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God is always there



PSALMS FOR EVERY MOMENT



Kathleen Atkinson, OSB



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introduction

YOU MAY WANT to open this book and simply begin reading. Or you may want to look through the chapter titles and pay attention to the desire of your heart—What do you feel most? Do you want to laugh? Cry out? Lead?

However you choose to experience this book is the right way for you. Your choice is a response to the invitation of God—God, who is already present; God, who has first loved us and invited our free response; God, who has been with us throughout all ages. With such a God, we can break into song or burst into tears or cry out in despair or give praise with full throat as did the people of the community out of which the psalms were composed.

Living authentically and faithfully is never easy. Natural disasters, the death of loved ones, and broken relationships can fill us with sorrow. The laughter of a child, the magnificence of a choir, and the thunder of the sky can fill us with joy. Life is not made up of distinct times of sorrow and times of joy. Rather, life simultaneously holds both sorrow and joy in a creative tension that can only find description in symbolic expression: in art, music, poetry, and dance.

For more than 4,000 years, the Book of Psalms has been the song offered by the believing community who lived out this vibrant reality that God dwells in all experiences, happy and sad. The people of ancient Israel lived their lives in praise and lament as the psalms provided a rhythm for all they encountered. Since then, communities throughout the world have continued this practice. Jewish and Christian men and women have shared the

common prayer of the psalms for centuries. Monastics worldwide gather seven times a day to pray and reflect on the psalms.

I invite you to become part of this experience of the psalms “in stereo” as you let your heart beat as one with those who expressed their faith in these prayers long ago.

CHOOSE A REFLECTION The psalms in this book are divided into three sections: faith, hope, and love. Within each section, selections from several different psalms are offered. Allow yourself to be drawn into God’s presence as you read and pray.

GENTLY PRAY A PSALM AND ALLOW YOURSELF TO LINGER Where did you feel called forth in longing, seeking, stretching for fulfillment? What words or phrases stood out beyond all others? What persons or memories were evoked? Pay attention to what you hear God saying.

READ THE STORY AND REFLECTION Laugh, smile, allow a tender tear. Muse, reflect, and come to a new insight about how all our hearts beat to the one Spirit of God.

PRAY THE PRAYER RESPONSE Allow your reflection to stir up personal words of prayer within you.

RESPOND, ACTING ON THE INVITATION FOR TODAY If you are inspired to act, rejoice and follow the Spirit’s prompting.

Remember, God is there ahead of us.



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LIVING IN FAITH

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*Take delight in the Lord
and he will give you the desires of your heart.*

PSALM 37:4

TO LIVE IN FAITH is our birthright rather than something we earn. It is a sacred gift for us to receive with open hands. It is a gift from God—from *God*—so how could we not welcome it fully? Yet sometimes we forget.

When we live in faith, we are able to stand tall when everyone around us is cowering. It is to live with deep faith as all around us changes. It is to live with a resounding *yes* when everyone around us says “no.” Living in faith is the daily walk of those who live from the interior of their heart rather than from external circumstances.

As we lift up our souls with the psalmist, groan with thirst and ponder in amazement, we create space for prayer and a place for God within us. This is how it is possible to live in faith.

Living in faith means to believe in the transforming power of God and to move beyond fear into a new and uncharted way of living. Faith does not undo fear but unravels it little by little as a safe place is created where we can name it. That place is with God.

PSALM 1



to yield fruit

*Happy are those
who do not follow the advice of the wicked,
or take the path that sinners tread,
or sit in the seat of scoffers;
but their delight is in the law of the LORD,
and on his law they meditate day and night.*

*They are like trees
planted by streams of water,
which yield their fruit in its season,
and their leaves do not wither.
In all that they do, they prosper.*

*The wicked are not so,
but are like chaff that the wind drives away.
Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,
nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous;
for the LORD watches over the way of the righteous,
but the way of the wicked will perish.*



The family reunion was held at the same location each year. Dozens of family members came, and thousands of dollars were spent to provide a wonderful time for everyone.

One year when everyone came to share their final breakfast and farewells, one young man noticed his father quietly looking over the bill, then approaching the cashier for a short conversation. The restaurant had inadvertently charged too little.

The dad noticed it, pointed out the mistake, and paid the higher amount. It cost him an extra \$50.00, but it gained him the respect of his son and taught more than any lecture on business ethics.

Like a tree planted near a stream of water, the children of this simple man watched him closely and drank of his goodness. He walked in the way of the Lord as best he could each day and with everyone he met.

He sought more to be faithful than to be noticed for his actions. His children noticed.

Divine Lawgiver, free me from the temptation to play games with the truth. Teach me to walk honestly and humbly in your way.

Today, notice acts of simple honesty.

PSALM 4



to rest

*Offer right sacrifices,
and put your trust in the LORD.*

*There are many who say,
“O that we might see some good!
Let the light of your face shine on us, O LORD!”
You have put gladness in my heart
more than when their grain and wine abound.*

*I will both lie down and sleep in peace;
for you alone, O LORD, make me lie down in safety.*

PSALM 4:5–8



It was a fantastic summer afternoon in the park, and everyone was enjoying a family soccer match with cousins, brothers, sisters, aunts, and uncles of all ages. After extensive running and laughter, one of the aunts held up her hand and called for a “time-out.” Young Matt looked confused, then ran to his mother with huge tears in his eyes and said, “Mom, Aunt Karen gave me a time-out, but I don’t know what I did.”

A simple request for breath by a middle-aged aunt had been perceived as a punishment by the young boy.

We all need time-outs. Time to take a breath, time to reflect and be silent. Time to allow the light of God to shine upon us. Time to remember that it is the Lord alone who brings security to our lives.

Run—laugh—play—work diligently and plan responsibly.
Then take time out to remember that God alone is in charge.

Gentle God, receive my tired spirit. Anoint my weary body. Look upon my valiant efforts to care for others with tenderness and bring them to fruition. I entrust my work, my loved ones, my world, to you alone.

Today, sit quietly and feel your heart beat.
Be at one with yourself.

PSALM 8



to stand amazed

*O LORD, our Sovereign,
how majestic is your name in all the earth!*

*You have set your glory above the heavens.
Out of the mouths of babes and infants
you have founded a bulwark because of your foes,
to silence the enemy and the avenger.*

*When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars that you have established;
what are human beings that you are mindful of them,
mortals that you care for them?*

*Yet you have made them a little lower than God,
and crowned them with glory and honor.
You have given them dominion over the works of your hands;
you have put all things under their feet,
all sheep and oxen,
and also the beasts of the field,
the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea,
whatever passes along the paths of the seas.
O LORD, our Sovereign,
how majestic is your name in all the earth!*



A young boy wrote the following letter:
“Dear God, we learned today in school that Thomas Edison invented light. But in Sunday school, we learned that you created it. I’ll bet Edison got the idea from you, didn’t he?”

All good ideas come from God.

It is easy to lose track of this truth. But what if we really looked?

What if we stood amazed at what we saw, heard, smelled, tasted, touched; marveled at the variety of animals, plants, landscapes; relished the adventure of living, loving, seeking, striving?

All good ideas come from God.

The greatest of these is us—a little less than God, yet crowned with glory and honor.

Now that’s amazing!

**Awesome God, I take my place in your
amazing world. Hold me in your hand with
the magnificence of all you have made.
How majestic are you, O Lord our God.**

Today, linger outside in the darkness of night.
Stand beneath the moon and the stars.
Imagine all the work of God’s fingers.