

4 Things to pray on a sleepless night

One of the symptoms of perimenopause, and increasing age, that can take people by surprise, is the onset of insomnia. Even people who have decades of sleeping soundly behind them can find themselves lying awake at night – exhausted but unable to drop off.

A trip to the GP to discuss options can be wise when sleeplessness hits – there are times when medication or simply talking with someone wise can help. Having good nighttime routines, exercising wisely, and learning to quieten a busy mind can all be useful techniques. But, in the dark hours of the early morning, each of us has a decision to make: in our sleeplessness are we going to use our minds to grumble or speak with the Lord?

It's not always easy to know how to pray, though, especially when tired. We can usually manage, "Father, please help me sleep" but struggle to know where else to go. So here are four ideas from Psalm 40:1-4 to spur us on our way:

1. **Lord, help me wait well.** Waiting is rarely something we find easy. Waiting for sleep to arrive is no exception. But waiting is something the Lord often asks his children to do. God is active at all times – he is bringing about change in the lives of those he loves. We can lean on him and discover new depths of his provision and care. We can ask for his help to "wait patiently" (v1).
2. **Saviour, be my firm foundation.** Insomnia can be a deeply disorientating place. Sleeplessness is hard – worry about sleeplessness is even harder – and we can easily convince ourselves that everything is spiraling out of control. But there is certainty in life: the saving power of Jesus, our assured place in his love and care, his posture towards us showing his constant willingness to lift us out of the pit. We can ask that he will help us know those things are rock-solid and sure (v2).
3. **Father, you are so good.** When exhausted, it is easy to think that everything in life is bad. Life becomes tainted by our nighttime trials. But not everything is bleak. There is still good to behold. And where there are hard situations, that are nudging us towards anger, irritation or despair, there can be merit in remembering the hope we have in Christ. We can thank the Lord for his blessings to us – actively hunt for signs of his grace each day – and praise our God (v3).
4. **My God, help me to trust you.** It is not easy to trust when sleep eludes. In fact, it is far easier to doubt God's goodness. But there is no better place to put our eyes than

on the One who loves and leads so perfectly. We can gaze at his awesome glory and cry out for help to put our trust in him. (v3-4)