

Psalm Prayers *for* Seniors

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To the Reader



I have always loved the psalms for their ability to capture so much of the dynamics of my personal relationship with God and life—the exuberant joy, the profound sorrow, the paralyzing fear, the quiet longing, the bold questioning, the gnawing impatience, the fiery anger.

Good prayer should speak real thoughts and real feelings. It should be honest and true.

The prayers of this booklet were inspired by the psalms. They speak the deep stirrings of my own heart but also voice thoughts and feelings that many senior adults have shared

with me during my years as a nursing home chaplain.

I offer them to you, the reader, with the hope that they can be genuine prayer for you and encouragement for your efforts to be in intimate conversation with your God.

DENNIS H. FERENCE

1



*Those ...[whose] delight is in the law
of the Lord....
are like trees planted by streams
of water,
which yield their fruit in its season.*

PSALM 1:1,2,3

O Lord, my God,
I come before you this day,
no longer youthful and fresh
and bubbling with energy,
but a little tired and worn
and scarred from life's journey.

Yet, my needs
are not all that different

from those expressed years ago
when I first came to you
praying for truth and peace
and love and happiness.

But time and experience
have left their marks.
And now I can admit
how hard it has been
to accept your answer
to my prayers and pleas.

And so, today I ask
that you grant me the desire
to open my heart
to the grace of your word—
the word you have spoken all along—
that it is in doing your will
that I receive what I seek;
it is in doing your will
that life's truth is found.

2



*You, O Lord, are a shield around me,...
the one who lifts up my head.*

PSALM 3:3

Sometimes, Lord,
in the dark of the night,
I am brought especially low
by the hurts and losses
and the burdens of these years.

I wonder where you are,
and I wonder how it can be
that your children
should suffer
and know such distress.

My mind is rattled
by thoughts and worries
that question your love
and puzzle over promises
on which I depend.

Then, from the past, I remember
how you broke the silence
to light the dark,
to guide me through danger,
and to calm my fear.

And as the morning dawns,
I choose to go on,
trusting in you and praising
your name,
placing my future under your care,
setting my life firmly in
your hands.

3



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

PSALM 4:8

Often, O Lord,
on this journey of life,
I feel like I'm walking
a tightrope
with miles of emptiness below
and no one to catch me
and nothing to hold on to.

I reach for and grasp at
promises of security

that pop up all around me,
though they fade like the wind
when I truly need them
to give me direction
and steady my step.

But it is you alone
who are my true security;
it is you alone
who will take my hand
to travel every step with me
in answer to the cry
that comes out of my fear
of walking this way alone.

And with this truth
to console and comfort,
I surrender my anxiety,
and I take my rest.