Death is something I have an acquaintance with. I must admit it has surprised me at times. I had no
inkling of my sister’s death. Or did I? At Christmas I bought my sister oil used for anointing the dying. It
did not occur to me at the time, its purpose.

Twenty-five years ago my mother died. My question at the time of the Lord, was not why did you take
her, rather why did you not warn me ahead of time, friend?

Fifty-five years ago in the fall of the year near 10pm we were in the living room. The phone rang. Mother
pick the phone up and a horrible sense of foreboding overwhelmed me. She listened saying nothing,
hung up the phone. Turning mother told us, our father had died. I was fatherless.

When do we implore the Lord to withhold His hand? A question many parent and child faces. Does He
hear such prayers?

Forty years ago my mother was hospitalized near death. I have always loved reading the Old Testament.
At an early age I discovered a passage in Isaiah. It follows a great battle scene in which 185,000 of the
enemy has just been slain.

Hezekiah, good king Hezekiah lies ill. Isaiah comes in and tells Hezekiah to set his house in order he will
not recover, he will die. Isaiah then leaves.

Hezekiah turns his face to the wall and begs the Lord to spare him.

The Lord stops Isaiah and tells him to return to Hezekiah and say, “I have heard your prayer, I have seen
your tears, behold I will add fifteen years to your life.”

As I was walking to work, forty years ago I reminded the Lord of the passage and ask the Lord to add
fifteen years to my mother’s life. Fifteen years later He reminded me the time was complete.

I was born a twin, two months premature. I struggled to live but it was a losing battle. One night the
doctor approached my mother and told her, “There is no longer any hope he will not make it through
the night.” She prayed.

So how do we know what to pray for at times like these, whether parent or child. When should we pray,
when should we no longer pray? What do we ask for, what do we dare not ask?