

Prayer for Mother and Baby

By Ruth Hanley



If you recently gave birth and are feeling depressed, anxious, angry, isolated, or just “not yourself,” pausing for a time of breath prayer may be a starting point to feeling whole again. Keep in mind that many new mothers suffer from some form of postpartum depression, which is temporary and treatable. Many resources are available to help (see last page).

For

Young Family

Season

Winter

Needed

Votive candle in a holder, matches or lighter



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Prepare in Advance

- Do this prayer activity when your child is sleeping in your arms. Find a comfortable spot where the baby can nap securely in your arms or on your chest.
- Place the candle near you in a safe place and light it.

Activity Plan

1. Take a deep breath in through your nose and out through your mouth. Think of how the whole universe was stirred into being by God's breath. Part of that universe is in you. Meditate on your connection to God, the universe, and your baby. Feel the invisible cords that connect you. As you continue to breathe, blow any negative thoughts out and away. They have no power over you.
2. As you breathe, notice how your baby is calmed by the expansion and contraction of your chest. If you are rocking, notice how your child is affected by this calming motion. Notice your heartbeat and the baby's heartbeat, pumping life through your veins—separate, but parallel, in a peaceful embrace.
3. If it feels difficult to pray, remember Romans 8:26: “Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.” Trust that God is with you, carrying you and even praying for you when you feel too weak to pray for yourself.
4. As you whisper each of the lines below, breathe in slowly through your nose as you read the first part and breathe out slowly through your mouth as you read the second part.

Holy God, ~ hold me close.

I am enough. ~ I am your child.

You are light within me, ~ overcoming the darkness

My child is your gift to this world. ~ I am your gift to this world.

You are here, ~ blessing us.

Come Holy Spirit, come. ~ Grant me your peace.

Come Holy Spirit, come. ~ Grant me your guidance.

Come Holy Spirit, come. ~ Dwell within me and give me strength.

I am not alone. ~ God is here.

5. After you pray, close your eyes and rest in God's peace.



Information and Resources on Postpartum Depression

Having a baby is a major life change for any woman and her family. One in eight new mothers suffer through times of postpartum depression. Perinatal Mood Disorders (PMD, also known as postpartum depression) are temporary and treatable.

Perinatal Mood Disorder can affect any woman who is:

- Pregnant.
- Has recently had a baby.
- Has ended a pregnancy.
- Has miscarried.
- Has recently stopped breastfeeding.

If you have PMD or are trying to decide if you have PMD, talk with your doctor about this. Reach out to the resources available to you. You are not alone and this depression is not your fault. Conversations with a therapist, other parents, a friend, family member, or trusted pastor may also help. Most hospitals and many OB/GYNs have information about local parenting support groups. Some sponsor support groups for PMD.

Here are some resources to start you on your way to finding support:

Books

- *This Isn't What I Expected: Recognizing and Recovering from Depression and Anxiety after Childbirth*, by Karen Kleinman
- *Down Came the Rain*, by Brooke Shields
- *The Mother to Mother Postpartum Depression Support Book*, by Sandra Poultin
- *Women's Moods: What Every Woman Should Know About Hormones, the Brain and Emotional Health*, by Sichel and Driscoll
- *Misconceptions: Truth, Lies and the Unexpected on the Journey to Motherhood*, by Naomi Wolf

Web Resources

- [Postpartum Support International](#): Resources and information about Perinatal Mood Disorders.
- [Postpartum Depression on WebMD](#): General information on Perinatal Mood Disorders.
- [Postpartum Dads: Helping families overcome PPD](#): Supporting fathers through their partners' Perinatal Mood Disorder.
- [Postpartum Progress: Together, Stronger](#): A support blog written by women who have gone through a Perinatal Mood Disorder.

