



The Church's Ministry of Healing –
Down & Dromore Committee

Praying with the

PSALMS DURING LENT

Take time out with God

PRAYING WITH THE PSALMS DURING LENT

Lectio Divina is an engaging way of reading the Scriptures that has a long and rich history, and has been experiencing resurgence in recent years. It follows a four-step approach of: **lectio** - reading, **meditatio** - meditation, **oratio** - prayer, **contemplatio** - contemplation.

This booklet aims to follow a similar approach as we read through the appointed Psalms for each day throughout Lent. Each member of the committee was allocated a number of Lenten Psalms to reflect on. We read the Psalm in its entirety, and in some cases certain verses particularly stood out. We hope that you will be blessed through the verses and reflections that follow.

The Church's Ministry of Healing Down & Dromore Committee

Firstly, we invite you to **pause** as you **prepare** to read God's Word.

Focus on God and rest in His presence.

Invite the Holy Spirit to come and guide you through your experience.

Read - the passage slowly.

Reflect - Listen to what God may be saying to you.

Respond - to God in prayer.

Rest - in His presence.

Day 1 (Ash Wednesday)

Read Psalm 51: 1 – 18 slowly

Reflect

All of us would be aware of the sins that separate us from God – and none more so than the Psalmist David when he writes (v3): *“I know my transgressions and my sin is always before me”*.

This is common to each of us; we sin - we hold attitudes, or commit actions that are contrary to God’s will for us. It offends God and will burden us. But then David expresses that great and necessary response from each of us, a response that truly blesses. (v6): *“Surely you desire truth in the inner parts; you teach me wisdom in the inmost place”*. We need to acknowledge that the way forward, the wise and fulfilling way to live, is with this prayer on our heart (v10): *“Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me”*. This is something God does for us that we can’t do for ourselves. It happens when we desire, to follow Jesus Christ, to walk in obedience to him, and humbly with him. A humble and penitent heart rests in Jesus, blessed by the presence of his Holy Spirit.

Respond to God in prayer.

Rest in His presence.

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## **Day 2**

**Read** Psalm 25 slowly

*“Show me your ways, Lord, teach me your paths. Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Saviour, and my hope is in you all day long. Remember, Lord, your great mercy and love, for they are from of old. Do not remember the sins of my youth and my rebellious ways; according to your love remember me, for you, Lord, are good. Good and upright is the Lord; therefore he instructs sinners in his ways. He guides the humble in what is right and teaches them his way.”* (v4-9)

**Reflect** - Put your trust in God. In duty’s path go on. Walk in his strength with faith and hope. So shall your work be done. Give to the winds your fears; hope and be undismayed; God hears your sighs and counts your fears; God shall lift up your head. Who points the clouds their course, whom wind and wave obey; He shall direct your wandering feet. He shall prepare your way.

**Respond** to God in prayer.

**Rest** in His presence.

### **Day 3**

**Read** - Psalm 39 slowly

*"Hear my prayer, LORD, listen to my cry for help; do not be deaf to my weeping."* (v12)

**Reflect** - From the depths – of sorrow, suffering, sadness, pain and anguish – God is with us, hears our anguish and knows our pain.

**Respond** to God in prayer.

Almighty God, in your boundless love for us, you sent your Son to share our human experience; may the joy and sorrow known to Jesus in his life be to us a source of hope in the darkest of time; we pray this in the wonderful name of that same Jesus. Amen.

**Rest** in His presence.

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Day 4

Read Psalm 13 slowly

"But I trust in your unfailing love; my heart rejoices in your salvation. I will sing the Lord's praise, for he has been good to me." (v5-6)

Reflect - When we feel that things couldn't get any worse, we must still take our anxieties to God and leave them at His feet. While we may struggle and feel abandoned at times, we must be assured that God never leaves us. When His time is right, He will remove all our troubles, for which we must rejoice and sing His praise!

Respond to God in prayer.

Rest in His presence.

