

A parent's prayer: The Lord is my Shepherd

Psalm 23 The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

Lord, help me to be a good shepherd to my flock. Give me the patience to listen and the right words to help support them.

Also, please Lord, give me the strength to herd them out of the door on time and not sigh too loudly when someone needs the toilet when we're already in the car.

² He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

Lord, help me to find you in the quiet parts of the day ... although they may be few and far between. Help me to find you at 3am in the nursery rocking chair, to find peace within myself when I need it the most. And help me to find that feeling of calm as I walk sleeping children along the sea wall, past the slack water, neither coming nor going. Help me to find that peace in the in-between.

Also, please Lord, when you do ask me to lie down in green pastures and find animals in the clouds ... please help me stay awake, snoring can ruin the moment.

³ He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

Lord, help me to remember to take time to let you restore my soul. In brisk, breezy walks with mum along the sea wall when the children are in bed, watching the sun set over the trees. Lighten my soul and help guide me to where I am needed the most to do your work. Help me to find a smile for a stranger and a kind word for those who need it.

Also, please Lord, when the path of unrighteousness is strewn with dog mess ... please help me avoid rolling the pram through it.

⁴Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

Lord, we have been through dark times recently. We have struggled with our emotions, with loneliness, sadness, loss and fear. The shadow of the Corona Virus has left its indelible mark upon us and has shut our churches and our communities, making it so difficult to be present to comfort each other. Lord, help our community not to fear, to grow and to rise from the ashes of this time like a phoenix, beautiful and strong and wiser for it.

Also, please Lord, support our children in this uncertain and awkward time. Where, as parents, we can't always find the words to explain why the 'nasty jumpy bug' means we can't see those we love, help us to give comfort and help there to be no fear in our little one's eyes. Help them to transition out of lock down and help them to remember from this time, only the joy of time spent playing, building train tracks and sharing lazy pyjama days.

⁵Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

Lord, help us to be thankful for all that we have. For our health, our home and for the love we receive from you. Fill our hearts so they too run over with joy and love to be shared with all (from a social distance).

Also, please Lord, when you do prepare the table, please can you also prepare the children to eat what's on it ... even if they're disappointed that the intricate meal that's been prepared isn't chips!

⁶Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

Lord, help me to remember that my children will grow, but that your love for me and for them, will be with us all for all the days of our lives. Help me to set a strong foundation in faith for them so that, even if they walk along your path without seeing you, you are holding their hand when I am not able to.

Also, please Lord, if we dwell in your house, do I still have to Hoover?

Praise be to you Lord, you are our strength, our rock and our redeemer.
Through you we have the strength to do all things.

Peace be with us all.

Alice Harvey