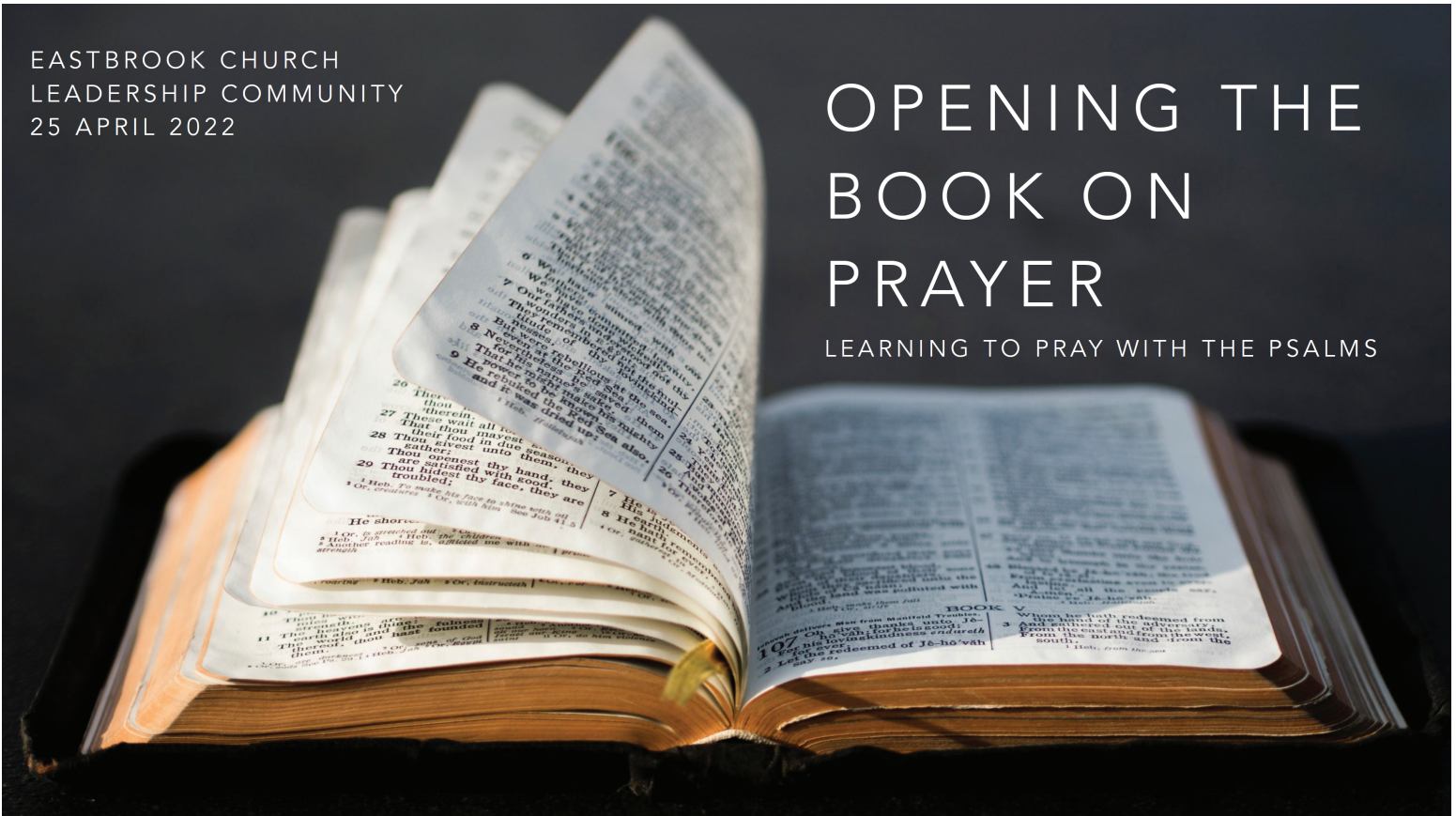


EASTBROOK CHURCH
LEADERSHIP COMMUNITY
25 APRIL 2022

OPENING THE BOOK ON PRAYER

LEARNING TO PRAY WITH THE PSALMS



THE PSALMS: AN OVERVIEW

- 150 poetic compositions
- Title: *psalmoi* (Greek) means “songs”; *tehillim* (Hebrew) means “praises”
- Various authors: of David, of Moses, of Solomon, of Asaph, of Sons of Korah
- Various superscriptions: occasions, musical performance guidelines, genres

