

**SPECIAL
EDITION**

At the Counter Soul Pause Journal

A Guided Companion
for Reflection, Prayer, and
Everyday Faith



LAURA SHARP-WAITES

At the Counter

Soul Pause Journal

A Guided Companion for Reflection,
Prayer, and Everyday Faith

Special Edition

Laura Sharp-Waites

At the Counter Soul Pause Journal:

A Guided Companion for Reflection, Prayer, and Everyday Faith,
Special Edition

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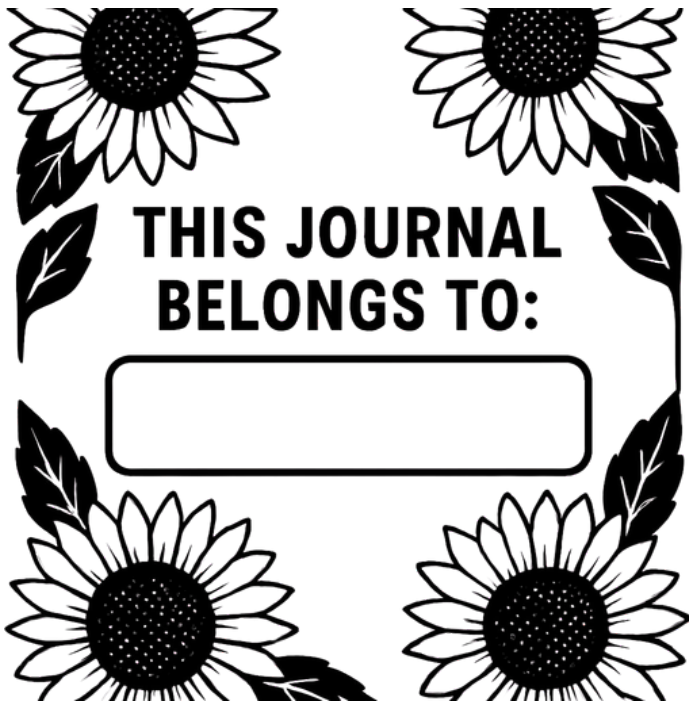
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This is a work of nonfiction. This book contains personal reflections and stories. Names or identifying details may be changed to protect privacy.

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This book was written at the counter, one ordinary day at a time.



A place for quiet reflection,
honest prayer, and the
ordinary moments of faith.

Dedication

This journal exists because readers asked for it.

Over time, many of you shared how the Soul Pause reflections in At the Counter became small moments of stillness in your day. Some of you began writing your thoughts in the margins, in notebooks, or on scraps of paper nearby.

You wondered what it might be like to have a space created just for that purpose.

This journal is for you.

Thank you for reading, reflecting, and gently encouraging this idea to grow into something more. And for those who have found their way here through the podcast, thank you for sitting at the counter and making space for these conversations.

May these pages offer you the same quiet invitation that inspired them in the first place.

Pull up a chair at the counter.

You belong here.



About This Journal

The *At the Counter Soul Pause Journal* was created as a guided companion to the devotional *At the Counter: Spiritual Recipes for Faith in Everyday Life*.

Each chapter of the devotional includes a brief Soul Pause—a moment to reflect on where God may be meeting you in everyday life.

This journal gathers those moments into one place and provides space to write, pray, and explore your own reflections.

You may choose to use it alongside the devotional, or simply as a quiet place to pause on its own.

You may write a little or a lot.

Some days may fill a page.

Other days may hold only a sentence or two.

Both are enough.

This journal is not meant to guide you toward perfect answers.

It is simply a place to notice what is already present—

and to trust that God meets you there.



How to Use This Journal

There's no right way to use these pages.

You might read a prompt and sit quietly with it.

You might write a few words... or a full page.

You might come back to the same question more than once.

Some days, you may only have a moment.

Other days, you may find yourself lingering longer than you expected.

Let that be enough.

You don't have to rush toward answers.

You don't have to make sense of everything right away.

This journal isn't about getting somewhere.

It's about making space for what's already here.

If a question feels heavy, you can set it down.

If something surprises you, you can stay with it a little longer.

Return when you need to.

Pause when you can.

Leave the rest.

This is simply a companion for the quiet moments.



At the Counter

Pull up a chair at the counter.

This is a place for ordinary moments, quiet questions, and the kind of reflection that often gets lost in the rush of daily life.

You do not need perfect words here.

