

The Timeless Psalms

by Joan Stott

A Call to Worship Advent 4, Year A, Psalm 80: 1-7, 17-19

O Lord, the Great Shepherd of your people we come to worship you, seeking your tender care. Lead us, Good Shepherd, into your path of your fullness of life, through your justice, peace and joy.

O God the Father of us all, we are aware that we have failed to worship and serve you as we should.

Come to us, Restoring Lord, with your forgiveness; and bind us to yourself as your beloved children.

May the radiant light of God's face shine upon us as we come to worship the God of light and mercy.

As we receive the light of your presence, O God, may our prayers and our worship be acceptable to you. Amen.

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Prayers of Confession and Lament Advent 4, Year A, Psalm 80: 1-7, 17-19

O Lord our God, hear our cry as we come to you this day in prayer. Great Shepherd of your people, hear our call for your help and mercy. O God, the Holy One, as we come before you in worship, may our words, our sincere feelings of penitence, and our prayers be acceptable to you.

We are filled with remorse because of our careless living and our casual approach to worship and prayer. O God, strengthen us in our commitment to you and to your ways. Help us to more faithfully worship and praise you, so that we will confidently know again that you hear our prayers.

O Gracious and Forgiving God, we know from our past experiences, that if we honestly and sincerely confess our lack of trust in you; our slowness to respond to you; and the way we fail to honour your Holy Name; then you will forgive us and renew us with the joy of your eternal fellowship.

Restore us we pray, into the care of the Great Shepherd of the flock of your people! O God, shine the radiant light of your love upon us again, so that we will once again receive God's merciful blessing, God's protection, and God's favour. Amen.

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A Personal Meditation

Advent 4, Year A, Psalm 80: 1-7, 17-19

O Lord my God, forgive my foolishness, and the way I have strayed from your paths of right living and loving. May I never again have to taste my bitter tears, or the sourness of a daily diet of sorrow! May I never again be the laughing stock of my neighbours who mocked my fall from grace, and openly enjoyed seeing me fail in my faith in you!

Creative pause: There is no nourishment in tears or bitterness.

O Lord my God, please listen to me while I pray for your help, and as I struggle with my dreadful sense of isolation from you. O Shepherd God, I feel lost and bewildered, and I am in desperate need of your guiding hand. Restore me not only to the care of my Tender Shepherd, but also into the membership of your flock, for I only feel secure when I am by your side and as a part of your flock - safely at home with you.

Creative pause: Tender Shepherd, lead me home to you.

O God, I lose my way and darkness is all around me when the radiant light of your presence seems not to be shining down upon me. Turn your ears and your eyes towards me again, O my God. I yearn to worship and praise you each day in ways that are acceptable to you. Restore me again as your beloved child; and in your generous love, lay your hand upon me in healing, giving me renewed strength and courage so that I may worship you all my days as I live in the radiant light of your love

Creative pause: Almighty God, lay your hand on me to restore me.

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