



PRAYERS OF  
**Lamentation**

BASED ON  
**Psalm 13 (NRSV)**

*How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever?*

*How long will you hide your face from me?*

*How long must I bear pain in my soul,  
and have sorrow in my heart all day long?*

*How long shall my enemy be exalted over me?  
Consider and answer me, O Lord my God!*

*Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep the sleep of death,  
and my enemy will say, "I have prevailed";  
my foes will rejoice because I am shaken.*

*But I trusted in your steadfast love;  
my heart shall rejoice in your salvation.*

*I will sing to the Lord,  
because he has dealt bountifully with me.*



**Rev. Alka Lyall**  
*Pastor of  
Broadway United  
Methodist Church  
Chicago, IL*

***God of grace, the pain around us is indescribable.*** The suffering we see every day makes us question your existence and presence in this world. All the work done for racial and social justice seems to not be enough. How long, will you hide your face from us, O Holy God? How long will we need to suffer before you pay attention to us?

We continue to see BIPoC and trans lives cut short, people deemed unworthy and invisible, and immigrants labeled as aliens. Our hearts break every time we learn of another black person lynched, another brown person murdered, another indigenous child forced to speak English, another trans person who goes missing to later be found dead. We experience rage when we see borders tightened, fences built and young people who know only this country, to be deported to a land they have never seen before. We lament at the unfair voting restrictions, experience food deserts, and visit gentrified communities that continue to displace poor and underprivileged people.

We seek justice every day! We feel defeated every day! The harder we try, the tighter the grip of white supremacy seems to get around our necks. We feel we are fighting alone. You are hiding your face from us, it seems, creator God! How long will we experience this defeat? How long will we suffer the pain? How long before we can breathe the fresh air of equity and justice?

We are tired God! We have no more tears to cry. We have no energy. We feel numb. We wish to give up. Look at us, divine Wisdom! Have mercy on your people! Restore hope among us! Show us signs of your presence. Hear our humble cries! Help us Holy God, to not ignore our anger and our frustration, but to share it with you in a way that re-energizes us to continue the work: to seek justice, to demand equity for all, and to stand in the margins with the hurting.

In Jesus' name, we pray, Amen.



**Alma W. Pérez**  
*Director of Hispanic/  
Latino Resourcing of  
Discipleship Ministries  
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***Terror surrounds me everywhere.*** During the day, I am overwhelmed by bad news: a massacre in the supermarket; a policeman abusing and killing with his power; Your creation rebelling against selfish human attitudes that cause pollution and exploitation; people dying from Covid; the ignorance fostered by idolatry doesn't allow for healing; the unbearable weight of the wall (visible and invisible) imposed by privilege, racism, and xenophobia.

I no longer dare to speak, and I hide in my lamentation. My foreign accent hurts the senses of those who see me differently; my gender crushes me into an inferior and marginalized place; my Caribbean identity, made of the noise of drums, the flavor of achiote, cadences of the palm trees, and the beach, hit the ethnocentric homogeneity.

At night my thoughts disturb me and in a valley of tears and insomnia I ask You: until when, my good Jesus? Powerlessness consumes me.

But I know that you will not leave me in this agony; you are my Redeemer! In my lament, the warmth of Your presence accompanies me; You cry with me and also comfort me. You sustain and guide me with Your grace, love, and mercy. And like the prophet Habakkuk, like a praise, I proclaim:

...but I will still celebrate  
because the LORD God  
saves me.

The LORD gives me strength.  
He makes my feet as sure  
as those of a deer,  
and he helps me stand  
on the mountains.

(Habakkuk 3: 17-19, CEV)

A PRAYER OF LAMENTATION  
Based on Psalm 13 (NRSV)



**Rev. Connie  
Semy P. Mella, Th.D**  
*Academic Dean  
of Union Theological  
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***In pain, we come before thy presence, O God.*** Listen to our supplication. Open your ears to the cries of our hearts. Take heed to the groaning of our souls. You have seen our plight. Evil people persecute the righteous. Malicious people spread lies to discredit your children. Manipulators distort facts to inflict pain on us.