You do not need to have everything figured out.

Just bring what is already present.

A thought.

A prayer.

A memory.

A question that hasn't found its answer yet.

God often meets us in the middle of the everyday—
in kitchens, conversations, pauses, and small acts of attention

These pages simply give that moment a place to land.

You don't have to write everything.

You don't have to make it meaningful.

Just notice what is here.



So take a breath.
Pick up your pen.
And begin wherever you are.

The counter is open.
And your seat is waiting.

Laura Sharp-Waites



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Opening Prayer

God of quiet moments,

As I open these pages, help me slow down enough to notice what is already here.

In the middle of ordinary days, unfinished thoughts, and questions I may not yet understand, remind me that your presence is already here.

Give me honesty as I write, patience as I listen, and gentleness toward the places in my life that are still unfolding.

Let these pages become a small space of reflection, gratitude, and trust.

And in the simple act of pausing, help me remember that I am never alone.

Amen.





Noticing

Soul Pause

Where did you notice a small moment of grace today?

“My grace is sufficient for you.”

— 2 Corinthians 12:9



Soul Pause

What is quietly present in your life right now?

“Be still, and know that I am God.”

— *Psalm 46:10*



Soul Pause

Where did you feel even a small sense of peace today?

“And the peace of God... will guard your hearts.”

— Philippians 4:7



Soul Pause

*What did you move past too quickly that might
be worth noticing again?*

“This is the day that the Lord has made.”

— Psalm 118:24



Soul Pause

What are you becoming more aware of in this season?

“See, I am doing a new thing.”

— Isaiah 43:19



Soul Pause

Where did something ordinary feel meaningful?

“The earth is full of the steadfast love of the Lord.”

— Psalm 33:5



Soul Pause

What is asking for your attention today?

“Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.”

— 1 Samuel 3:9



Soul Pause

What did you feel, even briefly, that you almost ignored?

“Search me, O God, and know my heart.”

Psalm 139:23





Soul Pause

What feels heavy in your life right now?

“Come to me... and I will give you rest.”

— Matthew 11:28



Soul Pause

What have you been carrying that is difficult to name?

“Pour out your heart before him.”

— *Psalm 62:8*



Soul Pause

Where do you feel tired in ways that rest alone won't fix?

“My soul is weary with sorrow.”

— Psalm 119:28



Soul Pause

What are you avoiding, even gently?

“The truth will set you free.”

— John 8:32



Soul Pause

What feels unfinished or unresolved in your heart?

“The Lord will fulfill his purpose for me.”

— Psalm 138:8



Soul Pause

What truth have you been hesitant to admit to yourself?

“Then you will know the truth...”

— John 8:32





Letting Go

Soul Pause

*What are you holding onto that may no longer belong
in this season?*

“Forget the former things; do not dwell on
the past.” — Isaiah 43:18



Soul Pause

*What would it feel like to set something down,
even for a moment?*

“Cast your burden on the Lord.”

— Psalm 55:22



Soul Pause

Where might you be holding on out of fear rather than faith?

“For God has not given us a spirit of fear.”

— 2 Timothy 1:7



Soul Pause

What expectations are you carrying that are no longer yours?

“My yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

— *Matthew 11:30*



Soul Pause

What would it look like to release control, even slightly?

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart.”

— Proverbs 3:5



Soul Pause

What are you afraid might happen if you let go?

“Do not be afraid, for I am with you.”

— *Isaiah 41:10*





Soul Pause

What kind of rest do you need right now?

“He restores my soul.”

— Psalm 23:3



Soul Pause

Where in your life are you being invited to slow down?

“Be still before the Lord.”

— Psalm 37:7



Soul Pause

What would it look like to be gentle with yourself today?

“My grace is sufficient for you.”

— 2 Corinthians 12:9



Soul Pause

Where are you pushing when you might be invited to pause?

“In returning and rest you shall be saved.”

— Isaiah 30:15



Soul Pause

What would “enough” look like for today?

“Give us this day our daily bread.”

— Matthew 6:11





Hope

Soul Pause

What is quietly growing in your life right now?

“The kingdom of God is like a mustard seed.”

— Mark 4:31



Soul Pause

What feels like a small next step, not a big one?

“Your word is a lamp to my feet.”

— Psalm 119:105



Soul Pause

Where do you sense even a hint of hope?

“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace.”