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### **Day 5** The First Sunday in Lent

**Read** Psalm 91:1-2, 9-16 slowly

*"Because he loves me," says the Lord, "I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name. He will call on me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honour him. With long life I will satisfy him and show him my salvation."* (v14-16)

**Reflect** - On the times and ways that God has answered your prayers in the past and praise him.

**Respond** to God in prayer.

God, the Most High, as you hold me in your love, may I rest in you; as you hear my call and answer, may I hear only your promise to rescue and deliver me; as you release me from worry, may I receive your blessing. Amen.

**Rest** in His presence.

## **Day 6**

**Read** Psalm 26 slowly

*“Test me, Lord, and try me, examine my heart and my mind; for I have always been mindful of your unfailing love and have lived in reliance on your faithfulness.” (v2-3)*

**Reflect** - listen to what God might be saying to you.

**Respond** to God in prayer.

**Rest** - in His presence.

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Day 7

Read Psalm 56 slowly

“In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I am not afraid; what can flesh do to me?” (v4 NRSV)

Reflect

‘For this slight momentary affliction is preparing us for an eternal weight of glory beyond all measure,’ (2 Cor 4:17)

So we fix our eyes, not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, for what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal. No matter what is happening around us we have to remember that we are on our journey home to be with Jesus for ever. When we trust in Him, nothing can harm us.

Respond to God in prayer.

Lord God, you never promised that it would be an easy journey, but I have been leaning on your promises that there may be weeping in the night, but joy comes in the morning. By your Holy Spirit, strengthen my faith and enable me to feel your presence and praise you continuously as I journey onward, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Rest in His presence.

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## **Day 8**

**Read** Psalm 3 slowly

*“But you, Lord, are a shield around me, my glory, the One who lifts my head high.” (v3)*

**Reflect**

For David the situation seemed hopeless. Enemies surrounded him and it appeared that God had deserted him. However, his faith remained strong. We pray that our faith will not waiver, even in the most trying times.

**Respond** to God in prayer.

Father, today I confess my own failings, and ask for your forgiveness. May I be aware of your protection over me and trust you just like David did.

**Rest** in His presence.

## **Day 9**

**Read** - Psalm 124 slowly.

*"Praise be to the LORD, who has not let us be torn by their teeth. We have escaped like a bird from the fowler's snare; the snare has been broken, and we have escaped. 8 Our help is in the name of the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth."* (v6-7)

**Reflect** - listen to what God might be saying to you.

**Respond** to God in prayer.

**Rest** - in His presence.

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Day 10

Read Psalm 27 slowly

"One thing I ask from the Lord, this only do I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze on the beauty of the Lord and to seek him in his temple. For in the day of trouble he will keep me safe in his dwelling; he will hide me in the shelter of his sacred tent and set me high upon a rock." (v4-5)

Reflect

David experienced many fears as revealed in Psalm 27. Those who were seeking his downfall, but he overcame his fears. Fear comes when we take our eyes off the Lord. Fear is basically the idea that something bad is going to happen to us or our loved ones. Either physical or emotional. Fear has a horrible impact on us and on our health: high blood pressure, nervous breakdowns, ulcers, headaches, blurred vision, lack of sleep, lack of concentration. David chose to come close to God, to dwell in His presence. If we fear the dark, the Lord is our light. If we fear danger, He is our Salvation. When we fear the lack of a basic need, He is our strength. Even though David was totally surrounded by enemies he knew that God would shield him and protect him. Bring your fears before the Lord and seek His face.

Respond to God in prayer.

Rest - in His presence.

Day 11

Read Psalm 69 slowly

Reflect

It's difficult to read this Psalm of David without hearing in the opening verses and in the verses following, the heart calls, shared centuries earlier by Job as he tries to make sense of a life turned upside down; all security gone, it seemed; facing the real loss of family and health and strength – and more particularly, the sense that God was not listening to him as he searched and prayed for answers. We will also read this Psalm and hear in its verses the prophetic heart call of Jesus, healer, friend, - beaten, rejected and nailed to a cross with the weight on his shoulders which drew from his lips: *“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”* At that moment, our Saviour bore all of our sins and failures, totally alone. The great thing to remember is that the resurrected light of the world was soon to shine his blessing and peace into the hearts of all who came to him, seeking the One who hears the needy. That brings praise from our hearts and lips as the Psalmist writes in verses 30 – 36.

