

MHA Sunday



One Sunday, one service, one church

Meditative prayers on Psalm 139

Father God,

Psalm 139 reminds us that you see deep into our hearts and you know each of us intimately. This is not the critical scrutiny of a judge who can never be satisfied but the loving gaze of a tender father.

There are times in our lives when, due to illness, stress or declining memory, we struggle with basic actions, but you our great Father are still so personally engaged with us that: *“you know when we sit and when we rise; you discern our going out and our lying down; you are familiar with all our ways.”*

In times of mental distress or memory loss our thoughts can be fragmented but *“you perceive our thoughts from afar”* and you know when those thoughts are confusing or painful.

Some of us may struggle to remember the words we want to speak but the Psalm says, *“before a word is on our tongues you, Lord, know it completely”*, even when we can't formulate the words you know what we want to say.

Sometimes we feel lost or confused but the Psalm says: *“You hem us in behind and before, you lay your hand upon us.”*, not to restrict us but to protect us and make us feel safe.

Father, sometimes we feel isolated, lonely and afraid but the Psalm reminds us that, no matter how far away we feel, you are present in every place, we are never alone.

“If we go up to the heavens, you are there; if we make our bed in the depths, you are there. If we rise on the wings of the dawn, and settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide us, your right hand will hold us fast”.

You knew us, and you know us, in our weakness and our strength, in our fragile infancy, our healthy childhood, our strong and active lives, our vulnerable and struggling times.

You are the God of our lives. You are **our** God. We love you and we trust in you.

Please help us to love and care for each other with generous love, just as you do, through the many phases of our lives.

In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

For two voices:

1 You have searched me, Lord, and you know me.

2 You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar.

3 You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways.

Lord (Loving) God, we pray for those we know and love who seem to be lost; who can no longer find their way around because of physical or mental disability. They sit and they rise and we have no idea of their thoughts. We are concerned if they go out. We are also concerned when we go to sleep. How grateful we are that you discern their thoughts and are familiar with their ways; that you watch over them in a way that we can't. Help us to trust your love and care.

4 Before a word is on my tongue you, Lord, know it completely.

5 You hem me in behind and before, and you lay your hand upon me.

6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain.

Lord (Loving) God, we pray for those whose language is confused; those who can't get their words out in the right order or get frustrated because they know they are no longer able to communicate as they once did. We pray that you would help us to be patient with them and give them time to formulate their thoughts. We thank you for the days when they *can* communicate and remember, laugh and cry with us. We pray that in their 'lost moments' they might know themselves completely known by you.

7 Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence?

8 If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.

9 If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea,

10 even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast.

11 If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me,"

12 even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you.

Lord (Loving) God, sometimes life can seem very dark for those who suffer because of illness or old age and also for those who care for them and love them. It can seem as though much of what we have known and loved has gone. People, places and contexts have been changed and we feel haunted by our memories. Thank you for this reminder that even when we can't see or discern you, you are there holding us fast. We pray for those who feel lost in their own worlds, that in the darkness we see or understand they would know the light of your presence.

13 For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb.

14 I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.

15 My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth.

16 Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.

Lord (Loving) God, you knew us before we were born. You were the one who knit us together in our mother's womb. We are all different and your ways with us are as different as your knitting pattern for each of us was at the beginning of our lives. You saw our unformed bodies and formed us. You knew the days ordained for us. Keep us faithful in living, watching and caring until you call us home. Help us to trust in your creative, loving presence still at work in our lives.

17 How precious to me are your thoughts, God! How vast is the sum of them!

18 Were I to count them, they would outnumber the grains of sand— when I awake, I am still with you.

23 Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts.

24 See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

Lord (Loving) God, your thoughts remain precious to us, as does your company. We long that we might be nearer to you and know your presence more constantly. Search us and know our anxious thoughts; forgive us for anything that is offensive and lead us to the place of wholeness and healing - the way which is everlasting. Through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

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