— Romans 15:13



Soul Pause

*What would it look like to trust this season,
even without clarity?*

“We walk by faith, not by sight.”

— 2 Corinthians 5:7



Soul Pause

What might God be inviting you into, gently?

“See, I am making all things new.”

— *Revelation 21:5*



Counter Companions

Prayers for the Moments You're Living

There may be moments when you come to these pages without words.

Moments when reflection feels difficult, or when what you are carrying feels too heavy to sort through on your own.

These prayers are here for those times.

You can read them slowly, return to them often, or simply let them hold what you cannot yet say.

You do not have to find the right words.
You are already heard.



Noticing Prayer

God of quiet moments,

Help me slow down enough to notice what is already here.

In the middle of ordinary things, open my eyes to the small signs of your presence— the moments I might otherwise pass by too quickly.

Teach me to see with gentleness
and to trust that even the smallest moments matter.

Amen.



Honesty Prayer

God who meets me as I am,

Give me the courage to be honest about what I'm carrying.

Where things feel heavy or unclear,
help me name what is true without fear or shame.

Hold me in the places I don't fully understand yet,
and remind me that I don't have to hide from you.

Amen.



Letting Go

Prayer

God of open hands,

Help me release what I was never meant to carry.

Where I am holding too tightly—out of fear, habit, or uncertainty
— gently loosen my grip.

Teach me to trust you with what I cannot control,
and give me peace in the act of letting go.

Amen.



Rest Prayer

God of rest,

Meet me in this moment of pause.

Where I feel tired, restore what has been worn thin.

Where I feel rushed, slow me down.

Help me receive rest without guilt
and trust that even stillness has purpose.

Amen.



Hope / Forward Prayer

God of new beginnings,

Walk with me into what comes next.

When the path feels unclear,
be the quiet light that guides my steps.

Help me trust the small beginnings,
and remind me that you are already at work in what is unfolding.

Amen.



Closing Prayer

God of everyday moments,

As I step back into the rhythm of my day,
help me carry this sense of quiet with me.

Where life feels hurried, slow me gently.
Where I feel uncertain, steady my steps.

Where I feel alone, remind me that your presence goes with me.

Take what I have written—
the clear thoughts and the unfinished ones—
and hold them with care.

Help me trust that nothing offered here is wasted.

And when I forget,
when the noise returns and the pace picks up,
lead me back to this place again.

A place of pause.
A place of honesty.
A place where I am met with grace.

Amen.



Before You Go

Before you close these pages, take a moment.

Not to finish anything.

Not to come to a conclusion.

Just to notice.

Notice what feels a little lighter.

Notice what still feels tender.

Notice what you're carrying with you as you leave this space.

You don't have to have answers.

You don't have to make sense of everything you wrote.

Sometimes the simple act of pausing is enough.

If you've found yourself returning to these pages...

lingering a little longer than you expected...

or noticing something quietly shifting beneath the surface...

you're welcome to continue.



The full *Soul Pause Journal* offers more space to reflect, more gentle prompts to return to, and a deeper rhythm for noticing God's presence in the ordinary moments of life.

<https://amzn.to/3PJxFRj>

And if you're drawn to sit with these themes a little longer, *At the Counter: Spiritual Recipes for Faith in Everyday Life* invites you into the same kind of quiet, everyday faith—through story, reflection, and the sacredness of what often goes unnoticed. <https://amzn.to/4vifCBW>

There's no need to rush there.

But if and when you're ready, you can find them here:

<https://amzn.to/4m1WRhM>

Until then...

stay as long as you need.

The counter is still open.

And you are always welcome here.



About the Author

Laura Sharp-Waites is a licensed minister, writer, and the voice behind *The Baking Pastor*. Her work weaves together storytelling, hospitality, and spiritual reflection, inviting others to encounter faith in the ordinary rhythms of everyday life.

Through her writing—and her podcast, **At the Counter with the Baking Pastor**—Laura creates space for gentle pauses, honest reflection, and conversations that meet people right where they are.

At the Counter: Soul Pause Journal grew out of the reflections found in her book *At the Counter*, offering readers a place to slow down, write, and engage more deeply with their own stories of faith.

Whether through books, podcast conversations, speaking, or small group gatherings, Laura's heart is to create spaces where people feel welcomed, seen, and invited to pull up a chair at the counter.

Companion Leader Guides and additional resources are available for those who wish to explore these reflections in community.

<https://daretoliveagain.com/leader-guide/>



