

## A PRAYER FOR MENTAL HEALTH

This prayer is intended to reveal Christ's presence within the pain and difficulty we all experience. Then, out of the state of sympathy, we can pray more fully for those who struggle with profoundly damaging levels of mental illness. May we pray with compassion and with enduring sympathy.

**The Lord is my shepherd, there is nothing I shall want.**

Although sometimes we feel we lack everything. Sometimes we cannot see what you have given us through the lie of what has been taken away. Show us how to see your blessing. Show us how to see your provision when the world teaches us an economy of fear and scarcity.

*The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged.*

**He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside quiet waters, he restores my soul.**

Refresh us, Lord. Let the raging waters be quiet. Let dry pastures be watered. Let us lie down and rest without fear.

*Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.*

**He guides me in right paths for his name's sake.**

We so often turn from your path - believing lies about ourselves, about others, about you; taking on burdens that are not ours to bear; struggling to entrust you with ourselves, our family, our friends, and our circumstances. Guide us along your path of trust and contentment.

*Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.*

**Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me;**

Although we sometimes feel abandoned, you have not left us alone. You have not left us alone with our depression, with our sorrow, our pain, our illness, our despair, our fear, our waiting. You have not left us alone with the past wrongs that have been done to us, with the derision and misunderstanding of others. You have not left us alone. You are with us.

*Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because the valley in which you walk, for the Lord Your God goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you.*

**Your rod and your staff, they comfort me.**

With your rod, you protect us from ourselves. With your staff, you protect us from harm of others. Your truth comforts us, as we find our identity wholly and firmly locked up in you.

*Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.*

**You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies.**

Although we are surrounded by people who do not understand the weight we bear, the struggles we face, we gather to eat at your table. Although we suffer ignorant comments, laughter and sometimes shame - we are worthy to eat at your table. We can eat our fill - even feast - because you have not despised us. You have made us welcome.

*Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the Lord your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you.*

**You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.**

You have made us worthy. You have made us chosen. You accept us with all our flaws, with all our illness and frailty, with all our failings. You have anointed us, us, to serve with you - our cup overflows with joy.

*The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged.*

**Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord my whole life long.**

Surely goodness and love will follow us. Surely goodness and love will chase us down - despite ourselves, despite others, despite our circumstances - goodness and love, by the power and grace of your Spirit, have found us. And will never let us go. Forever. In health, in strength, in love, in mercy. Forever.

*The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you wherever you go; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Amen*

*by Stacey Gleddiesmith*