

Out of Breath

a liturgy for working long days

These days are long...really long.

Sometimes they come one after another, and I feel like a cross-country runner - out of breath, finally reaching the top of one hill, only to see the next one coming into view. I can't help but wonder when I'll get a break.

I find myself thinking, "I am so tired."

Tired of teaching

Tired of answering questions

Tired of grading papers

Tired of preparing lessons

Tired of walking to and from class (up and down so many stairs!)

Tired of meetings

Tired of constantly being 'on'

I know that You planned good works for me to do before I was ever born, but some days it feels like You've given me a double portion! I've had so many lessons and meetings and activities that my brain cannot process one more thing.

Yet, this work that You planned brings joy and rewards, even as it brings challenges and exhaustions. Often, it's in the end-of-my-rope moments that You do the most amazing things; You teach me more about Yourself when I am at the end of my own strength. You make it possible for me to look back at my long days and say, "That was incredibly hard, but it was so good!"

And especially on days like this, I want to be able to recognize Your divine appointments, those places where You invite me to participate in the Bigger Picture that You're creating. Open my eyes to Your presence and help me to consider what You might be doing.

When I look back and recognize the instances where I could have been more aware of Your hand at work, less self-centered, more patient, more like You—may I be comforted with Your truth. The enemy would have me focus on my failures, downplaying Your amazing work, and denying You the glory You deserve.

Instead, help me not to see these long days as things to merely "get through," but show me where I can slow down to partner with you:

as a listening ear or smile for a discouraged or shy student; as a cheerful collaborator with my co-teachers; as an encourager to teammates; as a good and faithful servant who uses Your gifts and resources wisely and well and in ways I never could have anticipated.

Help me see every individual as Your deeply loved image bearer; look beyond my own desires to their deepest need; see past what it is about them that might tire or annoy me to the wanderer looking for a home. Use me to invite them to walk another step on the journey.

In the longest days that challenge me the most, remind me that I am Your handiwork. I too am deeply loved by You—and it's ok to be both Your masterpiece and a work in progress at the same time. So whether I'm at the beginning or the end of these long days—or perhaps somewhere in the middle—help me to give myself grace as I become more aware of Your voice and Your hand in the tasks You have lovingly planned for me.

May I always look to You as my Source and Supply.

Amen

This liturgy was published by [Master Teaching](#) and Laura. It can be found at: [Out of Breath](#).