

# CARRIED

5 Devotions for a Mother's Heart

*Inspired by the  
Mothers of Haiti*



**For every mother who has ever felt  
like she was carrying it alone.**



**HANDS  
& FEET  
PROJECT**

Dear Friend,

My name is Letty Vendrell, and it is a true privilege to serve as the Executive Director of Hands & Feet Project. Thank you for opening your heart to this devotional—your willingness to journey with us brings hope and encouragement to mothers everywhere.

The stories you are about to read are true accounts from courageous mothers in Haiti—women who rise each day carrying the weight of their families and who, with unwavering love, refuse to give up.

These are mothers who have broken rocks into gravel just to pay school fees, and mothers who have walked miles down mountainsides to give their children a chance at education. Their daily realities may be different from ours, but the questions they ask—the hopes and fears—are shared by mothers everywhere: Am I doing enough? Will my children be okay? Can I keep going?

Their stories remind us of a powerful truth: no mother is meant to carry it all alone. We are called to walk alongside one another, to share burdens and multiply hope.

These five devotions are built around the words: provision, resilience, community, restoration, and hope. Each is anchored in Scripture and rooted in the life of a real mother whose faith has been tested—and found stronger than her circumstances.

At the end of each devotion, you'll find a reflection question and a short prayer—words that came from our own hearts as we listened to these stories. Feel free to use them just as they are, adapt them, or let the stories themselves spark your own prayers.

Take your time with these pages—read one a day, or all five at once. And if you know a mother who could use encouragement, please share these words with her. You never know the difference a story of hope can make.



*Letty Vendrell*



**Letty Vendrell**  
Executive Director  
Hands & Feet Project

## Day 1: **PROVISION**



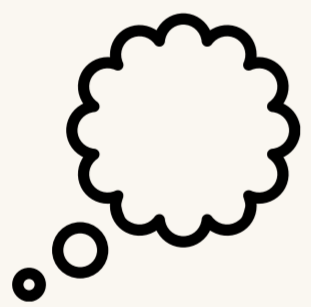
Roseberta Juinvil and her husband are a faithful, loving couple raising four children, but they face the same financial struggles as many other Haitian families. Medical needs, housing difficulties, and expensive school tuition fees all collided at once, and they couldn't afford to send their children to school. Their family reached a breaking point. Rather than give in to despair, Roseberta turned to God. During a prayer service at her local church, she asked the Lord to allow His Word to bear witness to His greatness in her family's life.

At that very moment, she received a phone call. Her family had been accepted into Hands & Feet Project's Preserving Families, which provides social, emotional, spiritual, physical and educational support to families in crisis.

Today, the Juinvil children are back in school. Their parents face each day with less worry and more peace. And Roseberta watches her children's faith take root as they witness God's faithfulness through the people who showed up for their family.

*"There is nothing God cannot do. Everything that is impossible with man is easy with God."*

**- Roseberta**



### **REFLECT**

Roseberta felt the weight of every bill, every need, every gap she could not close on her own. What are you carrying right now that feels too heavy for one person? Is there a person or a resource God has already placed around you that you have not yet leaned into?

**For further study and encouragement: Philippians 4:19**



### **PRAY**

*God, Roseberta's faith humbles me. She trusted You when the stakes were her children's futures. Help me bring my own needs to You with that same honesty. And thank You for the people and places You use to answer prayers I have not even finished praying. Amen.*

## Day 2: **RESILIENCE**

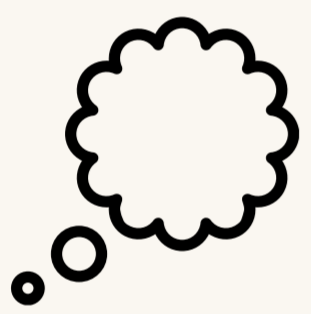


Marie Hélène did everything she could for her five children. When her husband was severely injured in a workplace accident, she carried the family alone, traveling between hospitals, searching for work, and breaking rocks into gravel just to feed her kids. Despite everything she spent, she could not save him. She was left a widow with five children and no one to lean on. But she did not stop. She planted corn. When the harvest failed, she sold mangoes. She kept going until she had nothing left to give.

Then Marie Hélène heard about Hands & Feet Project's Preserving Families program and applied. Today, all five of her children are back in school. Her family receives consistent food and support, and regular visits from social workers and a campus pastor have reminded her of something she had almost forgotten: she does not have to do this alone.

*When I went there, I had no hope. But I said to myself, 'Since God is with me, I will not give up.'*

**- Marie Hélène**



### **REFLECT**

Marie Hélène broke rocks to feed her children. Most of us will never face that. But every mother knows what it feels like to keep going when you have nothing left. What season are you in right now? And when you have wanted to give up, what has kept you going? Where is God asking you to hold on a little longer?

