

## **“A Caregiver’s Prayer”**

by  
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- What** In this duet, a middle-aged man struggles to balance being a good husband and father as he also cares for his elderly father. He asks God for wisdom to make good decisions and the strength to show love and compassion in caregiving.  
**Themes:** Duet, Fatherhood, Prayer, Compassion
- Who** Toby- a middle-aged businessman  
Joe- Toby’s elderly father
- When** Present
- Wear (Props)** Toby wears a suit, tie, and coat. Joe dresses casually.  
Table and at least two chairs.  
Toby also carries an umbrella, gym bag, fast-food to-go bag with a bottled water inside, and car keys.  
Joe is reading a newspaper.
- Why** 1 Peter 5:7; Matthew 11:28-30; Colossians 3:23-24
- How** This is a conversation between father and son. Toby is tired and concerned but loving towards his dad. Toby’s prayer should also be conversational. Don’t overdo it.  
  
CS = Center Stage; SR = Stage Right; SL = Stage Left; OS = Offstage
- Time** Approximately 8 minutes

*Lights up. Center stage, a dining room scene with table and at least two chairs. Joe sits at the table reading a newspaper. On the table is a half-eaten frozen dinner and a weekly pill organizer.*

**Toby**—wearing a coat, suit, and tie—enters from SR. He's struggling to balance an umbrella, gym bag, his keys, and a fast-food to-go bag.

**Toby:** Knock, knock!

**Joe:** Hey Toby. Come on in, Son.

*Joe keeps his eyes on the paper while Toby heaves his belongings onto the table and snaps his umbrella shut.*

**Toby:** Man, it's really coming down out there now.

**Joe:** Weatherman said it could last through the night. They showed a map on the world news...it's that El knee-no flaring up again in the Pacific Ocean.

*Toby takes off the coat and tie and lays them on the back of the chair.*

**Toby:** El knee-no... (*chuckling under his breath*) Dad, I think it's El-Niño.

**Joe:** That's what I said, El knee-no.

**Toby:** Has Janene already left?

**Joe:** Yeah, she cleaned the kitchen and then left before the news came on. Said Derek had a baseball game she had to get to since she missed the last one.

*Toby plops down into the chair and notices a half-eaten frozen dinner on the table. Beside it is a weekly pill organizer. But no glass of water.*

**Toby:** Did you have enough to eat?

**Joe:** Tried one of those new taste-free, I mean gluten-free dinners that Janene bought me. Mac and cheese and some sort of artificial meat.

*Toby picks up the frozen dinner and tries a bite using his fingers. He tastes it for a second, then spits it out.*

**Joe:** Yeah, it kinda tastes like dog food...I couldn't find my glasses, so I didn't really read the label. Could've been dog food.

**Toby:** Well, it's gluten-free.

**Joe:** There you go.

*Toby smiles and holds up the pill organizer.*

**Toby:** Do you need something to drink to take with your pills?

**Joe:** No, no, I already took them.

**Toby:** They're still in there. Let me get you some water.

**Joe:** Toby, I already took them. It was during a commercial break. I remember. They were advertising those magic towels that expand like a sponge...

*Toby puts his face in his hands and closes his eyes. It's been a long day at work and his patience is running on fumes.*

**Joe:** Only twenty-nine ninety-nine. And if you call within the next five minutes, they throw in a genuine plastic plunger lunger. I don't know exactly what that is, but I think I need one.

**Toby:** Dad...

**Joe:** Toby! I already took them. I promise.

*Toby looks through the to-go bag and pulls out a bottled water. Sits it in front of Joe with a little too much force. Joe notices.*

*Joe points to the organizer.*

**Joe:** Here. See? Thursday. Night. Both of my heart pills and the little blue one that helps me sleep. I told you I took 'em.

*Toby takes the organizer and opens the tiny box labeled "Friday Night."*

**Toby:** It's Friday, Dad. Remember, Janene stays with you Monday through Thursday nights 'cause I can't take off any more time from work.

*Toby dumps the imaginary pills into Joe's palm.*

**Toby:** And then I'm here weekends. Every weekend.

*Joe refuses to look up at his son, trying to hide his embarrassment.*

**Joe:** You know me, I...I can't keep up with your crazy schedules. Maybe if you were here more often to help, I could keep up with what day it is!

