

# DAILY PRAYER GUIDE / 40 DAYS OF PRAYER

WEEK TWO – AUGUST 5-11

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FAITHFUL

DEUTERONOMY 7:9

FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL,  
HIGH SCHOOL & ADULTS



# HOW TO USE THE DAILY PRAYER GUIDE

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*For I have always been mindful of your unfailing love and have lived in reliance on your faithfulness. Psalm 26:3*

## **Alone, with your family, and in your House Church – pray.**

Little Rock Church: let's pray together! For 40 days let's share a conversation with God. Let's practice together devotion and surrender to Him.

This prayer guide intends to help us. Each day's reading includes a reflection, a short Scripture reading and a prayer, and follows the weekly themes introduced on Sundays at 9am:

July 29 **We celebrate You!**

Aug. 5 **We lament.**

Aug. 12 **We seek You.**

Aug. 19 **Form us.**

Aug. 26 **Keep us together.**

Sept. 2 **Bless our families.**

Sept. 9 **Take us on mission.**

Inside this Guide are daily readings for Week One, from July 29-August 4, exploring the theme, "We celebrate You!"

Use this prayer guide each day as you meet alone with God. Share the daily reading with your family. Ask your House Church or Youth Group to meditate on a Scripture important to you. And, join the congregation on Sundays at 9am as we pray together. In doing so may we become more devoted and yielded to the Lord.

# AUGUST 5

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*Awake, Lord! Why do you sleep? Rouse yourself? Do not reject us forever. Why do you hide your face and forget our misery and oppression? Ps.44:23-24*

\* Based on article by G. Brooke Lester at [www.bibleodyssey.org/passages/related-articles/psalms-of-lament](http://www.bibleodyssey.org/passages/related-articles/psalms-of-lament)

## He has forgotten us.

"Rouse yourself! Why do you sleep, O Lord? ... Why do you forget our affliction?" (Ps 44:23-24). If many of us have been taught to put on a happy face, to keep our complaints to ourselves, then the Old Testament passages offer a needed corrective in the complaint psalms, or *psalms of lament*.

In a lament psalm, a person addresses God directly amid some calamity. Given God's history with God's people, the psalmist is comfortable charging God with "dereliction of duty." He unabashedly urges a favorable response.

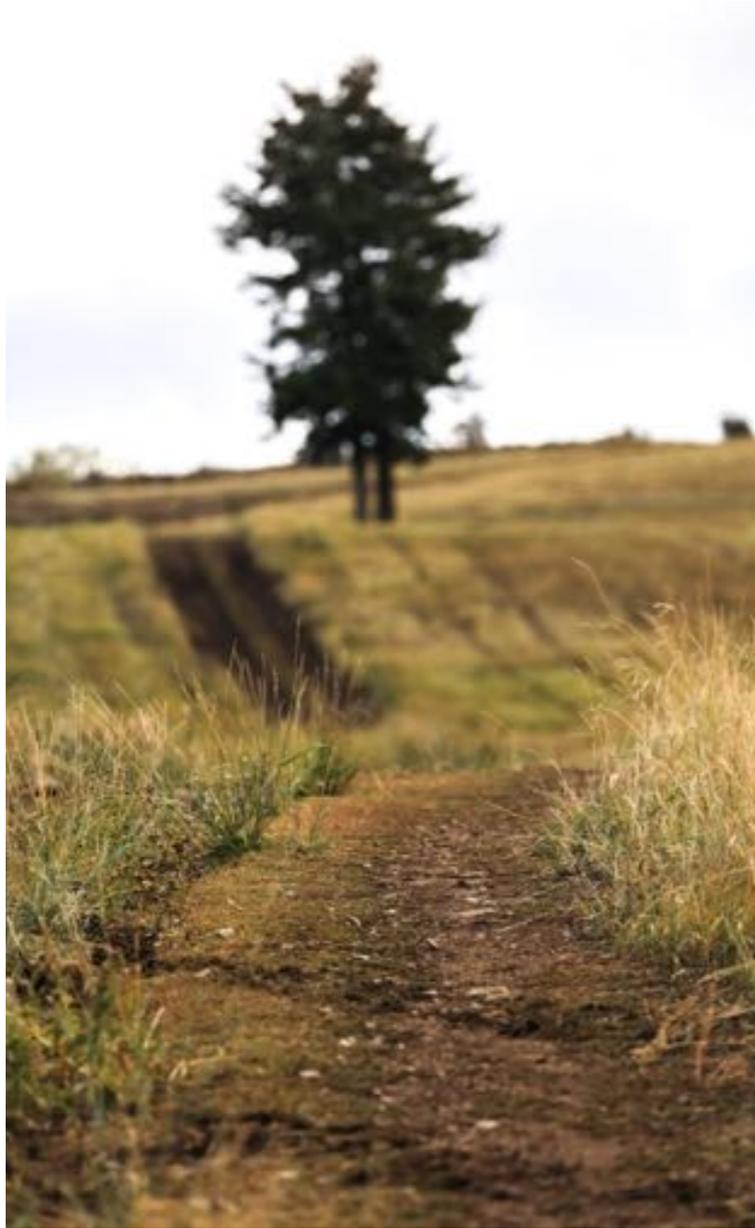
Psalm 44 illustrates well the common features of the lament psalm: *direct address to God* (Ps 44:1, "O God"), a *complaint* (Ps 44:9-22), a *petition* for redress (Ps 44:23-26), some *statement of trust* about God's ability to save and vindicate (Ps 44:1-8), and a *vow* to offer thanksgiving after God has intervened (Ps 44:8).

