

December 2021 Prayer and Praise

As we enter into this season of advent, I recognize the need in my own life to pause and reflect on the way God uses *waiting* in my life. Let me also be honest and say, "I hate waiting." I don't like waiting in the drive-through lane of my favorite coffee shop. I find myself taking deep breaths as I sit waiting for a red light or in traffic. I will never understand why my husband says I need to wait for his homemade banana bread to cool. It's no wonder I'm frequently find myself thinking about the next thing on my list or experience difficulty in being present in the moment.



Maybe you feel you're in a time of waiting as well. Waiting to complete clinicals and graduate, waiting for the pandemic to end, waiting for additional staff that's needed, waiting for the weariness to be over. These past two years have been difficult for us as nurses and as individuals in so many ways.

As much as I don't like to wait, I also recognize God uses waiting in our lives. We see waiting emphasized again and again throughout scripture. Hebrews 11 names great men and women of faith who waited believing in what was promised, but not yet seen. Scripture tells us they died with the hope of what was yet to come.

The season of advent is also a story of waiting. The Jewish people waited centuries for the Messiah to come. Zachariah waited months to speak again while his wife, Elizabeth, was pregnant with their son, John. Mary waited not knowing if Joseph would accept her and still continued to be obedient to what God was asking of her.

In learning how to wait, I've come to recognize how manipulative the enemy can be. When I am impatient, the enemy accuses me of not living up to my faith. When I struggle to stay present in a situation, I hear I'll never be able to succeed at being fully present. There's also the loud, critical voice inside my own head for the emotions that can accompany both these polarities.

God is patiently showing me I am safe to bring all my emotions to him. He welcomes me to enter into his presence with all the chaos of my life. He does not expect me to arrive all cleaned up. He desires relationship and conversation with me. This is what he wants for each of us as his sons and daughters...deep abiding relationship with him.

I saw this truth as a friend encouraged me to read Psalm 138 which was written by the shepherd king, David:

- ¹ I give you thanks, O LORD, with my whole heart;
before the gods I sing your praise;
- ² I bow down toward your holy temple
and give thanks to your name for your steadfast love and your faithfulness,
for you have exalted above all things
your name and your word.^[a]
- ³ On the day I called, you answered me;
my strength of soul you increased.^[b]
- ⁴ All the kings of the earth shall give you thanks, O LORD,
for they have heard the words of your mouth,
- ⁵ and they shall sing of the ways of the LORD,
for great is the glory of the LORD.
- ⁶ For though the LORD is high, he regards the lowly,
but the haughty he knows from afar.
- ⁷ Though I walk in the midst of trouble,
you preserve my life;
you stretch out your hand against the wrath of my enemies,
and your right hand delivers me.
- ⁸ ***The LORD will fulfill his purpose for me;
your steadfast love, O LORD, endures forever.
Do not forsake the work of your hands.***

In this psalm, David praises God for who he is and what he will do – both now and in the future. David acknowledges and recognizes the hope we each have in personal relationship with God. And then I read the last sentence of verse 8, “Do not forsake the work of your hands.”

David brings all that he is to God – the depth of his knowledge of who God is, his faith in God, and his emotions (including emotions of fear and uncertainty). This truth is supporting me in new ways as my husband and I walk his journey of dementia together. Waiting has taken on new meaning for us. Recognizing I don’t have to compartmentalize or minimize who I am in the challenges I face gives me freedom to grieve and to walk in joy at the same time.

As you wait in whatever situation you’re facing right now, know that you are not alone. God desires desperately to have relationship with you. It’s why he sent his Son. God wants to be present with you in your waiting. We serve a God of hope – hope for that which we cannot yet see but is true to all that he is.

Shalom.

Christy Secor RN, DNP, CDWF, NCF Professional Ministries Director

References:

Holy Bible, English Standard Version. (2001). Crossway.

December Prayer Calendar

- December 1 – God, in this season of Advent and waiting, we recognize you are with us. You are our only hope. We believe, oh God; help our unbelief.
- December 2 – We praise God for the safe delivery of a son to Jessica Harper, our Communications and Marketing Manager, and her husband, Trey. Pray as they adjust and love as a family of five.
- December 3 – We pray for the students, faculty, and administrators of Carson Newman University in Jefferson City, Tennessee as they grieve the loss of their nursing lab and classrooms to a recent fire. We pray for wisdom as decisions are made for the rest of the semester and academic year. We ask that this loss would provide opportunities for deeper connection, courage, and growth within their nursing program.
- December 4 – Pray for Student Ministries Director, Jen Wojtysiak, as she returns from sabbatical and jumps back into full time ministry. Ask God to bless her family in this adjustment and to give Jen wisdom and strength as she reengages.
- December 5 – Today is the second Sunday of Advent. We remember the faith of those who have gone before us and the faith of a young girl who answered God's call on her life saying, "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word" (Luke 1: 38).
- December 6 – Intercede for NCF's publishing partner, Wolters Kluwer | Lippincott Williams & Wilkins, as they struggle to maintain excellence in publishing their over 300 journals (including *JCM*) in the midst of COVID and personnel and supply shortages. Pray that NCF can be salt and light for Christ as we work with LWW.
- December 7 – We pray for those who are serving at the front lines as the Omicron variant begins to spread and so many in healthcare are weary. We ask God to provide strength, wisdom, and leadership for those in healthcare who serve at the bedside and for others who are developing responses and policies for patients, residents, and their staff.
- December 8 – The marketing team appreciates prayer as we ask God to give direction to the team's planning and understanding of how to expand the reach of NCF to practicing nurses, students, and faculty nationwide.
- December 9 – Pray for NCF staff members who are experiencing hard challenges. Ask God to help staff keep their eyes on him.
- December 10 – Supporting and strengthening the ministry of faith community nurses is one of the objectives of the *Journal of Christian Nursing*. Ask God to prompt FCNs to submit more articles toward this purpose.
- December 11 – We praise God for the incredible new editorial board that has been formed for the *Journal of Christian Nursing* and for the new process that has been developed where they will be more involved and engaged than the previous advisory board model.
- December 12 – We celebrate the third Sunday of Advent and the joy the shepherds felt as a host of angels announced the birth of Jesus declaring, "I bring you good

