

KNOWN

THE LESSON: PSALM 139

The Book of Psalms in the Old Testament is a collection of poems set to musical accompaniment, which form an ancient collection of prayers/hymns. They were written by many poets at many different dates, and were in use by Israel for many centuries before the birth of Jesus. This ancient “prayer book” is quoted repeatedly in the New Testament, has been used in Christian liturgy since the earliest days of the Church, and continues to be used in Christian worship, crossing all denominational lines—and of course a large portion of the psalms are included in our Book of Common Prayer (beginning on page 331).

AT-HOME CHALLENGE

At home, find a quiet space and spend some time praying with each of these phrases from Psalm 139. You may choose to expand on these phrases in your own words and to reflect on what these things mean in your own life. Use your prayer journal to help focus your thoughts:

Lord, you made me.

Lord, you know me.

Lord, you love me.

Lord, you are always near.

Lord, forgive me.

Lord, help me to live in a way that honours you.

- AND/OR -

Take some time to pray through this prayer of thanksgiving, pausing to reflect after each phrase.

O God whose ways are hidden and thy works most wonderful, who makest nothing in vain and lovest all that thou hast made: Comfort thou thy servants, whose hearts are sore smitten and oppressed; and grant that they may so love and serve thee in this life, that they may obtain the fullness of thy promises in the world to come; through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen. (FROM THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER, PAGE 575)

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PSALM 139:1-16: **NOTHING HIDDEN**

¹O Lord, you have searched me and known me! ²You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from afar. ³You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways. ⁴Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O Lord, you know it altogether. ⁵You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me. ⁶Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high; I cannot attain it. ⁷Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence? ⁸If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there! ⁹If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, ¹⁰even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me. ¹¹If I say, “Surely the darkness shall cover me, and the light about me be night,” ¹²even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is bright as the day, for darkness is as light with you. ¹³For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother’s womb. ¹⁴I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well. ¹⁵My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. ¹⁶Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them.

PSALM 139:23-24: **INVOCATION**

²³Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! ²⁴And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!