

# Circling prayers

When we find ourselves in circumstances which are bewildering or overwhelming, as well as in times of pain and grief, when we cannot find words or when words seem inadequate, praying a circling prayer can often be helpful.

Circling prayers have their origins in Celtic Christian spirituality. They are simple prayers which speak of God's protective "circling" presence. They can help us invite God's encompassing presence into the circumstances we face and the issues we care about. We can use them to pray for ourselves and for others.

Early Celtic Christians regarded a circle as a sacred space, a symbol of the universe in which God lives at the centre, as well as something having no beginning or end and therefore representing God's love and time itself in eternity. They carried this concept into their circling prayers (caim prayers). For this reason they would 'draw' a circle round themselves as they prayed, thus involving their whole selves - body, mind, soul and spirit.

The words of the prayer are simple and adaptable. You can use one of the examples below or you can create your own. The basic idea is to pray for God's encircling - for his love, peace, and protection in, and discouragement, danger, and turmoil out. As you pray, extend your right index finger and draw a circle clockwise around yourself, or trace a circle on your left hand. Imagine a circle of God's love around you and see yourself and others for whom you are praying enclosed in God's love, care and protection.

The basic prayer is something like this:

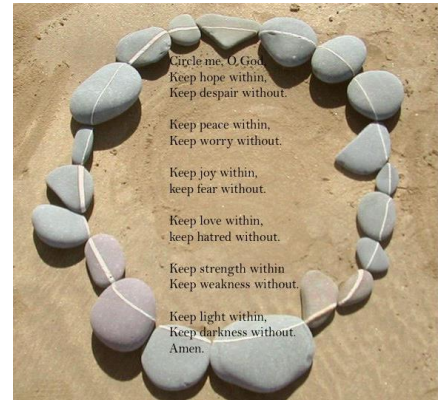
- Circle me, Lord. Keep protection near and danger afar.
- Circle me, Lord. Keep light near and darkness afar.
- Circle me, Lord. Keep peace within; keep evil out.

You can use it to pray for others by inserting their name and naming their circumstances:

- Circle *(name)*, Lord.
- Keep *(name the good you want revealed)* near and *(name the evil you want removed)* afar.
- Circle *(name)*, Lord.
- Keep comfort near and discouragement afar. Keep peace within and turmoil out.
- Circle *(name)*, Lord.
- Keep hope within and despair without.
- The eternal Father, Son and Holy Spirit shield *(name)* on every side.

You can use it to pray for our church, using 'us'.

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| Circle us, Lord:<br>keep love within and hatred without.   | Circle us, Lord:<br>keep light within and dark without.  |
| Circle us, Lord:<br>keep pardon within and injury without. | Circle us, Lord:<br>keep joy within and sadness without. |
| Circle us, Lord:<br>keep faith within and doubt without.   | Circle us, Lord:<br>keep peace within and fear without.  |
| Circle us, Lord:<br>keep hope within and despair without.  | Circle us, Sacred Three,<br>now and forever. Amen.       |



Psalm 125:1-2 – Those who trust in the Lord are like Mount Zion, which can never be shaken, never be moved. As the mountains surround Jerusalem, so the Lord surrounds his people, now and forever.