THE PSALMS: LITERARY FORMS

- Prayer for help (individual and community)
- Psalm of trust
- Hymn of praise
- Song of thanksgiving (individual and community)
- Instructional/wisdom psalm
- Royal psalm
- Liturgies

STRUCTURE AND LAYOUT

- The Book of Psalms is divided into 5 parts or books
- Psalms 1-2 and Psalms 146-150 serve as bookends for the Book of Psalms
- Psalms 1-2 outline how one’s life is blessed by living according to God’s law and trusting in God’s king
- Psalms 146-150 sum up all the parts of the psalms with praise, each psalm beginning and ending with the Hebrew word hallelujah (praise the LORD)
- The five parts of the Book of Psalms tell the story of Israel’s history:
 - Book 1 (3-41) & Book 2 (42-72): Reign of King David and King Solomon
 - Book 3 (73-89): Divided kingdom after Solomon and eventual destruction
 - Book 4 (90-106): Babylonian exile and recovering identity as God’s people
 - Book 5 (107-150): Celebrating return from exile and God’s rule as King.

TWO BASIC TYPES OF PSALMS:
PSALM OF LAMENT
PSALMS OF PRAISE

A TREASURE FOR SPIRITUAL LIFE

- The psalms gather the full range of human experience and emotion.
- The psalms provide powerful imagery that activates our imagination.
- The psalms lead us into an encounter with the character and activity of God.
- The psalms show us how to interact with and worship God.

PRAYING THE PSALMS WITH JESUS

- Jesus prayed the psalms while on earth. Many see the psalms as a reflection of Jesus' life as the Messiah.
- When we pray the psalms, we enter into the life of Christ by praying along with Him.
- If we want to learn how to pray, we can join in with Jesus, who prays the psalms as God and man, showing us the way.

APPROACHING THE PSALMS IN PRAYER

- Understand the meaning of the psalm
- Meditate on a portion of the psalm (a verse or two)
- Write your own response or reflection on those verses
- Pray the psalm or a response back to God

AN ORDER FOR PRAYING THE PSALMS

- Read one psalm per day (dividing longer psalms over more than one day)
- Read the entire psalter in one month
- Partner reading the psalms with a devotional book or reading plan

FURTHER READING ON THE PSALMS

Dietrich Bonhoeffer. *Life Together and The Prayerbook of the Bible*. Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works Volume 5. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1996.

Nancy deClaissé-Walford, Rolf A. Jacobson, and Beth LaNeel Tanner. *The Book of Psalms*. NICOT. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2014.

Timothy and Kathy Keller. *The Songs of Jesus: A Year of Daily Devotions in the Psalms*. New York: Viking, 2015.

Derek Kidner. *Psalms 1-72*. Kidner Classic Commentaries. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2014.

_____. *Psalms 73-150*. Kidner Classic Commentaries. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2014.

C. S. Lewis. *Reflections on the Psalms*. New York: Harper, 1958.

Eugene H. Peterson. *Answering God: The Psalms as Tools for Prayer*. New York: Harper Collins, 1989.

W. David O. Taylor. *Open and Unafraid: The Psalms as a Guide to Life*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2020.

N. T. Wright. *The Case for the Psalms*. New York: HarperCollins, 2013.

Two resources from the Bible Project (bibleproject.com/explore/video/psalms/) are:

- "Psalms: An Overview"
- "How to Read Biblical Poetry: Psalms"