

# Prayers for Exercise and Healthy Eating: A Jewish and New Testament Perspective

## Morning Prayer Before Exercise

### A Prayer for Strength and Discipline

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, King of the Universe, who has created my body with wisdom and granted me the ability to move and strengthen myself.

I stand before You today, Lord, ready to present my body as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to You, as this is my spiritual act of worship (Romans 12:1).

You have taught us that this body is a temple of Your Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19), and just as the ancient Levites prepared the Temple for Your presence, I prepare this body for Your service.

Grant me the strength that comes from loving You with all my heart, with all my soul, with all my mind, and with all my strength (Deuteronomy 6:5, Mark 12:30).

Like an athlete in training, help me to exercise self-control in all things (1 Corinthians 9:25). As Paul reminds us, "Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training." May I discipline my body and bring it under control, so that after preaching to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize (1 Corinthians 9:27).

Lord, strengthen me to endure hardship as a good soldier of Yeshua Messiah (2 Timothy 2:3), not entangling myself in the affairs of everyday life, that I may please the one who enlisted me.

I know that "physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come" (1 Timothy 4:8). As I train my body, may I also train my character, developing perseverance, and may perseverance complete its work so that I may be mature and complete, not lacking anything (James 1:4).

As I exercise today, may I remember that You formed every muscle and sinew with purpose. Help me to honor Your craftsmanship through my stewardship of this body.

May this physical discipline reflect my spiritual dedication to You, as I await the redemption of my body (Romans 8:23) and its transformation into the glorious image of Your Son, Yeshua.

Amen.

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## Prayer Before Meals

## **A Prayer for Self-Control and Nourishment**

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, King of the Universe, who brings forth bread from the earth and nourishment from Your creation.

Lord, as the ancient Israelites discerned between food that was kosher and that which was not, grant me wisdom to discern what truly nourishes this temple of Your Holy Spirit.

I acknowledge that "everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving" (1 Timothy 4:4). Help me to receive this food with gratitude while practicing the self-control that is a fruit of Your Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23).

As the sacrifices of old were offered on Your altar, I offer my eating habits to You. May they reflect my devotion to honoring You with my body, which was bought with a price (1 Corinthians 6:20).

Like an athlete in training who competes for a crown that will not last, I discipline myself for a crown that will last forever (1 Corinthians 9:25). Grant me the wisdom to make choices that sustain rather than hinder my ability to run with perseverance the race marked out for me (Hebrews 12:1).

Just as physical discipline strengthens my body, may self-control in eating strengthen my character. For "the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control" (Galatians 5:22-23). Let this meal be an opportunity to cultivate these virtues.

Strengthen my resolve to eat for nourishment rather than merely for pleasure, remembering that "whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31).

As I await the day when this mortal body will put on immortality (1 Corinthians 15:53), help me to care for it as a sacred trust from You.

Amen.

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## **Evening Prayer for Continued Discipline**

### **A Prayer for Perseverance in Body Stewardship**

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, King of the Universe, who renews our strength when we are weary.

Lord, I thank You for sustaining me through another day of striving to honor You with my body. As the Psalmist declared, "I praise You because I am fearfully and wonderfully made" (Psalm 139:14).

When my discipline wavers and I am tempted to neglect the care of this body, remind me that I am running a race to win the prize. Help me to run in such a way as to get the prize, not like someone running aimlessly or boxing as one beating the air (1 Corinthians 9:24-26).

Keep before me the vision of that imperishable crown, that I might press on toward the goal to win the prize for which You have called me heavenward in Messiah Yeshua (Philippians 3:14).

Just as the ancient priests maintained the physical purity required for service in Your Temple, help me to maintain my physical health for service in Your Kingdom.

Through the discipline of caring for my body, may I add to my faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love (2 Peter 1:5-7). For if I possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep me from being ineffective and unproductive.

As I rest tonight, prepare me for tomorrow's efforts to train my body, remembering that "physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come" (1 Timothy 4:8).

I look forward to the hope of resurrection, when You will transform my humble body to be like Yeshua's glorious body (Philippians 3:21). Until that day, may I honor You through every choice that affects this temple where Your Spirit dwells.

In the name of Yeshua, who offered His perfect body as the ultimate sacrifice for our redemption, I pray.

Amen.

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## **Prayer for Perseverance in Exercise**

### **A Prayer for Running the Race with Endurance**

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, King of the Universe, who strengthens the weary and increases the power of the weak.

Lord, as I commit to the discipline of physical exercise, help me to "throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles" so that I may "run with perseverance the race marked out for me" (Hebrews 12:1).

Like Paul, I want to run in such a way as to get the prize (1 Corinthians 9:24). May my physical training remind me of the spiritual race I am running, keeping my eyes fixed on Yeshua, the pioneer and perfecter of faith (Hebrews 12:2).

When I am tempted to ease my efforts or abandon the discipline of exercise, remind me that "those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint" (Isaiah 40:31).

Grant me the determination of an athlete who exercises self-control in all things, striving for a crown that is imperishable (1 Corinthians 9:25), and the focus of a soldier who avoids entanglement in civilian affairs to please the commanding officer (2 Timothy 2:4).

As I train this body, may I also train my character, for "suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope" (Romans 5:3-4). Let the discipline of exercise develop in me the virtues that please You.

May each step, each lift, each movement be an act of worship, as I love You with all my strength (Mark 12:30) and prepare this body for Your service.

In the name of Yeshua, who endured the cross for the joy set before Him, I pray.

Amen.

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## **Prayer for Virtue Through Physical Discipline**

### **A Prayer for Character Formation Through Bodily Stewardship**

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, King of the Universe, who forms our bodies and shapes our character according to Your will.

Lord, as I discipline my body through exercise and mindful eating, may I remember the words of Your servant Paul, that "physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come" (1 Timothy 4:8).

Help me to see the connection between physical discipline and spiritual growth. Just as an athlete must train with purpose and consistency, may I also train myself to be godly (1 Timothy 4:7), developing the muscles of faith, hope, and love.

Through the exertion and sometimes discomfort of physical training, teach me to "rejoice in my sufferings, because I know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope" (Romans 5:3-4).

As I choose healthy foods and regular exercise, may I grow in the fruit of self-control (Galatians 5:23), which is not only a discipline of the body but a virtue of the spirit.

Lord, help me to add "to my faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness" (2 Peter 1:5-6), understanding that the care of my body and the cultivation of my character are intertwined in Your divine purpose.

May my body be not only a temple of Your Spirit but also a training ground for the virtues that make me more like Your Son, Yeshua, in whose name I pray.

Amen.