The lament psalm is best understood in comparison to the other major types of psalms, namely, praise and thanksgiving psalms. The lament psalm looks backward at praise (recalling God's saving acts), and it looks forward to thanksgiving and rescue (praising God's inclination to save). Lament gazes unflinchingly at the present reality of pain and at God's apparent slowness to save.\*

*"O Lord, I've held back from you. I didn't know - or I forgot - that your authority extends over my heartache. I need not hide my despair from myself or you. I want to join the psalmists to release my sadness to you, joining people of faith to proclaim you are God over all. I don't understand, so I come to you. Answer. Amen."*

# AUGUST 6

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*Why do you hold back your hand, your right hand? Take it from the folds of your garment and destroy them! Ps.74:11*

## **God, take your hands out of your pockets and do something! A prayer of lament\***

*You, God, who made the heavens and the earth and promised to remake them, hear my voice. I plead for a hearing because you often seem distant, and sometimes I fear that you do not listen. Awake, O God, and hear my prayer. I struggle again with death. Death has again invaded my world.*

*God, I hate death. I trust that you hate it, too. Death is my enemy; it is your enemy as well. It rips apart the very fabric of peace, hope and trust. Where are you in the midst of death, O God?*

*How, God, does death bring any meaning to your world? Would it not be better...would it not be to your glory...that you would rescue us from death so that we might praise you in the land of the living? Is your faithful love declared in the grave?*

*Lord God, every death raises questions about you, about the meaning of life, and your purposes. I confess that I cannot answer them. Death is like a fog that blinds me.*

*How long, O Lord? Will you forget us forever? How long must we live with these questions, doubts and tears? When will you rid us of this shroud?*

*God, take your hands out of your pockets and do something! Arise, O Lord, and destroy this enemy. Redeem us, O God, according to your unfailing love!*

*God, you are my God, and I entrust my life, including my eventual death, to you.*

- I confess that you, Father, are the maker of heaven and earth.*
- I confess that you, Jesus, were born of woman, lived among us, died with us, rose again for us, and now reign at the right hand of the Father interceding for us.*
- I confess that you, Spirit, are present to transform us and comfort us.*

*I confess the story is not yet over, and that you, God, will yet rise up and destroy the enemy. You will give birth to a new world without death and without tears. Rise up, O God, and give birth to your new world. Create your new world, Father. Comfort us, O Spirit. Come back soon, Lord Jesus. Amen.*

\* Written by John Mark Hicks. Retrieved at: <http://johnmarkhicks.com/2013/10/01/a-lament-prayer-i-hate-death/>

# AUGUST 7

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*What I feared has come upon me; what I dreaded has happened to me. I have no peace, no quietness; I have no rest, but only turmoil. Job 3:25-26*

## **Job's laments. And mine.\***

Sometimes life gets to be "too much."

