

Praying the Psalms

Psalms has been called the prayer book of the Bible in both Jewish and Christian traditions. Because the Psalms range so widely in emotional expression, from the heights of adoration and praise to the depths of vengeful curses against the enemy, they have special relevance to our prayer lives. They teach us to bring everything to God.

No matter what we are feeling—distress, trust, anger or delight, we find the words of the psalms accompany us into God's presence. . . in the Psalms we find words to express every conceivable human condition and feeling. These prayers give us words to glorify, confess, hope, ask, and even curse. In doing so, they give us permission to share our whole being with God.

Some Psalms to pray if you are feeling:

Anxious/afraid: Psalm 70.

Envious: Psalm 73

Despairing: Psalm 77

Sick and Tired: Psalm 6

Grateful: Psalm 9

Contented: Psalm 23

Wrongly accused: Psalm 17

Awed by God: Psalm 29

Suggestions:

1. Try to understand a Psalm before praying it.
2. Linger over a Psalm: Is there any particular verse that is especially relevant to your life right now? Chew on it. Read it over and over, with a different emphasis on each word. Why is this word chosen or important here? What difference would this make in my life if I believed this with all my heart? If I applied this to my life? Pray for yourself and others from it.
3. Use the Psalms to praise God

Try it out: Try out the above suggestions. Don't rush. Don't worry about doing this perfectly, just start! Be alert to what

differences might be happening in your relationship with God and your life as a result.

Practice: Psalm 131 (NIV):

My heart is not proud, LORD,
my eyes are not haughty;
I do not concern myself with great matters
or things too wonderful for me.
But I have calmed and quieted myself;
I am like a weaned child with its mother;
like a weaned child I am content.

Israel, put your hope in the LORD
both now and forevermore.

Redeemer Presbyterian Church:

www.redeemer.com/learn/resources_by_topic/prayer/prayer_and_fasting/praying_the_psalms/
Living Prayer Center: prayer-center.upperroom.org/resources/resources-articles/50

Fasting

The focus of fasting should not be on the lack of food.

Christian fasting is accompanied by a special focus on prayer during the fast, often substituting the time you'd spend eating with prayer.

Fasting provides a real-life illustration of dependency.

Fasting reveals a physical reliance on food that points to the ultimate dependency—the fact that you're dependent on God for things far more important than food.

Fasting fosters concentration on God and God's will. A hungry stomach makes you more aware and alert to what God is trying to say to you.

Fasting offers a way to impose self-control in your life. It gives you a "splash in the face" to awaken you to the need for the personal strength of will that you need to grow spiritually.

Fasting isn't always about food! Everyone can give up something in order to focus on God (TV, internet, coffee drinks shopping, etc.)

www.redeemer.com/learn/resources_by_topic/prayer/prayer_and_fasting/fasting