

Peace for the Journey ... May 12, 2010

Scripture Reading: [Psalm 137](#)

You don't have to learn to pray by yourself.

This doesn't mean that prayer is not practiced in silence and solitude. After all, Jesus instructed his disciples to pray behind closed doors to be alone with God. (Matthew 6:5-6). But, when you are learning to pray, many resources are available to you, including the Psalms.

The Psalms are the Bible's prayer and song book and have been used by many generations of God's people as a guide to prayer. In fact, you may want to read and pray one Psalm each day as part of your devotional practice. If you pray the Psalms you will discover the breadth and depth of human experience as you learn to pray. You will learn that there is nothing you can't take to God, including your anger and hatred, despair and doubt. This is not to say that God won't transform your thoughts and emotions and use them to teach you love and hope, faith and patience, but the witness of the Psalms is that God is willing and able to handle whatever you are experiencing.

The writer of Psalm 137 is experiencing isolation, despair, and anger as a result of Israel's exile after 587 BC. While your experience is going to be different, you also will likely experience times when you wonder where you will find words to pray. You might experience distance and separation from God. You might experience the "dark night of the soul" (a line from a poem by Saint John of the Cross.)

Know that God is with you always and will meet you in the midst of good days and bad days.

"The Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words." Romans 8:26