Intellectually, I know my losses are fewer than some and greater than others. I know it is all relative. But my emotional gut rails against my hurt and doubts the love of God.

How do I escape the feeling that God is picking on me? How do I overcome the sense that God seems unconcerned about the wrongness in his world, or my hopeless feelings that leave me without meaning?

I often read Job's laments with some empathy. I feel them in my bones. The hurt and pain are part of my body. Job 3 contains Job's opening lament—a "I wish I had never been born" lament. The final words of that chapter have sometimes resonated with me. I feel them today.

"What I feared has come upon me"...occurs several times in my life. Peace is difficult to experience when what you have "dreaded has happened" to you. You are tempted to "curse God and die."

"Let me alone," Job tells God (7:16). He prefers death to what he is experiencing (7:15). He is convinced that he will never see happiness again (7:7). Then Job gets to the point with God. What is the divine project? What is God's interest in people? Why so much suffering? Why should God give a rip about us? Why does he toy with us (7:17-20)? I know these are harsh questions, but they are real ones.

Job has little doubt—and I think he is quite right!—that God's hand is written all over his life. He confesses the sovereignty of God over his creation (Job 12:7-10).

But we are nagged by the feeling that meaning has escaped us. "Why then did you bring [us] out of the womb?" (Job 10:18b). What is the meaning of the darkness? As our hearts hurt, however, as the terrors overwhelm us, we choose God. We do not curse him. We will treasure his words more than daily bread and walk in his footsteps (Job 23:11-12).

But, at the same time, we are "not silenced by the darkness" (Job 23:17). We will speak; we will lament. We "will not keep silent; [we] will speak out in the anguish of [our spirits]; we will complain in the bitterness of [our souls]" (Job 7:11).

*"O God, I believe; help my unbelief. Amen."*

\* Based on an article retrieved from <http://johnmarkhicks.com/2008/06/07/jobian-laments/>

# AUGUST 8

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Your eyes are too pure to look on evil; you cannot tolerate wrongdoing. Why then do you tolerate the treacherous? Why are you silent while the wicked swallow up those more righteous than themselves? Hab. 1:13

## Perverted justice.

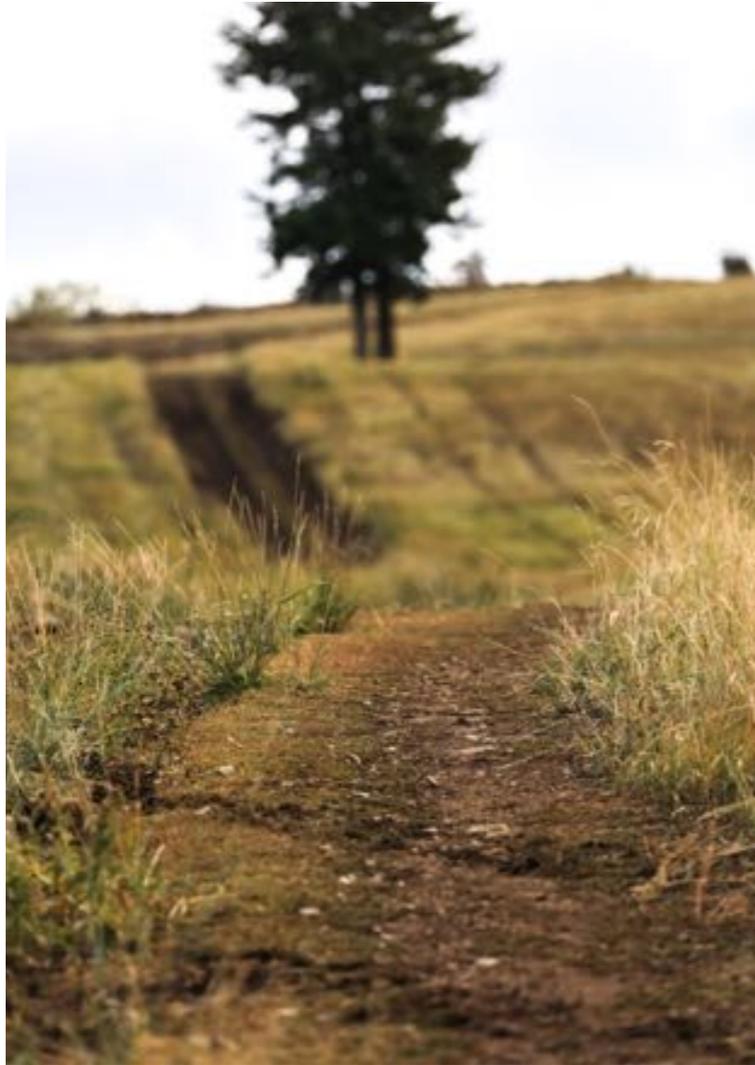
I'm not a stranger to sorrow. I have only experienced my own, but I've witnessed the sorrow of many. So have you. But some sorrow arises from circumstances that seem unfair, and consequences that seem inappropriate. Some may call it "perverted justice."