Respond to God in prayer.

Rest - in His presence.

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## **Day 12** The Second Sunday in Lent

**Read** Psalm 135:1-14 slowly

*“Your name, Lord, endures for ever, your renown, Lord, through all generations. For the Lord will vindicate his people and have compassion on his servants. The idols of the nations are silver and gold, made by human hands. They have mouths, but cannot speak, eyes, but cannot see. They have ears, but cannot hear, nor is there breath in their mouths. Those who make them will be like them, and so will all who trust in them.”* (verses 13-18)

**Reflect** - listen to what God might be saying to you.

**Respond** to God in prayer.

God, it is easy for us poor men and women to seek help from other human beings; it is easy for us and tempting to kneel to images, even those of your dear Son, and pray for help. But we do not find it easy to surrender ourselves to you in faith and in silence. Please give us the desire and the grace to practice your presence and to seek your company wherever we may go. Help us to know that we are never alone, that our constant companion is always by our side. So we may have all the strength we need and a clear direction for our lives.

**Rest** - in His presence.

## **Day 13**

**Read** Psalm 145:1-13 slowly

*"The Lord is trustworthy in all he promises and faithful in all he does."* (v13)

### **Reflect**

God's faithfulness is a thing of hope for us. It is in his nature to do good and to desire good for his people.

**Respond** to God in prayer.

Faithful God, your faithfulness endures and is the same from age to age; help me trust in you in the good days and in the bad days, in the happy times and in the sad times, in joy and in sorrow. I ask this in the name of the Lord of all hopefulness, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

**Rest** - in His presence.

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Day 14

Read Psalm 89:26-36 slowly

"I will maintain my love to him for ever, and my covenant with him will never fail. but I will not take my love from him, nor will I ever betray faithfulness." (v28 & 33)

Reflect

God's covenant with us is eternal and His love will never fail. Even when we fail to keep to his laws, He will never stop loving us.

Respond to God in prayer.

Rest - in His presence.

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## **Day 15**

**Read** Psalm 105:1-15, (16-41), 42 slowly

*"Give praise to the Lord, proclaim his name; make known among the nations what he has done. Sing to him, sing praise to him; tell of all his wonderful acts. Glory in his holy name; let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice."* (v1-3)

**Reflect** - remember the prayers you have seen God answer.

**Respond** to God in prayer.

Lord God, you never forget your promises to us, your love never fails; I praise you for your wonderful works, the pledge of your faithfulness. Help me to look to you always to save and rescue.

**Rest** - in His presence.

## **Day 16**

**Read** Psalm 69 slowly

*“Do not hide your face from your servant, Answer me quickly, for I am in trouble, come near and rescue me, redeem me because of my foes.” (v17-18)*

**Reflect** - listen to what God might be saying to you.

**Respond** to God in prayer.

**Rest** - in His presence.

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Day 17

Read Psalm 31 slowly

“My times are in your hand; deliver me from the hand of my enemies and persecutors.” (v15)

Reflect

Not only are we ourselves in God’s hands, but all that is around us is in his hands too. We are held in the palms of his hands, where our very name is engraved (Isaiah 49:16). We are at his disposal and our circumstances are arranged by him. We are there because we have committed our life to Jesus. We are members of his body. Nothing is left to chance; God is always caring for us.

Respond to God in prayer.

Lord God, it seems as though there are many out to get me. They would love to trip me up and see me fall, but help me by your Spirit to walk the narrow path of life, and keep my feet from slipping. May I always acknowledge your presence and give you the praise and glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Rest - in His presence.

