

A Prayer for the Middle Aged

Lots of correspondence – letters, emails, postcards – come into the president’s office. Some are positive and optimistic, a bunch from vendors, an assortment advising us how to improve our services, many grateful for the blessings of the care they or their loved ones are receiving, and a great deal of them encouraging and inspiring.

A very unique card was delivered to my home last week. It was from LeeAnn Matson, a registered nurse associated with Carl Campbell, a co-founder of Life Care. LeeAnn is a delightful, faith-filled person with a great sense of humor. Inside the card was folded a copy of *A Prayer for the Middle Aged*. Since I have been in and past that age group, it caught my attention.

The prayer has been attributed to any number of ministries and religious writers – a member of British royalty, a sea captain and a medieval nun. One newspaper account claims it was written by Alta Becker of Dayton, Ohio, who used it in her Lenten Lectures at the Dayton Women’s Club. The *Reader’s Digest* credits it to Thomas E. Dewey in 1952.

Whoever may have written it, the prayer should be shared, and here it is:

*Lord, Thou knowest better than I know myself
that I am growing older and will someday be old.*

*Keep me from getting loquacious, and particularly from the fatal habit
of thinking I must say something on every subject and on every occasion.*

*Release me from craving to straighten out everybody’s affairs. Make me thoughtful
but not moody, helpful but not bossy. With my vast store of wisdom, it seems a pity
not to use it all, but Thou knowest, Lord, that I want a few friends at the end.*

*Keep my mind free from the recital of endless details; give me wings to get to the point.
Seal my lips on my aches and pains. They are increasing, and the love of rehearsing
them is becoming sweeter as the years go by. I dare not ask grace enough to enjoy
the tales of another’s pains, but help me to endure them with patience.*

*I dare not ask for improved memory, but for a growing humility and less cocksureness
when my memory seems to clash with the memories of others.*

*Teach me the glorious lesson that occasionally I may be mistaken. Keep me reasonably
sweet: I do not want to be a saint – some of them are so hard to live with –
but a sour old person is one of the crowning works of the devil.*

*Give me the ability to see good things in unexpected places, and talents
in unexpected people. And give me the grace to tell them so.*

Amen.

(more)

I think the Apostle Peter would have shared similar sentiments. In his letter to “the pilgrims of the Dispersion,” he wrote:

Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble” (1 Peter 5:5 ESV).

– Beecher Hunter