That seems to be Habakkuk's complaint (1:4). A prophet to Judah, his short writings offer two laments—complaints really—about what's going on. And, he wonders, what's God up to, even as he affirms his confidence that God is "from everlasting," "pure" and the "Holy One." **Read Habakkuk.** Then join him by writing before the Lord questions of your own.

*"I pray now with the prophet, Habakkuk: 'I have heard of your fame; I stand in awe of your deeds, O LORD. Renew them in our day, in our time make them known; in wrath remember mercy... Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will be joyful in God my Savior. The Sovereign Lord is my strength; he makes my feet like the feet of a deer, he enables me to tread on the heights. For the director of music. On my stringed instruments. Why do you make me look at injustice? Why do you tolerate wrongdoing? Destruction and violence are before me; there is strife, and conflict abounds. For the revelation awaits an appointed time; it speaks of the end and will not prove false. Though it linger, wait for it; it will certainly come and will not delay. Amen.'"*

# AUGUST 9

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*I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint. My heart has turned to wax; it has melted within me. My mouth is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth; you lay me in the dust of death. Psalm 22:14-15*

## **“Why have you forsaken me?”**

I am so mad at God. What is happening isn't right and he knows it. This suffering—for what? There is no purpose. There is no aim. It doesn't belong in the world you God created. And he knows it.

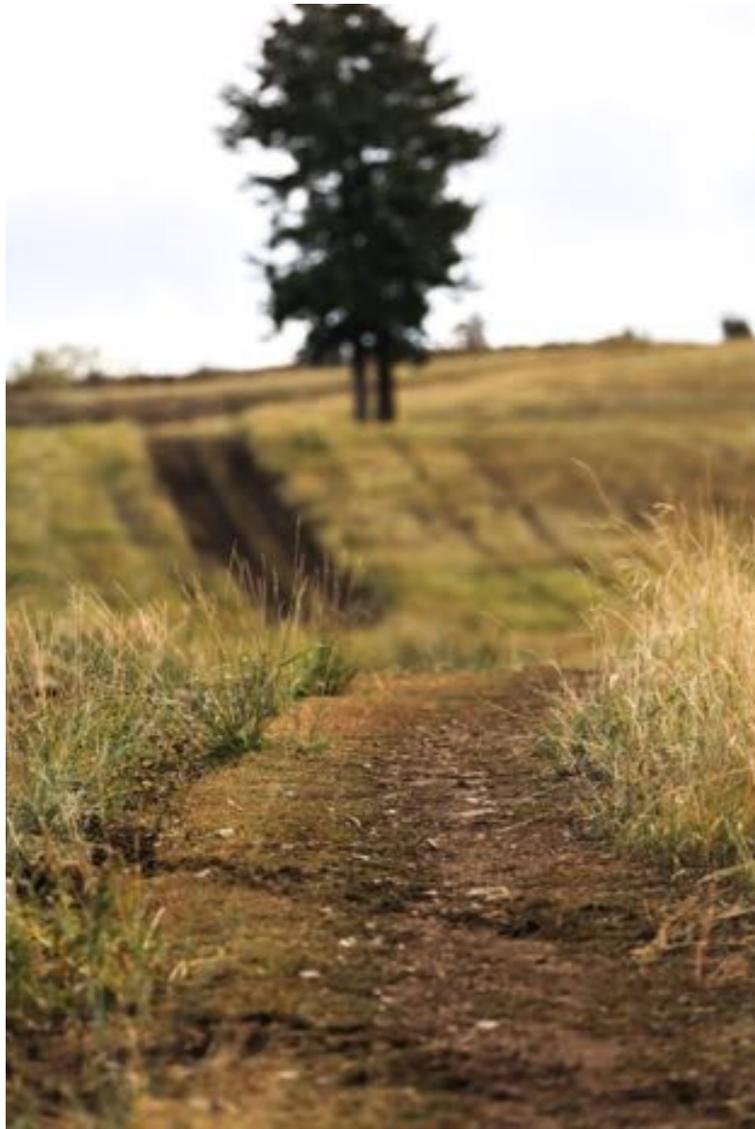
And more significant: since he is sovereign, almighty and good, the creator and designer, then he can do something. He can intervene. But, no, he seems content to work around the edges of the wrong. Or, he seems content to not work at all.