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## **Day 18**

**Read** Psalm 32 slowly

*“Blessed is the one whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. (v1) ...the Lord’s unfailing love surrounds the one who trusts in him.” (v10b)*

**Reflect**

As we are reminded in Morning Prayer *‘If we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us; but if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.’* (1 John 1:8,9) We are truly blessed, let us never forget that fact. Being blessed is so much more than simply happiness or joy. Thank you Lord for the awesome gift of forgiveness you offer us, and for the amazing unfailing love you have for us.

**Respond** to God in prayer.

**Rest** - in His presence.

## **Day 19** The Third Sunday in Lent

**Read** Psalm 63 slowly.

*“You, God, are my God, earnestly I seek you; I thirst for you, my whole being longs for you, in a dry and parched land where there is no water. I have seen you in the sanctuary and beheld your power and your glory. Because your love is better than life, my lips will glorify you. I will praise you as long as I live, and in your name I will lift up my hands.” (v1-4)*

**Reflect** - listen to what God might be saying to you.

**Respond** to God in prayer.

**Rest** - in His presence.

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Day 20

Read Psalm 40 slowly

“I waited patiently for the Lord; he turned to me and heard my cry. He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire; he set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand. He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God. Many will see and fear the Lord and put their trust in him.” (v1-3)

Reflect

Often we find ourselves in pits of hopelessness and desperation. When we are in a bind and cannot crawl our way out. Whether it be physical or emotional. It could be the physical and recurring pain of an illness, or the constant strains of not having enough money, to provide for our family. David cried out asking God for help, most likely he cried tears of pain because the suffering was so great. David put his hope in the Lord and he waited patiently for help. We too need to wait patiently for God to answer in His time. So whatever we are facing, let us continue to wait for God to act. God rescued David and was the solid ground on which to stand. And as a result He put a new song in his mouth. Even in the pits, patiently wait upon the Lord.

Respond to God in prayer.

Rest - in His presence.

Day 21

Read Psalms 25 and 27 slowly

Reflect

In Psalm 25:1 we read: *“To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul; in you I trust O my God.”* and in verse 4: *“Show me your ways, O Lord, teach me your paths, guide me in your truth and teach me”* In Psalm 27: 14 David expresses hope for those who set their hearts to do this. It requires that we determine to *“be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord.”*

Being a Christian, a follower of Jesus, in this day and age, is not a particularly easy way to live. Opposition comes, not for us, perhaps in overt persecution, but in a derisory comment, in a dismissal of an opinion we hold, which could well make us feel a bit isolated. It's often easier to keep your opinion to yourself, keep the head down. In the Book of Joshua, in Chapter 1, Joshua is told, no less than 4 times, to be strong and courageous as he prepared to obey God's command.

That being ‘strong and courageous’; that command in Psalm 17 to “be strong and take heart” only finds obedience in us when we “wait for the Lord” ie study his Word, listen to what he is saying to us, talking to him in prayer, resting in his presence.

Respond to God in prayer.

Rest - in His presence.

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## **Day 22**

**Read** Psalm 39 slowly

*“Show me, Lord, my life's end and the number of my days; let me know how fleeting my life is. You have made my days a mere handbreadth; the span of my years is as nothing before you. Everyone is but a breath, even those who seem secure. ‘Surely everyone goes around like a mere phantom; in vain they rush about, heaping up wealth without knowing whose it will finally be. ‘But now, Lord, what do I look for? My hope is in you.”* (v13-18)

**Reflect** - Listen to what God might be saying to you.

**Respond** to God in prayer.

Father in heaven, we do not know the number of our days here on earth. The good things which we may enjoy here on earth are not shared by all and not appreciated sometimes by those of us who are blessed with them. Let us not forget to pray for those for whom the journey of life is hard, beset by war, pain, sickness and sorrow, or overwhelmed by disaster and injustice. In the trials they face and the burdens with which they struggle, may your love break through. May the message of the Gospel bring them strength and comfort, help and healing.

**Rest** - in His presence.

## **Day 23**

**Read** Psalm 31 slowly

*"I trust in you, LORD; I say, 'You are my God.'" (v14)*

### **Reflect**

Our God is not a mysterious, remote being in a far off place. He is with us, he sent his Son to walk in our world and his Spirit guides and sustains us. He is a God who knows us personally and wants us to know him intimately.

