

Praying the Psalms

Monday, 7/20/09 – Read Psalm 100

My Observations _____

A Question to Answer: Do you pray? ... How do you pray? ... One of the Bible’s best guides to praying is the Psalms. The Psalms are the prayers of the ancient Hebrews, and they give us important guidance for our own praying. They teach us to bring before God all that is in our hearts, and they challenge us to include in our prayers even those parts of ourselves that don’t seem very pretty. So, this week (and again another week later this summer) our faith journal will invite us into the Psalms -- and deeper into our own praying. Let the words of the Psalms be the words of your own praying this week. ... Today’s reading is Psalm 100. Read it again, slowly. Read it aloud. ... Then make a list of all that you are joyful about today. ... Look at verse 5: we can be joyful and confident because God’s faithfulness and “steadfast love” endure when all else fails. Let this Psalm express your own joy!

Tuesday, 7/21/09 – Read Psalm 19:1-6

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: When you look at the natural world -- the hills, the ocean, the trees, the flowers, the rabbits, the birds -- what do you see? Do you see there the glory of God? ... As you move around the world today, look at it -- really look. Can you see the glory of God shining through the created world? In your prayer today, express your own praise for all that you see around you.

Wednesday, 7/22/09 – Read Psalm 13:1-6

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: Do you ever feel like God is distant -- or absent? Does it ever seem that your prayers just bounce off the ceiling and go nowhere? ... What does that experience feel like for you? Make some notes. ... When we get “down,” we often think that mood or feeling will last forever. But the Psalmist is confident that this dry time is temporary and that the joy of trusting God will return. Remember to let your prayer today conclude with verses 5 and 6.

Thursday, 7/23/09 – Read Psalm 103:1-14

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: The Psalm writer blesses God with ALL that is within him. Can you bring before God ALL that is within you? Are there feelings, thoughts, moods, attitudes that you don’t bring into your prayer. Name specifically (and write down) those parts of yourself that you don’t include in your prayer. Today ask God to help you include just one of those thoughts, feelings, or attitudes.

Friday, 7/24/09 – Read Psalm 2:1-11

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: Some people say: If you want to make God laugh, just tell him your plans! ... Of course, we have to plan, but today’s Psalm reminds us that God is bigger than our plans. And God’s activity may interrupt our plans -- and ask us to do something that we hadn’t planned on. Has that ever been your experience? Has God ever brought into your life something you hadn’t planned on? How did that turn out? ... Pray today, asking God to help you hold your plans loosely so that you’ll be ready and responsive when God’s intentions become clear.

My Faith Journal, July 19, 2009
The Inspiration of Sierra Service Project

What do I hear God saying to me today?

What action do I intend to take this week?

Each day this week, take a few minutes. Begin with PRAYER. Then READ through the Bible passage indicated on the inside of this guide. WRITE down your own thoughts, reactions, observations. ANSWER THE QUESTION to begin connecting the Bible with your life. Use additional paper or your own notebook if you need more space to write.

Saturday, 7/25/09 – Read Psalm 130:1-8

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: When have you felt like the Psalm writer in Psalm 130? When have you felt like you were living and praying “out of the depths”? ... Let the words of Psalm 130 express the “depths” of your own soul struggle. ... Notice verses 5-6. Sometimes relating to God means waiting, waiting on the Lord. Also notice that waiting on the Lord is not a passive thing; it means being alert and attentive -- like a watchman. Throughout your day today, practice that alert attentiveness, watching for the presence of God moving into your day.

Sunday, 7/26/09 – Read Psalm 139:1-18

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: The beauty of the Psalms is that they express the amazing variety of our human experiences in relationship with God. The Psalmist speaks of God seeming to be distant (Psalm 13). And the Psalmist in today’s Psalm describes God as so close and intimate that it’s almost painful. Do those words express your sense of the closeness of God? How would you express that holy intimacy in your own words? Does it work for you to let the words of this Psalm express your own sense of closeness to God? Try it today: read through this psalm slowly, read it aloud, and let your own experience be expressed through these words.
