

praying with a psalm

LIVINGTHEWORD

PRAYING WITH A PSALM

The Psalms - all 150 of them - the church recognises as the cry of the human heart, our ups and downs of life. When we don't seem to have words to say or pray..... the psalms can help us share our heart with God

Welcome to the Psalms! The Psalms are so descriptive of the journey of the human heart, its joys, questions and struggles. Sometimes we may find ourselves in a time of prayer and we don't seem to find words. We may be happy or sad. We may even feel we have lost a desire for prayer. We don't find words to express what our heart is going through. Let the psalms help you.

- Open your bible to the Psalms. Look at the headings of the various Psalms. What are you feeling and thinking at the moment? Does a Psalm heading strike you?
- Say the words of the Psalm slowly, allow the words to pray themselves in you. Allow the words to be a springboard into a conversation with God. Stay repeating a word or words until your heart has really prayed them to God. It is ok to argue and 'talk something out with God' by using a psalm. If a psalm is thankful and I'm not feeling thankful—talk about it with God.
- Christian tradition has treasured the psalms being prayed daily for the church and the world. Hold someone in your mind and heart when you are praying a suffering psalm (Ps 86). Hold someone in your mind and heart when you are praising God with a psalm of thanksgiving (Ps 66). If you feel saddened by sin, both personal and the sin present in the world, pray a psalm recognising this (Ps 51).
- Take a small phrase or single verse of the psalm and try and memorise it. Recall the verse or phrase during the day.
- You may like to write some of the psalms and phrases you have used and found helpful.

GETTING STARTED

- Prayer can sometimes be like a mirror. We pray with the scriptures and we find ourselves. We hear and notice how we are 'inside'.
- Look at the psalms and keep looking at the headings or phrases to see if anything 'strikes' you.
- Sit with a few lines and listen to what it does within you. eg. 'protect me God, I need you (psalm 16,1). What do I need protecting from?

Try some famous psalms

- Ps 50- for forgiveness
- Ps 139 - in wonder
- Ps 143 - for help
- Ps 130 - in sadness
- Ps 103 - God's love
- Ps 95 - in thanks