**Respond** to God in prayer. Merciful God; thank you that you know me better than I can know myself; grant that I would know you more fully each and every day, that my fulfilment and my heart's rest will come from you. Amen.

**Rest** - in His presence.

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Day 24

Read Psalm 26 and Psalm 32 slowly

Reflect

Psalm 26 – *"for I have always been mindful of your unfailing love and have lived in reliance on your faithfulness."* (v3)

We all aspire to lead a blameless life, but we all fail at times. We must never forget God's unfailing love and faithfulness to us.

Psalm 32 – *"I said, 'I will confess my transgressions to the Lord.'" And you forgave the guilt of my sin."* (v5)

"You are my hiding place; you will protect me from trouble and surround me with songs of deliverance." (v7)

"Many are the woes of the wicked, but the Lord's unfailing love surrounds the one who trusts in Him". (v10)

"Rejoice in the Lord and be glad, you righteous; sing, all you who are upright in heart!" (v11)

We must all take responsibility for our sins and confess them to the Lord in the sure knowledge that He will forgive us. Let us offer Him praise for His undying love for us.

Respond to God in prayer.

Rest - in His presence.

Day 25

Read Psalm 56 slowly

*“When I am afraid, I put my trust in you. In God, whose word I praise—
in God I trust and am not afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?” (v3-4)*

Reflect

Bring before God the people and situations you are anxious about.

Respond to God in prayer.

Lord, my God, so many things cause me to fear;
so many of them are personal and hidden from others, but you know what they
are.

Help me now to lift my eyes from them, to you, to trust you with even my
deepest fears. And may I know your perfect love releasing me from them all.

Rest - in His presence.

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## **Day 26** The Fourth Sunday in Lent

**Read** Psalm 32 slowly

*“Many are the woes of the wicked, but the Lord's unfailing love surrounds the  
man who trusts in him.” (v10-11)*

**Reflect** - Listen to what God might be saying to you.

**Respond** to God in prayer.

**Rest** - in His presence.

## **Day 27**

**Read** Psalm 30 slowly

*“O Lord my God, I cried to you for help, and you have healed me.”* (v2)

### **Reflect**

The Psalmist tells us that: *‘Weeping may linger for the night, but joy comes with the morning.’* (v.5b). When we are troubled, and tossing and turning in our bed at night, it is a very long time until morning. Those night watches are long and dark, but your word says: *‘When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you. For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Saviour.’* (Isaiah 43:2,3) I hold on to your promise that you will be with me whatever happens, and I am not afraid.

**Respond** to God in prayer.

Heavenly Father, thank you for listening to my cry for help and for healing me. I know that you have healed me for a reason; so use me whatever way you wish and keep me faithful to my promise to follow your precious Son Jesus forever. Amen

**Rest** - in His presence.

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Day 28

Read Psalm 46 slowly

“God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear.” (v1-2a)

Reflect

It is said that the one psalm that sustained Martin Luther throughout the period of the Reformation was Psalm 46, inspiring him to write the hymn “A Mighty Fortress is Our God”. God can and will help us with any problems in our life. We live at such a frantic pace today that we rarely take time to simply stop and reflect. One of the secrets of finding inner peace and calm is found in verse 10, *“Be still, and know that I am God...”* Take a few moments of quiet reflection, thinking about what the Lord has done, and is doing in your life.

Respond to God in prayer.

Rest - in His presence.

Day 29

Read Psalm 13 slowly.

“How long must I wrestle with my thoughts and day after day have sorrow in my heart? How long will my enemy triumph over me? Look on me and answer, LORD my God. Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep in death, and my enemy will say, “I have overcome him,” and my foes will rejoice when I fall. But I trust in your unfailing love; my heart rejoices in your salvation. I will sing the LORD’s praise, for he has been good to me.” (v2-5)

Reflect - Listen to what God might be saying to you.

Respond to God in prayer.

Rest - in His presence.