**For further study and encouragement: 2 Corinthians 12:9**



### **PRAY**

*Lord, Marie Hélène's strength didn't come from within—it came from You. When I face my own hard days, remind me of that. Give me the courage to keep going and the humility to accept help when it comes. Amen.*

## Day 3: **COMMUNITY**



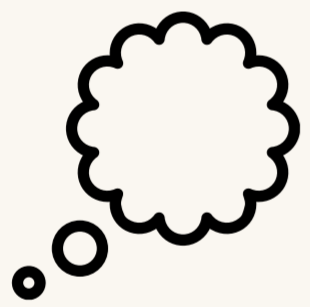
In Aline's kitchen, her family moves like choreographed dancers. Her foster son, Darbens, works the mortar and pestle, crushing garlic and onions into a paste. Outside, Aline's father holds the cup while her other foster son, Marleck, drinks his milk. Everyone has a role. Everyone belongs. Aline has been a foster parent with Hands & Feet Project for seventeen years, caring for children with disabilities. When Marleck arrived, he was nine years old and could only crawl. Aline held both his hands

and walked him around the house every day until he could stand on his own. Today, he walks independently and attends school.

But Aline will tell you plainly: she does not do this alone. Her husband rushes through the rain to find a car when a child needs the hospital. Her father crushes medications during seizures. Her mother keeps up with laundry and makes sure medicine is given on time even when Aline is away. Her biological children love and help care for others. This is a family that has said yes together.

*"Alone, I would not be able to do this work. I am really well surrounded."*

**- Aline**



### **REFLECT**

No one was assigned roles in Aline's household. Her family saw what needed to be done, and they did it. They did not wait for things to be calm or convenient. They showed up in the middle of 2 AM seizures, rainstorms, and messy kitchens. Real community does not wait for the perfect moment. When was the last time you showed up for someone in the middle of their mess? When was the last time you let someone into yours? And what is one thing you could do this week to be that person for someone in your life?

**For further study and encouragement: Galatians 6:2**



### **PRAY**

*God, Aline has spent seventeen years saying yes. Not alone, but surrounded by people who chose to carry this with her. Open my eyes to the people already around me. And give me the willingness to be the person who shows up for someone else, even when it is not convenient. Amen.*

## Day 4: **RESTORATION**

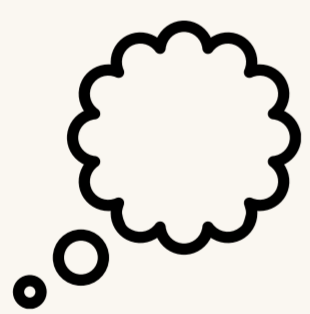


Marie Flore sat on her front porch holding her youngest daughter, Milanncia. Every morning, she carried six jerry cans to a faraway spigot because the water pipe near their home was broken. Her husband Nesly worked three jobs. But their four children were still hungry and unable to attend school due to the increase in school fees. The pressure was unbearable. Conflict crept in between Marie and Nesly. Communication broke down. One day, the family split apart. Marie left, taking the children with her.

When Hands & Feet Project's Preserving Families team found out, they stepped in. A social worker, a campus pastor, and a community elder came alongside the family as peacemakers. Through honest conversations and hard confessions, tension gave way to understanding. Marie and Nesly reconciled. The children came home. Today, the Flore family is whole again. Their children are in school, there is food on the table, and Marie knows that when conflict comes again, she will not have to face it alone.

*"This reconciliation calmed our spirits and enabled the children to return home and continue to go to school in peace. In a word, it brought my family back to life."*

**- Marie**



### **REFLECT**

As her family began to fall apart, Marie felt like she needed to leave. And sometimes it's easier to stay apart than to say what needs to be said. But she and Nesly both wanted their family whole. And that made the hard conversation worth having. Is there a relationship in your life where both sides want it to work, but neither has been willing to go first? What could that relationship look like on the other side of one honest conversation?

**For further study and encouragement: Psalm 34:18**



### **PRAY**

*Father, You did not leave Marie's family in a broken place. You sent people to walk them through it. Give me the courage to stop pretending everything is fine when it is not. And help me be honest enough to let restoration begin. Amen.*

## Day 5: HOPE

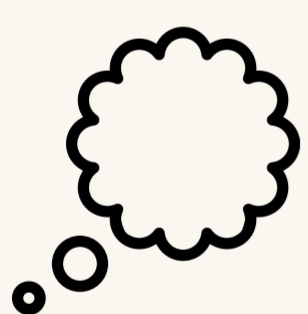


Iselande and her husband Emmanuel are farmers in Haiti, growing and harvesting produce for a living. But for a long time, their family lived in the dry season. Their three daughters went hungry, sometimes for a full day. Their fragile home had a twisted sheet for a door, and on stormy nights, rain came inside. At four and seven years old, Fabienne and Ketlove had never set foot in a classroom. Iselande and Emmanuel had dreams for their daughters, but no way to make them real.

