

## Secretary's Prayer

Dear Lord, help me to do my work well, to have the memory of an elephant, and by some miracle to be able to do five things at once—answer four telephones while typing a letter that “must go out today.” When the letter doesn't get signed until tomorrow, please give me the strength to keep my mouth shut.

Dear Lord, never let me lose my patience, even when the boss has me searching files for hours for the report that later is discovered on his desk.

Give me the intelligence of a college professor, although my education is limited to a high school diploma and secretarial training.

Help me to read his mind, his handwriting, and carry out all instructions without explanation.

Let me always know exactly where my boss is and when he'll be back, even though he never tells me these things.

And Lord, when the year ends, please give me the foresight not to throw out records that will be asked for in a couple of days even though I was told emphatically, “Destroy these! They are cluttering up the place!”

I ask these blessings, dear Lord, in the name of secretaries everywhere. Amen.

—Author Unknown—

*Charter Member Agnes Soos found this in an old trunk in an attic, on a folded, yellowed piece of paper, typed in a Pica font with the credit “Author Unknown.” In our search to find the author, we found the poem on one family Web site, but also without an author's name.*



“Praying Hands”  
Albrecht Durer

*In our diligent search, however, we did find another “Secretary's Prayer,” which we suspect from certain spelling and the overuse of the word “which” might be from England. We see similarity of thought and wonder about chicken-and-egg-type questions. We present that poem on the next page for your enjoyment.*

## **The Secretary's Prayer**

Give me please, O Lord, the wisdom of a judge, the patience of Job, and the hide of an elephant.

Give my fingers such speed that I can finish tonight the mail I should have done yesterday. Give me such acute hearing that I can understand the dictation my boss mumbles out of the window while jingling the change in his/her pocket.

Give me an uncanny insight and an encyclopaedic memory for dates and anniversaries he/she has never even mentioned and meetings he/she forgets to record so that I can remind him/her of them. And give me the diplomacy of an ambassador to get seats for trains, planes, and theatres, which he/she was so sure he/she had told me about yesterday.

Help me correct his/her spelling and even worse phrasing so that he reads my letters and glows with pride at his/her own good English—and let me suffer no pangs if he/she scrawls alterations in ink, which I could so easily have dubbed in on my machine.

Caution me to remember that if one day he/she feels off colour and barks, snarls, or sneers, I must retain a gentle, friendly smile, no matter how well or ill I may happen to feel.

Help me to have a memory three years long. By some small miracle let me be able to do all things at once—answer three telephones at the same time and type a letter that “must go today,” even though I know it won't get signed until tomorrow.

Give me knowledge of a university professor with my junior certificate of education. Help me to understand and carry out all instructions without any explanation.

Let me know, without being told, where my boss is or when he/she will be back. When he/she happens to disappear with out a trace just when something desperately urgent crops up, please give me the qualities of Sherlock Holmes so I may track him/her down.

Could you then please, O Lord, extend your mercies and throw in just one extra lesson on how to combine the duties of Secretary, Chairwoman, Hostess, Diplomat, Accountant, Receptionist, Filing Clerk, Booking Clerk, Cloakroom Attendant and General Nurse.

Amen.

*Downloaded free from <http://www.johnhelvin.net>*