

# Psalm 84



## Welcome & Introduction

### Pray together:

O Lord our God,  
teach our hearts this day  
where and how to see you,  
And where and how to find you.  
Teach us to seek you,  
And may we love you when we find you.  
Amen

St. Anselm

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<sup>7</sup>They will continue to grow stronger,  
and each of them will see God in full view.

<sup>8</sup>Hear our prayers, LORD God Almighty;  
<sup>9</sup>listen to us, O Ancient of Days.

<sup>10</sup>A single day in your courts  
is better than a thousand anywhere else!

<sup>11</sup>For the LORD God is a sun and a shield—  
giving us grace and glory,  
bestowing favour and honour.

<sup>12</sup>O LORD Almighty,  
blessed are those who trust in you.

**Community Songs:** *Holy, Holy / Craggs and Clay Vapor*

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### Reader:

Even the sparrow has found a home,  
and the swallow a nest for herself,  
where she may have her young –  
a place near your altar...

## Psalm 84

<sup>1</sup>How lovely is your dwelling-place,  
LORD Almighty!  
<sup>2</sup>My soul yearns, even faints,  
for the courts of the LORD;  
my heart and my flesh cry out  
for the living God.  
<sup>3</sup>Even the sparrow has found a home,  
and the swallow a nest for herself,  
where she may have her young –  
a place near your altar,  
LORD Almighty, my King and my God.  
<sup>4</sup>Blessed are those who dwell in your house;  
they are ever praising you.  
<sup>5</sup>What joy for those whose strength comes from the LORD,  
whose have set their minds on a pilgrimage of the  
roads you have traveled.  
<sup>6</sup>When they walk through the Valley of Weeping,  
it will become a place of refreshing springs.  
The autumn rains will clothe it with blessings.



I have a friend named Steve who is an ornithologist—'the bird man' as he likes to call himself. When we talk outside, I notice every once in a while, that his eyes dart in the direction of a bird song. He searches the skies, seeing what is invisible to me. I know that he is trying to listen to me, but he's distracted away by the birds, sidetracked by something I can't see, noise that filters into the background of my world.

I imagine that God is like my friend Steve. God goes about important business, yet God can't help but be diverted to look for a bird. What takes practice for me—this discipline of paying attention—is simply how God is. In God's life all creatures have weight; they cannot help but call attention. God cannot help but make protective space in God's life for them to roost and thrive.

The psalmist invites us to notice that there is a bird nesting at the altar, invites us to be drawn into the overlooked lives that carve out space in corners.

When Jesus preached the Sermon on the Mount, I imagine him pausing after telling the crowd to "look at the birds of the air." He is distracted for a moment, his mind going back to the words of Psalms he heard as a child, those words bounding through him.

I imagine him doing what my friend Steve does: his eye catches a flutter of movement in a tree, as a bird hops from branch to branch. I imagine Jesus' attention lingering on the birds around him, caught up where the psalmist can't help but notice: those mama swallows with their chirping babies, mouths opened wide for insects; those thick, dark nests made of muddy pebbles; those freed bodies flitting about the open air of the temple.

The birds soaring through the temple and the birds that flutter and hop and fly in our own neighbourhoods—each of them show us that to delight in the unexpected intrusion of another is to dwell in God's life. This distraction, and God's distraction for us, has another name: love.

Melissa Florer-Bixler

### The Table is set and open to all...

**Community Songs:**     *God Our Mother*  
                                  *Faithful One*  
                                  *Great Are You Lord / O Light*

### Reader:

When they walk through the Valley of Weeping,  
it will become a place of refreshing springs.  
The autumn rains will clothe it with blessings.  
They will continue to grow stronger,  
and each of them will see God in full view...



In community we work out our connectedness to God, to one another, and to ourselves. It is in community where we find out who we really are. It is life with another that shows my impatience and life with another that demonstrates my possessiveness and life with another that gives notice to my nagging devotion to the self. Life with someone else, in other words, doesn't show me nearly as much about his or her shortcomings as it does about my own. In human relationships I learn how to soften my hard spots and how to reconcile and how to care for someone else besides myself. In human relationships I learn that theory is no substitute for love.

It is easy to talk about the love of God; it is another thing to practice it...That's how relationships sanctify me. They show me where holiness is for me. That's how relationships develop me. They show me where growth is for me...Alone, I am what I am, but in community I have the chance to become everything that I can be.

And so, stability bonds me to this group of people and to these relationships so that resting in the security of each other we can afford to stumble and search, knowing that we will be caught if we fall and we will be led where we cannot see by those who have been there before us. Then we may all look back on our relationships with God, with ourselves, and with others as the only lasting mark of our humanity.

Joan Chittister

**Community Songs:**     *I Shall Not Want*  
                                  *Behold*

**Reader:**

For the LORD God is a sun and a shield—  
giving us grace and glory,  
bestowing favour and honour...



**Community Song:** *All Creatures  
Ancient of Days*

And may the Lord our God, the Ancient of Days,  
who established the dance of creation,  
who marvelled at the lilies of the field,  
who transforms chaos to order,  
lead us to transform our lives  
and the Church  
to reflect God's glory in creation.  
Amen.

Sylvia Walker

On our own, we conclude:  
there is not enough to go around.

And yet in the midst of our perceived deficit You come.  
You come, working to give bread in the wilderness.  
You come, working to give homes to exiles.  
You come, working to give futures to the shutdown.  
You come – fleshed in Jesus.

And when you come the blind receive their sight,  
the lame walk,  
the lepers are cleansed,  
the deaf hear,  
the dead are raised,  
the poor dance and sing.

So we watch  
and we take food we did not grow,  
and live life we did not invent.  
May your giving break our cycles of imagined scarcity,  
override our presumed deficits,  
quiet our anxieties of lack,  
transform our vision so we are able to see  
your field of mercy and blessing.

May your spirit settle deep into our lives  
and may your generosity change us,  
that we may give, in wonder, love and praise.  
that which we receive from you.

Walter Brueggemann

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