

Psalm 121

'A Job for Life'

We had this drama first, acted by Paul and Alex Williamson and Sarah Radford ... [Drama: A Job for Life \(rootsontheweb.com\)](http://Drama: A Job for Life (rootsontheweb.com))

A drama for Mothering Sunday. Stage set with a table, a laptop computer and chair, and a sign that says: 'Job Centre'.

Three actors: a member of staff sitting at the table (Danni), and two people forming a queue (Betty and Colin). As indicated by the names Betty is female, Colin is male and Danni could be either male or female.

Betty: (To Danni) I've come to apply for a job

Danni: Which job would that be? Is it one you've seen advertised this week?

Betty: Well, no. But I've seen it loads of times – there seem to be lots of jobs doing this. I want to be a mother.

Danni: You ... what? *(after recovering from the shock)* Well, I suppose it is Mothering Sunday after all. It probably puts strange ideas in some people's heads! A word of warning though: there may be lots of positions available but it's not an easy option. Whatever training you do never quite seems to fit the particular post you get. The most demanding job around, I'd say.

Betty: Well, I'm up to level ten in 'Maternal Awareness', and have the certificates to prove it. And I'm willing to do some more background work.

Danni: The fact is, it's more than a job. It's 24/7, and you can't give up on it. It's a job for life. You may have a partner – a job share, you might say – but some people simply have to go it alone.

Colin: *(pushing forward)* It sounds like the most fascinating job I've heard of – could I do it?

Danni: Well I suppose 'mums' can come in all shapes and sizes. Sometimes they are actually 'dads' – or grandparents or foster parents.

Colin: Do you mean, it's about what you do and how you are, rather than the job title? I suppose you need a certain 'je ne sais quoi'?

Betty: Wait a minute – what's this 'je ne sais' thing? I'm not qualified in foreign languages!

Danni: I tell you what, I'll read you the job description. That might help.

Betty: Good idea!

Colin: *(at the same time)* Yes, please.

Danni: *(after pressing a few keys on a computer)* Mothers wanted. Hours: variable. Contract: long term – a commitment for life. Rate of pay: irrelevant. Personal qualities and skills: successful applicants will, above all else, be caring people, able to put the needs of other human beings before their own. There is no need to be highly literate or numerate (although a certain level of competence will help with homework or bedtime stories). Menial and messy tasks are part of the job. Creativity will be an asset, together with a sense of fun. Mothers will have a special quality of bringing light and sparkle into a child's life, especially when things seem dark and difficult. **PTO**

Will provide security and a general sense of well-being. Will inspire, guide and help without controlling. And there's a footnote: Mothers must also be aware that having almost mastered one set of requirements, another stage of development will occur, needing a new set of skills, and these must be learnt on the job by trial and error, and ...

Colin: *(interrupting Danni)* Wait a minute! You need to be superhuman for all that!

Danni: Well a bit of divine inspiration would certainly come in useful! Come to think about it, there's quite a lot of ways in which God tends and nurtures us just like a mother – and shows us what an ideal mother would be like.

Colin: Funnily enough, I can think of quite a few women down the years who fit quite a bit of that description – and some of them didn't even have children of their own.

Betty: What, you mean women like Florence Nightingale, or Mother Theresa or Malala (*Yousafzai*)?

Danni: Yes, and all those unnamed poets, artists, thinkers, reformers, supporters and carers who've gone under the radar, almost unnoticed.

Betty: this is all getting very deep! I'm going to have to consider this very carefully. Maybe I'll come back tomorrow. And to think – I only came in here for a job! *(wanders off, watched by Danni and Colin)*

Revd Judy thanked them and continues:

Being a parent ... What a job, a task, a role.

And it's 24/7 – all day every day ... and for the whole of your life.

And, as in the drama – divine inspiration helps ... but not only inspiration: strength, patience, endurance, resilience and – most of all – love from God.

God as our parent really does want the best for each one of us and wants to share our good times – our celebrations – and be there to support us in our times of difficulty.

If you turn to page 4 in the service booklet, you'll see the Bible reading that we're going to say together in a moment.

Look at the first section that we'll say together – in bold type

**My help comes from the Lord
the maker of heaven and earth.**

And that help is always available – it's not like ringing a help line and getting an automated voice: *"Your call is important to us but we are experiencing heavy demand for our services. Your call is number 83 on the waiting list"*

Thankfully – somehow – God more than copes with however many demands or requests for help – night or day – as in the second part in bold

**Behold, he who keeps watch over Israel
shall neither slumber nor sleep.**

In that quote – Israel refers to God's people – and through Jesus, we've been adopted into God's family.

So this morning, as we give thanks for those who care for us – we very much include God in that thanksgiving. **Amen.**