# Pain, Dying, and Our Understanding of God

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A few of the prayers on [www.united-church.ca/worship-theme/death-and-dying](http://www.united-church.ca/worship-theme/death-and-dying) are aimed at meeting the needs of those in great pain. Most of the prayers relate to people who are in horrendous pain and wish to choose their time and place of death. There are also prayers for those who will accompany, support, and help them in practical ways to die.

The objective of the prayers is to encourage those in great pain, those ready to die, and their companions to create their own prayers and offer them in their own prayer voice.

It is crucial to be clear about how the authors of the prayers understand the nature of God, Divine Source, the Holy One, the Holy Spirit, to whom these prayers are offered.

You will have your own understanding, and for you to use or rewrite these prayers with integrity it is crucial that your own theology be reflected in the words.

For the authors:

* God is the Creator and Source of all there is, and with God there are no limits of time or space.
* God does not interfere in the normal course of humanity; God does not rescue drowning children, stop accidents happening, or stop cancer developing.
* God is all-compassion and feels absolutely for those who are in pain, suffer loss, and must make life-changing and life-ending decisions. Caregivers may know, ask for, and use a compassion that is both divine and rational.
* Through the Holy Spirit, God goes to work inspiring and encouraging those who must make hard decisions, those who have suffered loss, and those who stand with them.
* In Jesus the Christ, his teaching, his tragic death, and the way he overcame death we can understand God’s pattern worked out in full humanity. At the centre of all we do is the love of God, a love we have seen in the good people of times past, a love that we struggle to work out in everyday life, and a love that is there for all people in times to come.
* We are those who acknowledge God, worship God, and are ready to serve God to the best of our ability.