

On-the-Job Prayers



101 Reflections and Prayers
for Christians in Every Occupation

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PUBLICATIONS

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Hidden Saints

It is a timely coincidence that Christianity is seeking to be more relevant to the world of business when at the same time the American marketplace desires to reassess the meaning of work. At the same time that U.S. society is interested in humanizing the workplace in order to stay competitive and productive, the Christian community is struggling with its desire to upgrade the worldly life of its hidden saints—people at work in the world. Both America and Christianity are now beginning to recognize that work is a fundamental dimension of human existence and that work is a key to the values of the human enterprise.

—William Droel, *The Spirituality of Work*



WORKPLACE PRAYER

Merciful God, I've never thought of myself as a hidden saint—or any other kind of saint, for that matter. But I understand that, as a Christian, I have something distinctive to contribute to my workplace. Help me to model integrity, respect for all kinds of people, and a life-work balance. Help me to connect my faith with what people see of me and my work. Strengthen my sense that my work is a calling from you. Amen.

—WDT

On-the-Job Prayer

1



Lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love.

—Ephesians 4:1b-2

On-the-Job Prayer

2



*For what will it
profit them to gain
the whole world and
forfeit their life?*

—Mark 8:36

What Is a Job?

Jobs are what people do for a living, many of them for eight hours a day, five days a week, minus vacations, for most of their lives. It is tragic to think how few of them have their hearts in it. They work mainly for the purpose of making money enough to enjoy their moments of not working. If not working is the chief pleasure they have, you wonder if they wouldn't do better just to devote themselves to that from the start. They would probably end up in breadlines or begging, but, even so, the chances are that they would be happier than they would be pulling down a good salary as a bank teller or a dental technician or a supermarket bagger and hating every minute of it.

“What do people gain from all the toil at which they toil under the sun?” asks the Preacher (Ecclesiastes 1:3). If people are in it only for the money, the money is all they gain, and when they finally retire, they may well ask themselves if it was worth giving most of their lives for. If they're doing it for its own sake—if they enjoy doing it and the world needs it done—it may very possibly help to gain them their own souls.

—Frederick Buechner, *Beyond Words*



WORKPLACE PRAYER

God of My Heart, you know my thoughts about my job today. You know the things that bore me, that frustrate me, that challenge me, that delight me. Help me to see your deeper purpose. I pray today especially for the people in my workplace whose jobs seem meaningless to them—and for the times when my own work seems to lack purpose. I pray for those whose jobs are humdrum, monotonous or poorly paid. Give hope to those who can only see themselves spending their working lives at the bottom of the ladder. Remind me that you value every worker I will encounter today. Give me your heart for what I do and your joy in the doing. Amen.

—WDT

Escaping the Rat Race

“The problem with the rat race is that even if you win, you’re still a rat,” jokes comedienne Lily Tomlin. And the problem with being a rat at work is that it tends to make your home into a rat hole. Work is an important element of family life, whether it is paid work outside or inside the home, unpaid work at home, or volunteer work at church or in community or civic organizations. If our work is viewed as a necessary evil, a burden to be borne, a “daily grind,” then it cannot help but have a negative impact on family life. If mother or father and/or children detest the work, view it as something that detracts from family life, and complain about it all the time, then this attitude is going to permeate family life as well. Conversely, if family members are workaholics or consider their work as the really important part of life, then this too can destroy family life. On the other hand, if work is spiritual, that is, if it is conducted in a balanced manner in line with our deepest convictions and values, then work itself can provide the foundation and even enhance the spirituality of family life.

—Gregory F. A. Pierce, *Spirituality at Work*



WORKPLACE PRAYER

Giver and Sustainer, you know how hard it is to strike a balance between the time and energy I give to my work and what I seem to have left to give to my family and friends. I need your help to acknowledge the limits of my physical, emotional and spiritual resources, and to use them well in both places. Help me to be aware of your presence and power in my work life and in my life beyond the job. You are the one God, and I am one person made in your image. By your Spirit show me how to experience the wholeness of life lived by your Spirit, lived in your love. May my whole life be sustained by you and used by you to make the world a better place. Amen.

—WDT

On-the-Job Prayer

3



Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For it is on him that God the Father has set his seal.

—John 6:27

On-the-Job Prayer

4



*I keep the Lord
always before me;
because he is at my
right hand, I shall not
be moved. Therefore
my heart is glad,
and my soul rejoices;
my body also rests
secure.... You show
me the path of life.
In your presence
there is fullness of
joy; in your right
hand are pleasures
forevermore.*

—Psalm 16:8-9,11

A Calming Presence

May you trust God that you are exactly where you are meant to be.
May you not forget the infinite possibilities that are born of faith.

May you use the gifts that you have received
and pass on the greatest of those gifts
—the love that has been given to you.

May you be content, knowing that you are a child of God,
God be in your sitting down, your rising up, your coming and your
going.

Let God's presence settle into your bones,
and cherish the freedom to praise God
with your lips, your life, and especially your work.

Above all, may God give you the openness to hear his voice
and to become his presence
in that place to which you have been called.

—Author unknown



WORKPLACE PRAYER

O God, the unseen but real presence in this world, you are here in my place of work just as surely as I am. Thank you for your promise to be with me always. Help me to become increasingly aware that, in the midst of all that goes on here, I am not alone, nor am I ever lacking the love you provide so freely. Let your presence settle into my bones, your joy in my body, your love in my heart. Today and every day may I become your loving presence to those with whom I work. Amen.

—Author unknown

The Workers' Twenty-Third Psalm

The Lord is my real boss, and I shall not want.
He gives me peace when chaos is all around me.
He gently reminds me to pray and do all things without murmuring
and complaining.
He reminds me that he is my source (and not my job).
He restores my sanity every day and guides my decisions that I might
honor him in all that I do.
Even though I face an absurd amount of e-mails, system crashes,
unrealistic deadlines, budget cutbacks, gossiping co-workers,
discriminating supervisors and an aging body that doesn't
cooperate every morning, I still will not stop, for he is with me!
His presence, his peace, and his power will see me through.
He raises me up, even when they fail to promote me.
He claims me as his own, even when the company threatens to let me go.
His faithfulness and love are better than any bonus check.
His retirement plan beats every 401k there is!
When it's all said and done, I'll be working for him a whole lot longer.
And for that, I bless his name!

—Author unknown



WORKPLACE PRAYER

God, you are my Comforter. I am grateful that your peace is greater than all the chaos around me. You know what I face at work today; you know how much I have to do. And you promise to be with me in every discussion, decision and difficult task. Just as you claim me, so I claim your faithfulness and love. Walk with me throughout this day and restore my soul. Amen.

—WDT

On-the-Job Prayer

5



The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters; he restores my soul. He leads me in right paths for his name's sake.

—Psalm 23:1-3