

Laments, recorded in psalms, songs, prayers, and actions, have helped the people of God speak honestly about pain and suffering while remembering the presence of God in all things. Laments may address the experience of individuals or communities. As you work through your own lament, use the words of Scripture to guide and inspire you.

STEP 1 NAME

→ What is the hurt that you are naming?

→ What is the burden that feels unbearable?

Name both your feelings and the cause.

John 11
Some two miles away, "and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them about their brother." "When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out and met him, while Mary stayed at home." "Martha said to Jesus, 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. 'But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him.' Jesus said to her, 'Your brother will rise again.' "Martha said to him, 'I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.' "Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life'—

My eyes flow with rivers of tears because of the destruction of my people. —Lamentations 3:48

By the rivers of Babylon—there we sat down, and there we wept when we remembered Zion. —Psalm 137:1

Why, Oh LORD, do you stand far off?
Why do YOU hide yourself in times of trouble?
—Psalm 10:1

STEP 2 Cry Out!

Shout to God! Use words if you need them. Lament invites the whole body to be present and to release the hurt, fear, anger, and pain that you are holding.

Out of my depths, I cry to you, O Lord.
LORD, HEAR MY VOICES! —Psalm 130:1

A great number of the people followed Jesus, and among them were women who were weeping loudly and wailing for him. —Luke 23:27

Do NOT be silent, O Lord, do NOT be silent to me. My soul is full of trouble, and my heart is in anguish. O Lord, my salvation. —Psalm 38:21-23

STEP 3 Remember!

We are not alone in our suffering. Laments pause to remember God's presence. As Christians, we remember Jesus' ministry that shares our suffering.

→ How does God's story and your story intersect in this moment?

He was despised and rejected by others; a man of suffering, acquainted with infirmities, and one from whom others hid their faces. He was despised, and he held him of no account. —Isaiah 53:3

For I have sinned with my eyes. I have looked away from you, O LORD, my God. —Psalm 139:17

And remember, I am with you in your suffering. —Psalm 135:14

2 Corinthians 4
But we have this treasure in clay jars, so that it may be made clear that this power is from God and not from us. We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven back; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. The death of Jesus was for us so that we might live. —2 Corinthians 4:7-12

"We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose." —Romans 8:28

STEP 4 Find Hope!

Laments often end with the community declaring the promises and faithfulness of God.

- What promises of God's faithfulness speak to you?
- If you cannot find the words, what text from Scripture can help you?
- Who, such as a friend or loved one, can say them?

2 Corinthians 1
Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all consolation, who consoles us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to console those who are in any affliction with the consolation with which we ourselves are comforted by God. The goal of the suffering of Christ was abundant for us, so also our consolation is abundant through Christ.

STEP 5 Amen—So be it!
Offering a final "Amen" reminds us that, once offered, a prayer is received by God.
→ What does your "Amen" sound and look like today?

Psalm 34
I will praise the LORD with all my heart and in all my strength and in all my might. —Psalm 34:1-3

He will wipe every tear from your eyes. —Psalm 104:24