

# St John's, Ranmoor

## Sanctuary at home

### Refuge | Safety | A Holy Space



## Psalms of Lament

Out of the depths have I cried to you, O Lord;  
Lord, hear my voice;

I wait for the Lord; my soul waits for him;  
in his word is my hope.

*from Psalm 130*

The Psalter is the prayer book of Jesus Christ in the truest sense of the word. He prayed the Psalter and now it has become his prayer for all time...we understand how the Psalter can be prayer to God and yet God's own Word, precisely because here we encounter the praying Christ...because those who pray the psalms are joining in with the prayer of Jesus Christ, their prayer reaches the ears of God. Christ has become their intercessor...

*Dietrich Bonhoeffer*

### Welcome and introduction

Welcome to this suggested outline for how you might spend some time with Psalms of Lament at home. If we had been gathered in church there would have been a quiet space and some candlelight. You might like to find a quiet and comfortable corner at home, away from distractions, to allow this to be a time of rest, reflection and intentional abiding with the psalms.

The Laments are the commonest type of psalm. They form about one third of the Psalter. They express the psalmist's response to God in a situation of need or affliction. Their structure is flexible, being made up of a number of elements, not all of which will occur in any one psalm, and the order of which varies. Some of the more common elements are:

#### **Invocation of God**

**Complaint** - a description of the distress of misfortune that the psalmist is suffering - perhaps the 'heart' of the lament

**Petition** - an appeal to God to intervene and deliver

**A vow to praise and thank God** following deliverance

**Expression of confidence and trust in God**

**Exclamation of praise and thanksgiving**

Throughout this short reflective liturgy feel free to say the words out loud or pray them in the silence of your heart. God is listening.

### Greeting

Though we are scattered, we come together now to meet with God.  
Let us recognize his presence with us

### *Silence is kept*

As God's people we have gathered:  
Let us worship him together.

Come O Lord and visit us in peace,  
that we may rejoice before you with a perfect heart.

## Praise

*Music during which a candle may be lit: Mother of God, Here I Stand* - John Tavener  
To play the music on YouTube click [here](#)

## Opening prayers

In the depths of my being  
I become quiet and still;  
I wait for you, my God,  
Source of my salvation  
Amen.

You, Lord, are in this place,  
Your presence fills it.  
Your presence is peace.

You, Lord, are in my heart,  
Your presence fills it.  
Your presence is peace.

You, Lord, are in my life,  
Your presence fills it.  
Your presence is peace.  
Amen

## The Word of God

### Psalm 54

Save me, O God, by your name  
and vindicate me by your power.

Hear my prayer, O God;  
give heed to the words of my mouth.

For strangers have risen up against me,  
and the ruthless seek after my life;  
they have not set God before them.

Behold, God is my helper;  
it is the Lord who upholds my life.

May evil rebound on those who lie in wait for me;  
destroy them in your faithfulness.



An offering of a free heart will I give you  
and praise your name, O Lord, for it is gracious.

For he has delivered me out of all my trouble,  
and my eye has seen the downfall of my enemies.

*Read the psalm again slowly and notice the pattern of Invocation, Petition etc typical of the Psalms of Lament*

In the time of silence which follows, you may feel prompted to reflect on something that is giving you cause to lament; to cry out to God in anguish.  
Perhaps you could follow the pattern of the Psalms of Lament and use this as the basis for prayer, asking God for help.

Invocation of God

Complaint

Petition

A vow to praise and thank God

Expression of confidence and trust in God

Exclamation of praise and thanksgiving

*You may wish to write down a lament during this time for reflection*

**Response**

*A time of silence (20-30 mins)*

Lord, meet us in the silence  
and hear our prayer

*At the end of the silence:*

**Prayers**

I weave a silence on to my lips  
I weave a silence into my mind  
I weave a silence within my heart  
I close my ears to distractions

I close my eyes to attractions  
I close my heart to temptations

Calm me as You stilled the storm  
Still me, keep me from harm  
Let all the tumult within me cease  
Enfold me, Lord, in your peace.

*David Adam*

Calm my troubled heart; give me peace.  
O Lord, calm the waves of this heart, calm its tempests!  
Calm thyself, O my soul, so that the divine can act in thee!  
Calm thyself, O my soul, so that God is able to repose in thee,  
so that his peace may cover thee!  
Yes, Father in heaven, often have we found that the world cannot give us peace, but make  
us feel that thou art able to give peace; let us know the truth of thy promise: that the whole  
world may not be able to take away thy peace.

*Søren Kierkegaard (1813-1855)*

Eternal Light, shine into our hearts,  
eternal Goodness, deliver us from evil,  
eternal Power, be our support,  
eternal Wisdom, scatter the darkness of our ignorance,  
eternal Pity, have mercy upon us;  
That with all our heart and mind and soul and strength  
We may seek your face  
And be brought by your infinite mercy to your holy presence  
Through Jesus Christ our Lord  
Amen

*Alcuin of York (735-804)*

*Prayers conclude with The Lord's Prayer*

## **Conclusion**

### **Blessing**

May God keep us in all our days.  
May Christ shield us in all our ways.  
May the Spirit bring us healing and peace.  
May God the Holy Trinity drive all darkness from us  
and pour upon us blessing and light.

Amen.

Let us bless the Lord

Thanks be to God

Mother of God, here I stand - Tavener

Mother of God, here I stand

Now praying,

Before this icon of your

Radiant brightness,

Not praying to be saved

From a battlefield,

Not giving thanks,

Nor seeking forgiveness

For the sins of my soul,

Nor for all the souls.

Numb, joyless and desolate on earth,

But for her alone,

Whom I wholly give you.