*Toby winces at this stinging remark as Joe downs the imaginary pills with a sip of water. He hands Toby the bottle and returns his attention to the newspaper.*

*The two men sit together for a few seconds, brooding in the silence. Toby irritably taps his fingers against the table.*

**Joe:** How's Mary and the kids?

**Toby:** Kids are fine. Sarah's got her year-end recital tomorrow.

**Joe:** Oh yeah? Where at?

**Toby:** I don't even know, Dad. Last year it was at the high school auditorium, so I guess they'll have it there again.

**Joe:** *(staring at paper, not really listening)* Hmm...

**Toby:** And Josh is...well, he's Josh. *(Beat)* I'm so frustrated, Dad. I've prayed about how to help him, but I just don't know what to do. Last month it was cheating, this week he got into an argument with his coach and apparently, he's benched for the next two games...

**Joe:** *(eyes still on paper)* He's got a big game coming up, huh?

*Toby looks at his father, who's obviously more interested in the obituaries than in his son's family troubles and decides to let it go.*

**Toby:** Uh, yeah, I think they have Regionals coming up next week. Maggie'll be able to take him when she gets off work.

**Joe:** She still liking her job?

**Toby:** She's getting there. Fourteen years staying at home, watching the kids...I'm not sure if she'll ever just absolutely love it, but...

**Joe:** Then why did she decide to go back to work in the first place?

*Toby glares at the ground, not daring to look at his father. He chooses his tone carefully.*

**Toby:** Well, Dad, we really didn't have much of a choice. Remember, I told you they cut my hours. And we've got bills to pay. College coming up. *(Beat)* And somebody's got to pay Janene for helping us out here during the week, cooking and cleaning...

*Joe just nods. He yawns and folds up the paper.*

**Joe:** Well son, I think I'm gonna hit the sack. Didn't get much sleep last night. Janene sounded like a freight train. Bless her heart, she was so tired. Her snoring just rattles the walls.

*Joe slowly stands and takes a few wobbly steps towards SL.*

**Joe:** Well, goodnight. I'll see you in the morning.

**Toby:** Night Pop.

*Joe makes it to the SL exit, but then turns back towards Toby.*

**Joe:** How does sausage and biscuits sound in the morning?

**Toby:** Sounds great.

**Joe:** Good, they're in the freezer. I'll wait for you to get up and you can fix 'em for me.

*Toby's smile turns to a frown.*

**Joe:** No hurry! I'll probably sleep in. Stayed in bed 'til 6:30 this morning. Janene's snoring rattled the walls. Sounded like a freight train.

*Toby watches Joe disappear SL. He leans back and takes a deep breath. Then he looks forward and begins to pray.*

**Toby:** God? *(Beat)* God, I need you. I'm just...exhausted. I'm trying to be a good husband. I'm trying to be a good father...and I'm trying to be a good son. But I don't know how much longer I can do this. This balancing act gets harder every day. *(Beat)* I want to love my dad and honor him as the man who raised me, as the man who cared for me and provided for our family, but, honestly God, I'm struggling. His strength is failing, he's getting forgetful, but he's still as stubborn as ever. Maggie says I inherited that particular trait, but I don't think so.

*He smiles, then turns serious again.*

**Toby:** Lord, just please give me wisdom and grace to make the right decisions so I can take care of him. Help me to love him like you do, with compassion and patience. I'm pretty sure you've shown me a lot of compassion and patience over the years, too. *(Beat)* And Jesus? That peace that you offer us? The peace that passes all our understanding? I could really use some of that right now. I know you invite anyone who is weary and burdened to come to you, so here I am. I want to rest in you. I trust you, Lord. I will trust you in all of this. Amen.

*Toby grabs his gym bag from the kitchen table, then walks SL exit. He stops suddenly to listen. From OS, Joe is SNORING like a freight train.*

*A look of panic crosses Toby's face as he frantically searches for something in his gym bag.*

**Toby:** Oh please, oh please, oh please...

*Finally, he breathes a sigh a relief and holds up a pair of ear plugs. He looks up.*

**Toby:** *(whispering to God)* Thank you!

*He puts the ear plugs in his ears and exits SL.*

*LIGHTS OUT.*

SCRIPT

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