

Praying the Psalms

In season and out of season, generation after generation, faithful women and men turn to the Psalms as a most helpful resource for conversation with God about things that matter most. The Psalms are helpful because they are a genuinely dialogical literature that expresses both sides of the conversation of faith. On the one hand, Israel's faithful speech addressed to God is the substance of the Psalms. The Psalms do this so fully and so well because they articulate the entire gamut of Israel's speech to God, from profound praise to the utterance of unspeakable anger and doubt. On the other hand, as Martin Luther understood so passionately, the Psalms are not only addressed to God. They are the voice of the gospel, God's good word addressed to God's faithful people. In this literature the community of faith has heard and continues to hear the sovereign speech of God, who meets the community in its depths of need and in its heights of celebration. The Psalms draw our entire life under the rule of God, where everything may be submitted to the God of the gospel.

Walter Brueggemann, *Spirituality of the Psalms*, 1-2

- The Psalms teach us how to bring our whole life before God.
- The Psalms invite us to speak with God out of all that we are. God listens...
- The Psalms invite us to listen and to seek God's good word in the midst of the whole of life. God responds...
- Amidst the different situations and seasons of our lives, the Psalms can become our mentors in prayerfulness.

I knew that following Jesus could never develop into a "long obedience" without a deepening life of prayer and that the Psalms had always been the primary means by which Christians learned to pray everything they lived, and live everything they prayed over the long haul.

Eugene Peterson, *A Long Obedience in the Same Direction*, 12