

# SUMMER IN THE PSALMS

The song of the Christian assembly has its roots in the psalms of the Hebrew people, our forebears in faith. Jesus' own prayer relied on the psalms. The apostle Paul encouraged the faithful to sing "psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God" (Col. 3:16). Christians through the centuries have sung them daily.

Martin Luther considered the psalms the summary of all scripture, speaking to many situations and allowing the expression of a wide range of human responses. The psalms proclaim hope and faith, yet make room also for deep distress and questioning.

Read the psalm of the week at least twice per day. Try to memorize it by the end of the week.

Questions to ponder about the Psalms:

- 1) What type of Psalm is it?
- 2) Is it more individually focused, or more communal?
- 3) How can you relate to what the psalmist writes?
- 4) Write your own short psalm in the same style as the psalm for the week (ie. Lament, thanksgiving, trust, etc.). You could even challenge yourself to put your psalm to music!

The more deeply we grow into the psalms and the more often we pray them as our own, the more simple and rich will our prayer become."

~ Dietrich Bonhoeffer

"The book of Psalms can revolutionize our devotional life, our family patterns, and the fellowship and witness of the church of Jesus Christ."

~ Willem VanGemeren

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August 4 ~ In Psalm 40:1-10, David offered himself as a sacrifice to God because the Lord had delivered him. David lifts up the Lord as One to be trusted after his own deliverance and reestablishment after a long wait.

August 11 ~ Psalm 46, possibly written by King Hezekiah, lifts up the Lord as the people's sure defense. Just as Zion was secure because the Lord dwelt there, so its people were safe because God resided among them. "To Alamoth" in the title probably means female voices were to sing this psalm since the Hebrew word *alamot* means "maidens."

August 18 ~ Psalm 121 directed the thoughts of the pilgrim to God as his source of help. It gives assurance that God protects God's people.

August 25 ~ Psalm 51 is a penitential individual lament psalm in which David confessed the sins he committed against Bathsheba and Uriah. It is a model of confession that has become popular with God's people. Since we all sin so often and need to confess frequently, this psalm is a help and comfort to us all.

September 1 ~ In Psalm 150, the inspired poet called on every person to praise Yahweh for God's powerful deeds and supreme greatness (10 times out of the 13 uses of "praise" in this psalm). This psalm serves as a final doxology bringing the collection of psalms to a solemn and joyful conclusion.

May you be blessed as we immerse ourselves in the Psalms this summer!

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