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## **Day 30**

**Read** Psalm 102 slowly

*“Hear my prayer, Lord; let my cry for help come to you. Do not hide your face from me when I am in distress. Turn your ear to me; when I call, answer me quickly.” (v1-2)*

**Reflect**

Many people in our world today are lonely, even in the midst of busyness. The silence of loneliness makes our heart waste away. Also for many nothing is more frustrating than the silence of God. We want answers, deliverance and help immediately. Often we confuse the silence of God with a lack of love or compassion. Depression often occurs when we focus on the circumstances surrounding a situation instead of the situation surrounding the circumstance. We become unable to see “the forest for the trees.” In these times we must learn to dwell on the Lord’s goodness; not our pain. He knows what we are going through and we need to learn to trust Him. Remember that God has not turned His back on you or hidden His face from you.

**Respond** to God in prayer.

**Rest** - in His presence.

## **Day 31**

**Read** Psalm 38 slowly

### **Reflect**

This psalm, like others, identifies for us the awful hurt that is caused by numerous people who can *“hate without reason”* (v19), who can repay *“good with evil”* (v20).

Whilst the Psalmist recognises this sinful living of others, that often imposes great pain in his life, he also acknowledges in verse 18, the sin in his own life and its personal repercussions - *“I confess my iniquity; I am troubled by my sin”*. His acknowledgement of that sin, – gives expression to a deep truth: he knows the Lord he offends and he is also aware that God knows him – and he confesses to the One he knows! He is totally aware of God’s just judgement on sin. This confession shows a real, living relationship with God. There is an integrity of heart here for he writes: *“I wait for you, O Lord; you will answer, O Lord my God”* (v15). He trusts Him to hear his cry: *“O Lord do not forsake me; be not far from me, O my God. Come quickly to help me, O Lord my Saviour”*. There is an understanding here of God’s holiness, and grace and deliverance – and it can be ours as well!

**Respond** to God in prayer.

**Rest** - in His presence.

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Day 32

Read Psalm 90 slowly

“Our days may come to seventy years, or eighty, if our strength endures; yet the best of them are but trouble and sorrow, for they quickly pass, and we fly away. If only we knew the power of your anger! Your wrath is as great as the fear that is your due. Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.”
(v10-12)

Reflect - Listen to what God might be saying to you.

Respond to God in prayer.

The grass withers and the flower thereof fades away; but the Word of the Lord endures forever. Loving Lord, we pray that we may be shown the way to faith and taught to understand your word. We want to trust in you with all our heart. We do not want to depend on our own ways and decisions, we seek your will in all that we do and we trust that you will show us which path to take.

Rest - in His presence.

Day 33 The Fifth Sunday in Lent

Read Psalm 126 slowly

“The LORD has done great things for us...” (v4)

Reflect

From the depths of our hearts, we often offer petitions and intercessions. It is important for us to remember to come to God not only with petition, but with praise and thanksgiving because of all the good he has done for his people.

Respond to God in prayer.

Generous God, I thank you for all the blessings in my life. No matter the circumstances, let me always be thankful for the things I have, and let me always trust in you for the things I need. Amen.

Rest - in His presence.

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### **Day 34**

**Read** Psalm 73 slowly

*“Yet I am always with you; you hold me by my right hand. (v23)*

*My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever.” (v26)*

#### **Reflect**

How comforting to know that God is with us and holds our hand always while we are on this earth and He alone will lead us to glory.

**Respond** to God in prayer.

**Rest** - in His presence.

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Day 35

Read Psalm 20, 122 slowly

*“Pray for the peace of Jerusalem! “May they be secure who love you!
Peace be within your walls, and security within your towers!” (122:6,7)*

Reflect

Think about a difficult situation within your church family

Respond to God in prayer.

Lord God, you are our peace, but peace seems so far off at times.

I pray your peace for your people today, may we rest securely in you always.

Rest - in His presence.

Day 36

Read Psalm 55 slowly

“But I call to God, and the Lord saves me,

Evening, Morning and Noon, I cry out in distress, and he hears my voice.”

