A GENTLE PRAYER

A Prayer for When You're Tired of Being the Strong One

Father, I almost didn't come tonight. Not because I stopped believing, but because I'm tired, and I didn't know where to start. So I'll just be honest with you.

I've been holding it together for a long time. I smile when people need me to. I say I'm fine so no one has to worry. And then the house goes quiet, the messages stop coming, and I sit here, and I'm not fine at all.

I'm tired of being the one who's okay. Tired of being needed, but not known. Tired of being afraid I'm too much for people, and somehow never enough.

There are things I've never said out loud, Lord. The apology I'm still waiting for. The conversation I keep rewriting in my head at two in the morning. The quiet fear that if anyone really saw me, they wouldn't stay.

You see all of it. You've seen it for years. And you're still here.

You never asked me to be perfect. You never asked me to earn my place at your table. You only asked me to come.

So here I am. Not fixed. Not finished. Just here.

Tonight I put down what I was never meant to carry alone. The weight of everyone's expectations. The voice that says I should be further along by now. The shame I've worn so long it started to feel like my own skin.

Hold me the way I've been holding everyone else.

Teach me that resting is not failing. That asking for help is not weakness. That I am loved on the days I do nothing right.

I'm not asking for all the answers. Just enough light for the next step, and enough peace to sleep tonight. Tomorrow, let me tell one person the truth, even if my voice shakes.

Thank you for the warm cup in my hands. For the lamp still on. For the breath I just took without having to try.

Thank you for staying, even when I didn't know how to stay.

I'm yours, Father. I place this tired heart in your hands. Amen.

> *"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."*
> MATTHEW 11:28 (KJV)