

Suggested Prayers

For

Use with Victims of Disaster

The following prayers might be helpful when working with victims of a disaster. However, remember that it is preferable to use impromptu, heartfelt prayers that are tailored to each individual in these situations. These prayers might be guides or they might be used in a communal setting or during a worship service. Some editing from the original versions has been made. Feel free to adapt to the present circumstances as needed. Often 'this disaster' or similar words are used; it would be desirable to substitute the current conditions and locations instead. These prayers are only a sample of the many available from other sources.

Particularly for Responders to a Disaster

During a catastrophe, for volunteers beginning service

Almighty God, merciful Father, your thoughts are not our thoughts, and your ways are not our ways. Keep all of us and all who have been afflicted by this calamity from despair and do not let our faith be destroyed by the hopelessness we encounter. Sustain and comfort us. Direct all our efforts to attend the injured, console the bereaved, and protect the helpless. Deliver any who are still in danger and bring hope and healing that we may find relief and restoration. Through Jesus Christ, your Son and our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

For Rescue Workers

Merciful Father, we commend to your loving keeping all who work to bring rescue and relief especially the firefighter, police, paramedics, medical personnel, and volunteers, all who are helping. Give them courage in danger, skill in difficulty, and compassion in service. Sustain them with bodily strength and calmness of mind that they may perform their work to the well-being of those in need so that lives may be saved and communities restored. Amen.

Prayers for use with those affected by the disaster

Prayer in times of trouble

God of wind and water, stillness and storm, your spirit sweeps over the surface of the sea. Give us faith to seek you in times of trouble. Reach out your hand to us when we are sinking so that we may believe and worship you; through Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Amen.

Time of Community Mourning

God our creator, through those who are providing care we enjoy all goodness and life. Turn our eyes to your mercy in this time of confusion and loss. Comfort those who mourn the loss of loved ones because of this disaster. Shine your light on those whose only companion is darkness. Through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Time of National Distress

Eternal God, amid all the turmoil and changes of this world your love is steadfast and your strength never fails. In this time of danger and trouble, be to us a sure guardian. Guide the leaders with your wisdom. Comfort those in distress. Grant courage and hope to face the future. Through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

Prayer

Loving Lord, we come to you trusting in your mercy and knowing that your steadfast love endures forever. Look with mercy on those who have been harmed or displaced by this disaster. Grant them your strength to meet the days ahead. Allow those who are affected to experience your peace which passes all understanding and new hope in the resurrection. Move in those who are able to give aid, that we may be your hands and heart on the earth. Be with all who offer your assistance; may your Spirit uphold them. To you face the challenges ahead. Give us the assurance of your presence even in this time so that we can cling to your promise of hope and life shown us through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, Amen.

Prayer after disaster

Merciful God, hear our cry for your mercy in the wake of this disaster. Reveal your presence in the midst of our suffering. Help us to trust in your promises of hope and life so that desperation and grief do not overtake us. Come quickly to our aid that we may know peace and joy again. Strengthen us in this time of trial with the assurance of hope that we know in the death and resurrection of your Son. Amen.

Prayer in the midst of natural disasters

Merciful God, when the chaos of natural disaster threatens to overtake us, awaken our faith to know the power of your peace. Deliver us from our fear and ease our anxiety. Help us to endure the time of uncertainty and give us strength to face the challenges ahead. Give us the assurance of your presence even in this time so that we can cling to your promise of hope and life shown to us. Amen.

Prayers for use by those individuals and congregations outside the disaster area

Disaster Prayer

O God, where hearts are fearful and constricted, grant courage and hope. Where anxiety is infectious and widening, grant imagination and resistance. Where distrust twists our thinking, grant healing and illumination. Where spirits are daunted and weakened, grant soaring wings and strengthened dreams. All these things we ask in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

Prayer

O God, we give you thanks for the revelation of your creative power in our world. Reveal your love and hope in the midst of the suffering and chaos those individuals in the affected area are experiencing. Give strength and perseverance to those who offer aid and comfort. Move us with compassion to shoulder the burden of crisis with all your children. Remind us to continue our prayers long after the shock of the original disaster has passed. Amen.

Prayer

O God, you bring good news to those who are despairing. Help us to hear the cries of those who are enduring trials and suffering. Enliven all your children to respond with compassion, aid, and your care so all may know the hope of your grace. Fill us with the spirit of your love. Amen.

Prayer

God of renewing love, sustain those who continue to suffer and rebuild in the aftermath of this disaster. Bring hope in the midst of despair. Grant patience and endurance to those who bring aid and assistance. In the name of your Son, Jesus Christ. Amen

Prayer for those Suffering

Loving God, in the communion of Christ, we are joined with the trials and sufferings of all. Be with those who endure the effects of this disaster. Protect those in the path of danger. Open the pathway of evacuation. Help loved ones to find one another in the chaos. Provide assistance to those who need help. Ease the fears of all and make your presence known in the stillness of your peace, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

Prayer after Disaster

Gracious God, your word of peace stills the storms that rage in our world. Bring hope to all persons and places that know devastation in the calm following the winds and rains of Hurricane Irene. Bring comfort to those who grieve the loss of loved ones and property. Let your love be known through those who work to bring order to the chaos. Help us to shoulder the burden of suffering and make us bearers of hope that can be found in you, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.