

CHAPTER FIVE

Psalms

Reflection and Discussion

1. What is one thing that stood out to you or one thing that you learned from this chapter?
2. What is your experience with the Psalms? How often do you read or pray them? What do you like about them, and what do you find difficult?
3. Discuss the following quote from page 68: *I often think of Bono's observation that when he was asked, 'What's one thing that you've learned about God through your reading of the Psalms?' he answered, 'He listens.' Then, 'What's one thing you've learned about yourself through your reading of the Psalms?' Bono answered, 'I don't listen enough.'*
4. Julie talks about how much she has learned from the authors of the psalms and their perspective on life and says that when she neglects to read the psalms, what she misses is "their worldview, their clarity and confidence in God with them in the messes" (page 71). How might the "worldview" of the psalmists help us? What do you think we can learn from their perspective on life as we face the troubles of our own lives?
5. Discuss the following quote from pages 74-75: *In the Psalms we are never shown that the less we sin, the fewer challenges we will face. Godly people don't have less pain or heartbreak to deal with, instead they have God's wisdom and God's word to navigate that pain and to cause less pain to others as they do so...The Psalms reshape our shallow expectations, showing us life is full of pain and confusion and surprises, but God is with us, His people are with us with love and support if we seek after him.*

Practical Exercises

For these exercises, you'll need access to *The Book of Common Prayer* (2019). If you do not own one, you may access it online at <https://bcp2019.anglicanchurch.net>

1. Read the brief introduction to the psalter reading calendar on page 734 of the BCP ("Use of Psalms in the Daily Office").
2. Compare the "Traditional One-Month Psalm Cycle" (page 735) with the "60 Day Psalter" listed alongside the "Morning Prayer" and "Evening Prayer" scripture readings (pages 738-763). For the next month, commit to reading the psalms every day, following one of these two calendars.
3. Choose one psalm that you would like to memorize. Write it down. Repeat that psalm once in the morning and once at night each day for the next week.