



The Timeless Psalms

by Joan Stott

A Call to Worship

Psalm 123, Pentecost 22A [Ordinary 33A] or [Proper 28A] 2011

Great and Glorious God, we gather to worship you.
We lift our eyes to you, in reverent awe before your majesty.
Great is the Lord our God, and greatly to be praised!

Generous and Merciful God, we come to worship you.
We lift our eyes to you, giving thanks for your compassion.
Gracious is the Lord our God, and greatly to be praised!

Welcoming and Empowering God, we worship you.
We lift our eyes to you, and we celebrate your faithfulness.
Holy is the Lord our God, and greatly to be praised!
We lift our eyes, seeking to worship and praise our God. Amen.

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Prayers of Petition and Trust

Psalm 123, Pentecost 22A [Ordinary 33A] or [Proper 28A] 2011

Great God enthroned in glory, individually and collectively we look up to you, with a mixture of anxiety and trust in our hearts and minds. We look to you O God, seeking your merciful blessing as we journey on our pilgrimage home to you. We also lift up to you our wide open hearts and minds to perceive this world's wonders, that speak to us of your Everlasting Presence, and your loving compassion and care.

Holy God, high above all worlds, all life, all things and all creatures—we your children are struggling with living in a world that rejects you, and which scorns us for our faith and trust in you. We gather together as one people to share our concerns with the One in whom we trust, based on our knowledge that generations have experienced God's merciful kindness. We are harassed and tormented by arrogant people who think they know all there is to know about life; but they do not know you or acknowledge you, so how can they know anything about living and being a part of God's purposes for God's peoples and for God's world?

Empowering God, we seek to love and serve you within the hope and confidence we have in you, knowing that we are God's beloved children. You have called and challenged us to faithfully follow your commands, and to be risk-takers, as we seek to live within the promises that you have given to us. Each day we look to you, and to the people you have placed around us, to lead us on in our life's pilgrimage. We acknowledge that whilst we have often failed to be faithful to you—you have never failed or forgotten us. Therefore, in renewed confidence and trust in you, we continue on our life's journey towards our everlasting home in your Glorious Presence. Amen.

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A Personal Meditation**Psalm 123, Pentecost 22A [Ordinary 33A] or [Proper 28A] 2011**

Holy God, it seems to be a natural instinct for me to lift up my eyes whenever I think about you, and whenever I seek your presence and guidance. You are so far above me in so many ways. In your loving; your creative powers; your holiness and your faithfulness; it is truly impossible to list your mysterious attributes and wonders, your powers and majesty – any such list would be never ending, and still incomplete!

Creative pause: It is a natural instinct to look up to God.

Just like the long-ago pilgrims as they climbed the slopes leading up to Zion – their ancient place of the worship of God, as I climbed up to the highest point I have ever been, so I too seemed to be moving ever closer to God. There on the top of mountain ranges - as part of the Great Wall of China - God seemed to be so close, so accessible! Even in places where God is not always recognised or worshiped, God's presence there seemed to be so real, like being enveloped in a warm comforting blanket!

Creative pause: Is it an illusion that the higher we climb the closer we are to God?

With shame, I admit that there is always the temptation for me to be so involved on lifting my eyes towards God, that I fail to see God's world around me, with all its needs and problems, and its rejection of God and God's ways. My eyes also need to remain open so that I can see and experience the scorn and disdain that whirls around me; all of which remind me of my responsibility to continue to share the good news of God's love and compassion; of God's dependability and faithfulness; and of God's grace and gentle forgiveness. But being totally human, I admit that I am often hurt by those people who scoff at my efforts to share with them my faith and trust in God, and the importance of worship of God.

Creative pause: Ensuring that my eyes are not blinkered!

Have mercy on me O my God, and give me the courage to keep lifting my eyes to you, but to also keep my sights on the your world around me.

Creative pause: A dual focus for my eyes – God and God's world!

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