

2 OR 3 GATHERED

THE LESSON: PSALM 27

We have a sovereign God who is merciful towards us, and we have been given the privilege of approaching him through what Christ did for us. God is our Deliverer, and the one who holds our identity and purpose in his hands. And he is the one who cares for our needs, at times meeting them through our fellow believers.

Sue Careless, in the second volume of her series, “Discovering the Book of Common Prayer,” wrote this: “Spiritually we are born individually as each of us entrusts our lives to Jesus. But we are each placed by our heavenly Father into a spiritual family that he has provided, his Church, to be nurtured and loved. It is true that some local churches, like some individual families, may fail to nurture and cause real harm. Then we do need to seek a better spiritual home. But to go it alone is not the answer. Remember that no earthly family or church is perfect. Still, if your local church is seriously dysfunctional, you may need to find another that can nurture you and help you share your gifts... We are a pilgrim people called to journey together, to encourage and uphold each other on the way to heaven”.

St. Paul referred to the Church as “the household of God”, and taught that we are “being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit” (Ephesians 2:22). And Jesus himself promised, “where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them” (Matthew 18:20). God is with us: aware of our needs, and providing us with all that is necessary for the journey.

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Psalm 27 is one of the many psalms written by King David. It is believed to have been written before he was anointed king, while he was being hunted by then-King Saul. The longing David expresses for the house of the Lord is easy to understand in light of his exile. Yet in spite of David’s circumstances, he knows he can trust God with both his present and his future.

AT-HOME CHALLENGE

Each morning and evening, follow your own rule of prayer.

(IF YOU DON’T HAVE ONE, TRY SAYING THE MORNING AND EVENING PRAYERS FROM THE “FORMS OF PRAYER TO BE USED IN FAMILIES”, WHICH BEGINS ON PAGE 728 OF THE BCP. IF YOU DON’T HAVE A COPY, YOU CAN LOOK IT UP HERE: [HTTP://PRAYERBOOK.CA/RESOURCES/BCPONLINE/FAMILY-PRAYER.](http://prayerbook.ca/resources/bcponline/family-prayer))

Spend some time praying again with the phrase “*Give us today our daily bread*”. Do you feel that you are a part of the “household of God” – not alone on the journey? If not, ask God to provide you with a Church, and one or two good Christian friends to accompany you on your way. Read Deuteronomy 31:6: “*Be strong and courageous... for it is the Lord your God who goes with you. He will not leave you or forsake you*”. Conclude with a time of thanksgiving.

- AND/OR -

Take some time to pray through this prayer.

Lord, we beseech thee to keep thy household the Church in continual godliness; that through thy protection it may be free from all adversities, and devoutly given to serve thee in good works, to the glory of thy Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (COLLECT FOR THE TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY, BCP PAGE 254)

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PSALM 27: **SEEKING THE HOUSE OF THE LORD**

¹The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? ²When evildoers assail me to eat up my flesh, my adversaries and foes, it is they who stumble and fall. ³Though an army encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war arise against me, yet I will be confident. ⁴One thing have I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to enquire in his temple. ⁵For he will hide me in his shelter in the day of trouble; he will conceal me under the cover of his tent; he will lift me high upon a rock.

⁶And now my head shall be lifted up above my enemies all round me, and I will offer in his tent sacrifices with shouts of joy; I will sing and make melody to the Lord. ⁷Hear, O Lord, when I cry aloud; be gracious to me and answer me! ⁸You have said, "Seek my face." My heart says to you, "Your face, Lord, do I seek." ⁹Hide not your face from me. Turn not your servant away in anger, O you who have been my help. Cast me not off; forsake me not, O God of my salvation!

¹⁰For my father and my mother have forsaken me, but the Lord will take me in. ¹¹Teach me your way, O Lord, and lead me on a level path because of my enemies. ¹²Give me not up to the will of my adversaries; for false witnesses have risen against me, and they breathe out violence. ¹³I believe that I shall look upon the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living! ¹⁴Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the Lord!