

PSALMS

The book of Psalms deserves special and careful attention. Psalms are sacred songs or poems used in worship. The etymology of the word 'psalms' harkens back to the Greek 'psalmos,' meaning 'song sung to harp music.' The book of Psalms is a collection of biblical hymns well suited to be read aloud. There are even methods to sing or chant the Psalms as well.

Whatever happens to you in life: whatever emotions, challenges, struggles, defeats, or victories, all are addressed somewhere in the psalms. The psalmists are claiming that their relationship with God, as shown in all the things that God has done for them in the past, is evidence that he will continue to do so in the future as well. They, and we, can have faith in this simply because God himself is faithful.

Psalms can be seen as the prayer-book of the Bible. The more deeply we grow in the psalms, and the more often we pray them as our own, the simpler and richer will our own prayer become. Think of the psalms as the ultimate treasure in the treasure chest that is the Bible. It is ours for the taking! No charge!!!

When we begin to pray the psalms, we enter a school of prayer. It is a school of prayer that is incredibly ancient, for in this very school all the champions of prayer have learned to pray. It is a school that one must attend for life – it offers no crash courses. One must master the elementary courses before advancing to the higher levels. But all along the way, one finds delight in the psalms as expressions of genuine prayer. The first list below aims at brevity and simplicity for both morning and evening prayer. It is list of psalms that are relatively easy for Christians to use in prayer:

	Morning	Evening
Sunday	Ps. 19	Ps. 25
Monday	Ps. 84	Ps. 27
Tuesday	Ps. 96	Ps. 32
Wednesday	Ps. 104	Ps. 42; 43
Thursday	Ps. 145	Ps. 73
Friday	Ps. 147	Ps. 91
Saturday	Ps. 148	Ps. 102

The second list below attempts to make use of some of the most ancient traditions of praying the psalms. It is intended for those who are prepared to devote considerably more time to their prayers. Another important tradition that this second list observes is the use of psalms of praise in the morning and psalms of lamentation in the evening. This gives a distinctly different character to morning and evening prayers:

	Morning Prayer
Sunday	Ps. 16; 17;18; 19
Monday	Ps. 46; 47; 48
Tuesday	Ps. 65; 66; 67; 68
Wednesday	Ps. 95; 96; 97; 98; 99; 100
Thursday	Ps. 104; 105
Friday	Ps. 135; 136; 137:1-6; 138; 139:1-18
Saturday	Ps. 145; 146; 147; 148; 149; 150

	Evening Prayer
Sunday	Ps. 113; 114; 115; 116; 117; 118
Monday	Ps. 25; 26; 27; 28; 29
Tuesday	Ps. 31; 32; 33; 34
Wednesday	Ps. 61; 62; 63
Thursday	Ps. 73; 74; 75
Friday	Ps. 85; 86; 87
Saturday	Ps. 141; 142; 143

An easy way to 'pray a psalm' is to read it aloud, but very quietly, to yourself. It is recommended to read it in this fashion two times. If it is a relatively short psalm you can read it twice in the same sitting. If it is a longer psalm and you may want to first read it one day and the second time the next day. By the time you are done with the second reading you will have a good sense for the psalm, for what it is trying to say and how it speaks to you.