



NFL PLAYERS
ASSOCIATION

PRAYER FOR DAMAR HAMLIN AND THE NFL PLAYER COMMUNITY

By Reverend William Barber II

Gracious, eternal, and almighty God who loves us all, who cares for all, and has mercy for all. We come before you in the spirit of the elders who in times of trouble prayed in the spirit. We need thee. Oh, we need thee. Every hour we need thee. Oh, bless us now our Savior. We come to thee. With your people, I come making a request of all on their behalf. Walk with us Lord. While we're on this tedious journey, we want you, oh Lord, to walk with us. We ask you, oh Lord, to be a comfort and a healer for our young brother Hamlin and his family. We ask you as a healing presence to guide and direct and bless the doctors as they care for him, the medicines as they treat him, the nurses as they tend to him, and the family as they surround him.

Lord, we look to you to raise him up, and we give you praise for the healing and improvement we are seeing even now. We have so much gratitude for the first responders on the field who got to our young brother Hamlin and gave him medical attention. Thank you, God, for those trainers and paramedics and ambulance drivers. Thank you for the players who all knelt and prayed. Thank you, God, for those who came and lifted him as ministering angels. And we thank you God that even in the midst of tragedy, you have a way of giving us beauty for ashes. For everyone who has now given in the millions to Chasing M's Children Foundation, we thank you.

We thank you for all the programs for children that will now be supported. We thank you that somehow by your spirit, pain can turn to power and moments of great hurt can move people to be great help. We lift up those in every sick ward. We cannot pray merely for just ourselves. We lift up those in every sick ward, every intensive care unit, because you are God. Besides you there is none other able to help in our deepest need. We also pray your good comfort and love for every player and every player's family, for they cannot erase what we just saw the other night during a game and that memory shakes us all. The sight of it makes grown men cry and families tremble, but oh merciful God, let us own this truth -- that every player is human. Every player is at work on a job. This is not just a game. May this moment cause us who see the game recognize the players as people, not just competitors on a field, but fathers, brothers, uncles, husbands, sons, and grandsons. Help us, oh God, to repent of all the times we have forgotten this.

Help us remember all of the other people who depend upon their efforts for the jobs they have. These are laborers trying to provide for their families, pushing their bodies to the greatest degree. And we pray that we never forget the humanity of it all. We pray not only for brother Hamlin, but also for others hurt, scarred, or broken by injuries past and present. Teach us to pray and even more, teach us to care. To care about the rules, to care about the healthcare, to care about the labor rights of these players. Help us to care about the humanity and the fragility of their bodies, even when in the greatest shape. We pray for the league itself, the NFL, that it may never see the players as just pieces of an economic engine, but as people without whom the sport would not exist, cause us to see beyond the players, to see them as being more than just money makers, and game winners, and touchdown scorers, and interception grabbers, and tackle deliverers.





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Help us to see deeper than this, to know that every one of them is our brother in the human family who hurt like us, feel like us, can die just like us, and who need miracles of healing just like brother Hamlin, just like all of us. Let this moment open up our conscience to care about all people in need and remind us how quickly in the blinking of an eye things can change for any family. All of us on this life's journey at some time will need community, will need care, will need compassion. So help us to not only pray for those on the football field, but also all the workers, the laborers, the people on the field of life itself.

May we, gracious God, remember each member of the human family, wherever they are, who faces southern tragedy and unexpected trauma for as your Word says, "We are all of one blood." As your Word says, "How can we say we love you whom we've never seen and not love our brother who we see every day?" Oh God, since we cannot forget what we have seen, help us in the aftermath to care for each other even more from this time forward. In fact, help us not to forget, but to remember; so that in remembering, we live better as fellow members of your creation. And oh God, as long as there is time left on the clock of life, let us spend that time praying for one another, helping one another, caring for one another, knowing that on the field of life, we are not competitors, but one creation, one community, made by you for your glory.

Hear our prayer, oh Lord. And we thank you that nothing is too hard for you, and we thank you that we can always look to the heal from which cometh our help, knowing that all our help comes from thee. In the name of all that is holy, I pray. Amen.