(v15-16)

Reflect - Listen to what God might be saying to you.

Respond to God in prayer.

Rest - in His presence.

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## **Day 37**

**Read** Psalm 40 slowly

*“He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God. Many will see and fear, and put their trust in the Lord.”* (v3)

**Reflect**

Perhaps you have had to wait a long time for this new song; first in your heart, and then on your lips; a song to praise God for his goodness. It has been an arduous time of service to God and others, without human recognition, but as you have trusted in God, the words of praise have risen to God. You have begun to see the glory of the Lord in the land of the living.

**Respond** to God in prayer.

Dear God and Father, I have such a song of praise to sing to you and for all to hear. Give me opportunities to speak about you to those who don't know you, so that they too will have that joy. Release that joy into praise for your holy Son Jesus, in whose name I ask. Amen

**Rest** - in His presence.

## **Day 38**

**Read** Psalm 18 slowly

*"I love you, Lord, my strength. The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold." (v1-2)*

### **Reflect**

Have you ever been high up on a mountaintop, looking around taking in the full 360 degree view, marveling at the wonders of God's creation? The words rock and fortress also refer to mountaintop strongholds, a place where it would be almost impossible for an enemy to attack. We all need a secure rock in our lives. A rock to build our lives on. This passage strongly emphasises God's protection, the one in whom we can find safety.

**Respond** to God in prayer.

Lord, help me build my life on your foundation. Thank you that you illuminate the darkness, that you keep me secure and have given me the shield of your salvation.

**Rest** - in His presence.

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Day 39

Read - Psalm 23 slowly.

"The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me." (v1-4)

Reflect - listen to what God might be saying to you.

Respond to God in prayer.

Rest - in His presence.

Day 40 Palm Sunday

Read Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29 slowly

“Lord, save us! Lord, grant us success! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. From the house of the Lord we bless you. The Lord is God, and he has made his light shine on us. With boughs in hand, join in the festal procession up to the horns of the altar. You are my God, and I will praise you; you are my God, and I will exalt you. Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever.” (v25-29)

Reflect

Today is Palm Sunday the day we remember Jesus riding into Jerusalem and everybody is in party mode. Yet on Good Friday we will remember Jesus dying on the cross to defeat sin and death. Jesus is victorious and yet we still fear the credit crunch, redundancy, illness, rejection, and pain. All these things and more may come upon us but through the storm remember God is Good, He will not leave us or forsake us because Jesus has paid the price, the Victory is ours. As we give thanks and praise and exalt our God He will let His blessing and light shine upon us and help us to turn from worrying about the currency of this world. We will be blessed for eternity and surrounded and upheld by a love that will never fail. So as you reflect on Jesus' last journey, and join the procession turn your face towards Jesus, sink into those loving arms and receive a heart of love that will never fail you or reject you and will heal your deep wounds if you let Him, because Jesus loves you.

Respond to God in prayer.

Rest - in His presence.

Day 41

Read Psalm 36: 5 – 11 slowly

Reflect

There is nothing more lovely than standing on a hillside on a sunny day, looking out over the beauty of God's creation. The many aspects of God's creation play a big role in the mind of David as he uses the sky, the mountains, the depths of the sea, the rivers, fountains, as analogies of God's faithfulness, righteousness, justice, blessings and of a life worth living. However, he is very aware of living in a world of pride and wickedness and evil, where many have no fear, nor understanding of God; no apprehension of the light he offers all to live by. In verse 9 we read: *"With you is the fountain of life; in your light we see light"*. This is all the greater known and disclosed to us in our day as we look to Jesus, the water of life, and hear those words from John 1:4: *"In him was life and that life was the light of men."* What is true in our day, and the days of Jesus, was true in David's: *"The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it."* Yet, behind it all, is that great truth, God is working his purpose out, with his loving kindness settled upon the lives of those who seek him, find him and live for him. Those who come to him are promised, in verse 8, to *"feast in the abundance of your house"*.

Respond to God in prayer.

