for some people, for many diverse reasons.

Our first two prayers are from a new book, *Gathering up the Crumbs*, being published in May. It is a collection of writing by women in Baptist ministry in the United Kingdom. Some women ministers are mothers, others are not – they write from their own experience and into their own contexts.

### **Mother God... by Sarah Bingham**

Can a mother forget her child –  
One she weaned from her breast?  
Even if she ever could  
I could not, however pressed.

How I have longed to draw you close –  
Hidden safe 'neath my wing  
Always, you say, 'I will not'  
And turn from love I would bring.

With arms outstretched I show my love –  
Still so many turn away.  
Yet I show my faithfulness  
Won't you turn to me today?

Always I am watching, waiting –  
Longing to pour out grace.  
Waiting still to see you turn  
To my welcoming embrace.

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### **Mothering Sunday Prayer by Claire Nicholls**

Loving God, we come today all on different parts of our journey. Some are searching, some are feeling lost, some are hurting, some are feeling loved. Wherever we are and whatever we feel, we come to you as our parent who understands, knows and walks with us.

As we journey with you, we hear sounds of joy as families meet and celebrate being family together, children tell mothers how beautifully wonderful they are, and mothers tell children how loved they are.

We also hear sounds of mourning. We pray for those for whom today is a reminder of loss. A reminder that Mum is not with them anymore. We pray for peace. We pray for comfort. We pray that you might pick them up and carry them today.

As we journey with you, we taste the sweetness of new life. We thank you for children; the way they smile, the way they brighten our lives. Help us to welcome children into our family, loving them unconditionally as you love them.

We also taste the bitterness of those for whom today is a sorrowful and painful reminder of their childlessness. We pray for those who have desperately wanted to be parents and have not been able to be. We pray that you might bring sweetness into their lives through the blessings of others. We pray for comfort. We pray that you might pick them up and carry them today.

As we journey with you, we see the beauty in family life. We see how you have blessed and cared for us. We remember where you have led us look forward to where is next. Help us to trust you as the future unravels before our eyes.

We also remember those for whom the future is not what they expected to see. We pray for those who have lost a child – who were looking forward with joy only to have dreams shattered. We pray for peace and comfort. We pray that you might pick them up and carry them today.

As we journey with you, we remember the smells of home. The smell of freshly baked cake, a delicious meal and the familiar. We thank you for what you have provided.

We also remember that not everyone has enough, that not everyone can experience the smells of home. We pray for those children who have no home, who have nobody they can call Mum or Dad. We pray for those who do not have enough food or money. We pray that you will provide. We pray that you will pick them up and carry them today.

As we journey today, we reach our hands to you. We know that where we put our hand in your hand we can rely on your guidance, your love, your arms that carry us when life is hard.

We also remember those we love who have not reached out their hands to you or have let go: Our children who do not know you, parents, partners, siblings, wider families and the people we care about deeply. We pray that they may reach out, take your hand and choose to follow.

Loving God, we come today all on different parts of our journey. Some are searching, some are feeling lost, some are hurting, some are feeling loved. Wherever we are and whatever we feel we come to you as our parent; the one who understands, knows and walks with us.

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Creator God, we worship you as one who loves us with a mother's love, and comforts us as a mother comforts her child.

In Christ we see you as the vulnerable child of a teenage mother: loved and treasured, nurtured and protected, fed and clothed.

And so we thank you for the calling of motherhood, and pray that you would encourage all mothers as they live out their calling. We thank you for the memories they create in our hearts and the selfless devotion they offer. We thank you also for the commitment they show, the compassion they feel and the comfort they bring.

Today we pray for those countless mothers in our world who cannot care for their family as they would wish. For those who feel defeated in the call to motherhood. We think of those who have been unable to provide their children with food, and watch helplessly as poverty and malnutrition take their toll.

We think of those who have been unable to protect their children from the ravages of violence and war.

We think of those who have failed to provide a stable home, and must take to the road to live as refugees for the sake of their children's safety.

Lord we praise you for the unspeakable love that so often flows from mothers even in these darkest of situations, because it points us to the love you show to us.

Move us we pray, to appreciate and support the mothers who live in our home or town, as well as to appreciate and support those who struggle in dangerous, poverty stricken and hungry places. Move us to action, that we might truly be committed to seeing your heavenly love ever-shining through the faces of all you have appointed to represent you as mothers.

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## For Families

God, father and mother of us all,  
we pray for families in their joy.  
Where parents are loving and children are lively;  
where home is comfortable and jobs are secure,  
we pray that our joy may be hallowed by thanksgiving  
and our happiness increased by sharing it.  
Amid the blessings you send,  
keep us mindful of you,  
the one who sends them.

Son of God, Saviour of all, joy and sword for Mary's heart,  
we pray for families in their sorrow.  
Where grief has come for a loved one,  
or where love is no more;  
where jobs or home are lost or health has failed;  
where neighbours or relatives make trouble  
and children are wayward;  
where one or another is left coping  
with more than they bargained for,  
and nobody laughs, or sings.  
Lord Jesus, in our desert and our Gethsemane,  
give us your grace of strength and peace.

Holy Spirit of unity, wisdom and love,  
we pray for families in their growing.  
Reconcile us with change in one another,  
and in ourselves.  
Teach us that love need not be unaltering  
in order to be constant.  
Show us joy as a baby's trust  
becomes an adolescent's questioning,  
the beauty of strong hands grown waxen-veined in age.  
Strengthen our relationships by contradiction and temper,  
as well as by acquiescence and peace.  
Creator Spirit, help us grow towards mature humanity  
measured by nothing less than the full stature of Christ.

Father, Son and Holy Spirit,  
providence, grace and love:  
fit our families for the life of the heavenly household,  
and for the service of humanity.  
O Lord our God, make your way in our hearts  
and be glorified  
in the manner of our life together.

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