“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” **Read Psalm 22.**

*“O God, my words of complaint to you are not a rejection of you. Instead, my words express my faith and expectation. My protests are grounded in a confidence that you are Mighty. You are Right. You are Maker. ‘You are enthroned as the Holy One.’ I expect you, then, to act like the God you are. I plead with you. It feels like you have forsaken me. I will not hide those feelings from you. You already know. So, I will offer up to you my hurt, despair and sorrow as a sacrifice. I will give them to you. With faith and certainty in your character, I will wait for you to accomplish your will. My feelings and my circumstances, the trouble of this world—none of this will have the last word in my heart. You are God whose Suffering Son uttered the same cries of the psalmist. So, I await your words. I watch for your work. ‘Come quickly to help me.’ Amen.”*

# AUGUST 10

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Why, Lord, do you stand far off? Why do you hide yourself in times of trouble? My soul is in deep anguish. How long, Lord, how long?  
Ps. 10:1; Ps. 6:3

## Why, O Lord? How long, O Lord?

These are my questions. Often I present them to God. Why? How long?

I am not the first believer to ask. I will not be the last. People who look to God have commonly shouted them to our Creator.

**Read Psalm 6:3 and Psalm 10:1.** Then, keep reading. Many times the psalmists and prophets cry out, Why? and How long?

“Think of lament as an essential ingredient of honest faith. It’s the deep sense that something is wrong, whether with yourself or the world...Biblical lament is not complaint that goes nowhere. It’s the people of God planting seeds of hope in the soil of exasperation and despair, expecting that the Lord will come through in the end.”\*

*“O loving God, free me from the fear that I must hide my questions from you. Release me from the burden of carrying alone my questions that arise from trouble, grief, and uncertainty. Let me join the chorus of faithful who cry out to you and so, with them, express my longing to depend upon you. Amen.”*

\* Steve & Joan Huyser-Honig at <https://worship.calvin.edu/resources/resource-library/bringing-our-pain-to-god-michael-card-and-calvin-seerveld-on-biblical-lament-in-worship/>

# AUGUST II

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*His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.  
Lamentations 3:22-23*

## **Because of God's great love we are not consumed.**

Large portions of Scripture are devoted to the lament of faithful people to our God. One section, the book of Lamentations, is written by the prophet Jeremiah. He is often described as the "weeping prophet."

So, if you weep before the Lord, you are in good company. By faith—even small faith—speak to God the following words of Jeremiah, making them your own:

*"I am the man who has seen affliction by the rod of the Lord's wrath. He has driven me away and made me walk in darkness rather than light; indeed, he has turned his hand against me again and again, all day long. I have been deprived of peace; I have forgotten what prosperity is.*

*So I say, 'My splendor is gone and all that I had hoped from the Lord.' I remember my affliction and my wandering, the bitterness and the gall. I well remember them, and my soul is downcast within me. Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope:*

*Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. I say to myself, 'The Lord is my portion; therefore I will wait for him.'*

*The Lord is good to those whose hope is in him, to the one who seeks him; it is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord. Amen."*