

A Prayerful Reflection

Take time to sit quietly and ask Jesus to be present with you in a new way this week. As we prepare to pray, let's remember to praise God for all his goodness in and through Christ Jesus our Lord.

Hymn – 757

When peace like a river
 attendeth my way,
when sorrows like sea-billows roll;
whatever my lot
 You have taught me to say,
'It is well, it is well with my soul,'
 It is well with my soul;
 it is well, it is well with my soul.

A WORD FROM SCRIPTURE – Psalm 23

¹ The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing.

² He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters,

³ he refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake.

⁴ Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me;
your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

⁵ You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.

⁶ Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the
house of the LORD forever.

Psalm 23 is a royal psalm. The psalm prophetically speaks of Jesus. He is the Good Shepherd whose flock trusts in him (**John 10**)

Verse 1 'The Lord is my Shepherd'. The word picture David uses for God comes from his own life and experience. He has been a shepherd in his youth.

Verse 2 'He makes me lie down in green pastures'. David here uses eloquent language to express his view of the abundant care God gives to his people.

Verse 3 'He restores my soul' God refreshes His people with his quiet voice and gentle touch. For this reason, the sheep know the Shepherd and are known by Him (**John 10:14**)

Verse 4 'Even though I walk through the valley of death'. This can refer to any distressing time in our lives. The awareness of our own mortality often comes with sickness, trials and hardship. But the Lord our Protector can lead us through these dark and difficult valleys to eternal life with Him. 'You are with me'. The Good Shepherd is with us even in what seems the most difficult and troubling situations.

Prayer – Loving God, we thank You that Jesus is our Good and faithful Shepherd. Thank You for the times that You bring us to a halt in the business of life and cause us to take time to rest. Help us to listen to Your voice, respond to Your gracious leading, and lie down in the green pastures into which You lead us. **AMEN.**

Prayer of Intercession

Let us pray.

Good and gracious God, be our shepherd and our guide, lead us out of darkness and death and into life and light eternal; deliver us from all evil, guide us into the ways of goodness and peace, and when we wander bring us back to you and your love through Jesus Christ our Lord.

We pray for all who teach, we pray for our local schools and places of learning. We ask your blessings upon our communities, our homes and our loved ones. We pray for those who have lost direction, for those whose faith has become weak.

We pray for the despondent, the disillusioned and the despairing, for all who feel desperate or distressed, that they may know that God seeks for them and loves them. We pray for those with addictions, which find life so difficult, Lord God bring healing and restoration for those who are troubled.

We pray for our church and for all who minister, using their God given gifts of service. We give thanks for the Sunday school and the work with the children, who are a real blessing to us. We give thanks for.

- The prayer meetings.
- The Teenager group.
- The Golden Circle.
- The Bible studies.
- Freedom in Christ course
- Outreach in the village.

In all these activities we give thanks as we serve together, in unity and in love, sharing Jesus' love and growing together making Christ known in our community.

Finally,...take time out to pray for those on your hearts, for those close to us, for families, friends or neighbours, for those who are known to us who are going through a difficult time. For those who have lost a loved one. We ask your blessing upon all who are ill at home or in hospital. Lord, comfort and help those in need we pray.

Pray the LORD'S Prayer

Peace

*Jesus is the Good Shepherd and leads us into
the way of peace.*

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

A prayer of blessing

*The faithful shepherd protects you from all evil,
strengthen you with his goodness,
lead you to the fullness of his love.*

AMEN