Then a Hands & Feet Project social worker arrived with news: the Vercile family had been accepted into the Preserving Families program. Iselande turned to her husband with a smile and said the words she had been waiting years to say. *Emmanuel, timoun yo resi pral lekòl ato.* "Emmanuel, the children are finally going to school now." On their first day of school, she dressed Fabienne and Ketlove in white uniforms with pink socks, pink hair ribbons, and matching pink backpacks. Hand in hand, they walked to class together. Today, both girls are thriving, making friends, and bringing home good grades. This past fall, the family received the keys to a brand new home. A place to sleep without fear. A place to gather, rest, and dream. What started as a prayer for school became more than Iselande ever thought to ask for.

*"Emmanuel, the children are finally going to school now."*

**- Iselande**



### REFLECT

Iselande dreamed of her daughters going to school for years before it finally happened. And when it did, it was only the beginning. Good grades, new friendships, and a brand new home followed. When you look back on the hardest seasons of your life, where did God show up in ways you never expected? And what are you afraid to hope for right now that He might already be working on?

**For further study and encouragement: Isaiah 43:18-19**



### PRAY

*Lord, You gave Iselande more than she asked for. You do that. You take the thing we barely dare to hope for and You go beyond it. Teach me to stop shrinking my prayers. Give me the faith to believe that what feels impossible to me is already in Your hands. Amen.*

# FROM HER TABLE TO YOURS

In Haiti, a meal is never just a meal. It's how a mother says "I love you" without words. It's how she gathers her family close after a long day. It's how she turns whatever she has into something that feels like enough.

This recipe comes from the kitchens of Haitian mothers like the ones you just read about. We wanted to share it with you so that something from their table could find its way to yours.

## **DIRI KOLE AK PWA (HAITIAN RICE & BEANS)**

Serves 4-6 | Total time: 1 hr 45 min



### **INGREDIENTS**

- 1 ½ cups dry red kidney beans
- 6-7 cups water (for boiling)
- 2-3 tbsp neutral oil
- 1 ½ cups coconut milk (canned or fresh)
- 3 cups reserved bean cooking liquid (from above)
- 4 cloves garlic
- 4 green onions
- 1 chicken bouillon cube or 1 tsp chicken bouillon seasoning
- Small bunch of parsley
- 1-2 sprigs thyme
- 1 whole Scotch Bonnet or habanero pepper, pierced with 3-4 whole cloves (optional)
- Salt, to taste
- 2 cups long-grain white rice



# DIRECTIONS

## 1. Cook the beans (60–90 min)

Add beans and 4 cups of water to a pot. Bring to a boil.

Let the water reduce, then add 2–3 more cups of water and continue cooking. Cook until beans are tender and beginning to split.

Important: Strain beans and reserve the cooking liquid. Don't throw this away! You'll need it later.

## 2. Make epis (2 min)

Blend garlic and green onions into a paste, called epis. This fresh seasoning blend is the base of most Haitian dishes and can also include onions, peppers, and other herbs and spices.

If needed, add a splash of water to help it blend. This can also be done by hand in a mortar and pestle—which is how most moms in Haiti do it!

## 3. Build flavor base (5 min)

Heat oil in a large pot over medium heat.

Add epis and cook for 2–3 minutes, stirring, until fragrant.

Add cooked beans and stir to coat. Sauté for 1–2 minutes, also until fragrant.

## 4. Add liquids + seasonings (15 min)

Add coconut milk, 3 cups reserved bean liquid, and the chicken bouillon seasoning or cube. If using a cube, crumble it in your fingers before adding to the pot. Stir well.

Tie the thyme and parsley into a bundle and pierce the pepper with

3–4 whole cloves. (You may want to wear gloves for this step.) If left intact, the pepper doesn't add intense heat; it adds an aromatic spice and depth of flavor. Feel free to leave it out if you prefer! Add the herbs and pepper (if using) to the pot.

Bring the liquid to a boil, then reduce to a simmer.

Taste and adjust salt.

Simmer 10–15 minutes to develop flavor.

## 5. Add rice (10–15 min)

Rinse rice until the water runs mostly clear. Add rice to the pot and stir once to distribute evenly. Don't stir too much, and don't stir while it's cooking—this will make the rice gummy or sticky.

Bring back to a gentle simmer over medium to medium-low heat, uncovered. Cook without stirring until most of the liquid is absorbed and the rice is visible at the surface. It should look like the rice is sitting in thickened liquid with small bubbles breaking through, but not a rapid boil.

## 6. Steam the rice (15–20 min)

Reduce the heat to low.

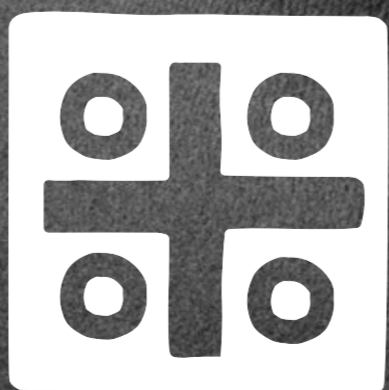
Stir once, cover tightly, and let the rice steam for several minutes. Rice should be tender and fluffy when done.

## 7. Finish

Remove the thyme and parsley bundles, and the whole pepper.

Fluff, serve, and enjoy!

*Bon appeti!*



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