news of great joy that will be for all the people” (Luke 2:10b). God chose to announce the birth of his Son to the most lowly. His joy is for all people!

- December 13 – Pray for God’s blessing, protection, and direction for Christy Secor, NCF’s Professional Ministries Director, and Whitney Kvistad, an ICU nurse and clinical instructor, as they lead a national webinar tonight on “The Spiritual Discipline of Lament – Drawing Closer to God Through the Difficulties We Face.” May God work and use what is shared to minister to the hearts and lives of those who are hurting.
- December 14 – Thank the Lord for committed Christian nurse faculty members committed to missions like Rebecca Meyer at Cal Baptist. Rebecca has faithfully served the Health for All Nations team that has produced the Christian Global Health in Perspective course, presented workshops at the Global Missions Healthcare conference, and has agreed to represent nursing on the Medical Education International Advisory Committee. We are grateful for her representation of nursing at the healthcare missions table.
- December 15 – We pray and ask God for clear communication across platforms for the *Journal of Christian Nursing* staff and their publisher. Many of these platforms are not voice which can create challenges.
- December 16 – Praise God for providing for NCF the first half of the 2021-2022 fiscal year. Ask him to bring in all that is needed by December 31 and to continue to lead and bless each staff member as they faithfully serve and seek new ministry partners in 2022.
- December 17 – We pray for the transition of the new editorial board members of the *Journal of Christian Nursing* who start officially in January 2022. We ask for God to make any rough places smooth and for members to be invested in the process.
- December 18 – We lift up our nurse group leaders and ask God to meet the personal challenges and losses many are experiencing. May God use them to build the kingdom of God and the profession of nursing.
- December 19 – Today is the fourth Sunday of Advent and we pause to acknowledge the peace we long for in our lives. Peace that is found only in the Prince of Peace. A peace which passes all understanding (Philippians 4: 7a).
- December 20 – Pray that nursing students and nurse faculty are able to find rest and refreshment during their winter break and that through it they gain a renewed sense of calling.
- December 21 – Ask Jesus to keep encouraging nurses in the critical work we do of caring for people in His name.
- December 22 – Pray for God’s continuing direction and leading for the Twin Cities NCF group as they prepare for their next webinar in February in the Spiritual Care for Nurses series.
- December 23 – Praise God for a wonderful Global Missions Health Conference in Louisville, Kentucky last month. We especially thank him for the many participants who are seeking to serve the Lord through their chosen healthcare professions.
- December 24 – On this Christmas Eve, we pause to reflect on the journey of Mary and Joseph as they arrived in Bethlehem. They traveled dusty streets not finding a

place to rest. A stable would be the answer to the respite they sought as Mary began her labor. God, help us to trust in your answers and provision for us...even when it does not make sense. You have a plan and purpose for us.

- December 25 – The child is born! The waiting is over! We celebrate the precious gift of your Son, Jesus Christ, who was born to give his life for us so that we may live. May his love be present in all that we say and do as we minister to those in our care.
- December 26 – We ask God to lead our East Texas NCF group as they prepare for their April retreat and conference.
- December 27 – We praise God for the committed journal editorial staff and seek his wisdom in continuing to use our skills and diverse work styles to work effectively with peer reviewers and our publisher to produce issues that glorify him and empower nurses and students to integrate their faith with their practice.
- December 28 – We give praise for each of our nurse group leaders who pray and give of their time, love, and expertise for the nurses they serve. We ask God to bless and to grow our nurse groups. May we listen to God's leading and guidance as many are beginning outreaches in January.
- December 29 – Please pray for students who are preparing to start nursing school in January. That they have peace and confidence as they look forward to their new journey that God has called them to.
- December 30 – We praise God and pray for newer members of our *Journal of Christian Nursing* editorial staff. We ask God to bless these new contributing editors as they continue being oriented to their duties with the journal. We are grateful for the wonderful staff/team God has brought together.
- December 31 – As we look at the beginning of a new year, we lean on God who is our rock and refuge. We pray we would grow in love for one another. We trust and ask God to build and create something new in our profession that honors the calling he has placed on our lives as nurses.