Rest - in His presence.

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## **Day 42**

**Read** Psalm 71:1-14 slowly

*"Be my rock of refuge, to which I can always go; give the command to save me, for you are my rock and my fortress. Deliver me, my God, from the hand of the wicked, from the grasp of those who are evil and cruel. For you have been my hope, Sovereign Lord, my confidence since my youth. From my birth I have relied on you; you brought me forth from my mother's womb. I will ever praise you."* (v3-5)

**Reflect** - listen to what God might be saying to you.

**Respond** to God in prayer.

God we thank you for watching over us from birth. We thank you for sending into the world your only Son and for his promise that when he had to return to you, we should receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. We thank you that the same Holy Spirit that came down in power at Pentecost is still with us today. We praise you and give thanks for that protective and healing power. Send us out in the power of the Holy Spirit to live and work to your praise and glory.

**Rest** - in His presence.

## **Day 43**

**Read** Psalm 70 slowly

*“But as for me, I am poor and needy; come quickly to me, O God.” (v5)*

### **Reflect**

The goodness of God is this: where we lack, he makes us complete. Where we are not worthy, he has made us worthy through the cross. Where we are vulnerable, he turns our weakness into his opportunity.

**Respond** to God in prayer.

Awesome God, in you is our salvation; in you is the promise of eternity.

Deliver me all the day long, that I may know you more fully and proclaim in my whole life: ‘The Lord is great!’. Amen.

**Rest** - in His presence.

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Day 44 Maundy Thursday

Read Psalm 116:1, 10-17 slowly

“I love the Lord, for he heard my voice; (v1)

I trusted in the Lord: (v10)

What shall I return to the Lord for all his goodness to me? (v12)

Truly I am your servant, Lord.” (v16)

Reflect

Stuart Townend’s version of The Lord’s My Shepherd includes this chorus which is a beautiful confirmation of our trust in God and His unending goodness to us: ‘*And I will trust in You alone, And I will trust in You alone, For Your endless mercy follows me, Your goodness will lead me home.*’ We must never be afraid to call out to the Lord: He will hear our cry and we must listen for his comforting words and trust in Him always.

Respond to God in prayer.

Rest - in His presence.

Day 45 Good Friday

Read Psalm 22 slowly

“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, so far from my cries of anguish? My God, I cry out by day, but you do not answer, by night, but I find no rest.” (v1-2)

Reflect

Psalm 22 begins with a cry of sheer abandonment but it ends with a cry of salvation. And these very words from verse 1 are echoed by Jesus from the cross. But God had not turned his back on Jesus – because God does not do that. There are times when we may feel overwhelmed by life, when we may want to cry out, *“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”* We may feel abandoned and alone, but we have not been abandoned by God, we are never alone. Some of us continue to carry heavy burdens, and we live our lives as if we still owed the debt. But, in a few hours time, Jesus will cry out, *“It is finished!”* Our debt is paid and we are now set free. Let us rejoice in that fact.

Respond to God in prayer.

Rest - in His presence.

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## **Day 46**

**Read** Psalm 31:1-4, 15-16 slowly

*“My times are in your hands; Rescue me from the hands of my enemies and from my persecutors.” (v15)*

**Reflect**

God never leaves us, in sickness, health, poverty or anguish.

**Respond** to God in prayer.

God, even when I am in trouble you are with me. Forgive me for the times when I think you have forgotten me. I will say, “you are my God at all times and I will trust in you.”

**Rest** - in His presence.

**Day 47** Easter Day

**Read** Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24 slowly

*“The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone; the Lord has done this, and it is marvellous in our eyes. This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.” (v20-24)*

**Reflect** - Listen to what God might be saying to you.

**Respond** to God in prayer.

Almighty God, through your only-begotten Son Jesus Christ you have overcome death and opened to us the gate of everlasting life: Grant that, as by your grace going before us you put into our minds good desires, so by your continual help we may bring them to good effect; through Jesus Christ our risen Lord who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

**Rest** - in His presence.

**Christ is risen - Alleluia!**