How long, O Lord, will you allow their evil deeds to prosper? How long will you let us bear the pain? How long shall we wait for justice and righteousness, healing and wholeness? Have you witnessed the pain of those who are bullied, despised, and discriminated against because of their color, race, status, and gender orientation? Have you seen the innocent children being ravaged by war in Ukraine? Have you heard the cry of the wounded and the orphans? Have you felt the distress of the refugees and the prisoners of war? Of the torment and pain of the families left behind?

We lament the arrogance of the warmongers as they laugh for mockery. We grieve over the senseless killings, manipulations, and distortion of your truth. We are in so much pain over the sin --both personal and structural-- that wreaks havoc on the life of people and society. We are in distress and lamentation. We cry out loud to you; listen to our prayers. Please give us the gift of tears as we weep alongside your people. Assure us of your presence that "though the wrong seems oft so strong," you are the ruler yet. Listen to our cries, O God. Take heed to our supplication and grant us the joy of your presence.

Amen.



**Rev. Gigi A. Warren**  
*Ordained Elder in  
The United Methodist  
Church and Board  
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### ***Gracious, Holy, and Loving God,***

We find ourselves in a time of great sorrow.  
Because we are weary, we lament.  
Because our hearts are broken, we lament.  
Because our spirits are crushed, we lament.  
Because our souls want to faint, we lament.

And when we lament, You are near.  
When we lament, You are the Breath of life.  
When we lament, You are the One that sustains us.

Thank You Lord, that when we are weak, You are strong.  
Thank You Lord, that You are our help and our rescuer.  
Thank You Lord, that weeping moves us beyond sadness into compassion.  
Thank You Lord, that even in lament, You take delight in us.

Thank you for the gift of lament,  
So that we do more than just regret our circumstances,  
We also resolve to wait patiently on You to see us through.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

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**Rev. Leo Yates**  
*Hospital Chaplain  
at Western Region  
Hospital Center  
Hanover, MD*

***You, O God, are known by many names.*** You are aware of the laments we carry in our hearts, like why? Are we there yet? and Can't You...? Many of us look to you when our laments are too heavy to carry and seek your solace. For some of us, we are overwhelmed by the severity of the world's problems, including our own.

We seek your presence and the other signs when we've been in the valley for far too long. War has once again plagued our world where we once again fail as humanity to show love and grace to one another. We pray to learn the pathways of peace. Lord, forgive us when we contribute to racism, homophobia, sexism, oppression, and acts of violence; instead, show us the ways of love and kindness.

God, it just seems that our tear ducts never seem to dry up. Yet, we know that you are with us because of the reminders to set our eyes toward the mountain to know where our help comes from. We ask you instill in our hearts the grace-filled words of Jesus, "Take heart!" Encourage us with moments of courage and strength to raise our hand towards you to pull us up. When our personal or family storms are too much, may we too hear Christ's words of "Peace! Be still!" Lord, when we find ourselves lingering at the foot of the cross, call our attention to look over the empty tomb, reminding us of the hope and grace that awaits us.

You are still our God and we thank you for your mercy. Amen.



**M. Garlinda Burton**  
*United Methodist  
deaconess and  
resource developer for  
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on Religion and Race  
Nashville, TN*

***Wise and Loving God, You have made us wondrously in Your image and called us all “good.”*** Yet, in our sin, your human creatures contradict you, saying, “No! Some humans are better than others. Some are more ‘divinely made’ than others.”

God, You promised to set a welcome table for Your entire human family. Yet, we divided ourselves into “us and them,” “haves and have nots,” and “blessed and not blessed.” And the oppressors enslaved, stole from, and exalted over the oppressed, and barred them from Your table.

How long, O God, will injustice overshadow justice? How long before the mighty come down and the ones despised for no good reason are lifted? How long before sorrow is replaced with rejoicing for those made in Your image, yet relegated to second place?

How much longer will racism encase Your church like lead, so that no warm sun shines in, nor Son-light shine out? How long will derision and discrimination reign? When will Your steadfast love work its way into our hearts, so much so that kin-dom living begins?

Let justice roll down today, God. Put a new song in the heart of the oppressed and the oppressors, so that we all may dance on a common ground of holy truth-telling, justice-making, and—when we’ve done our work—lasting reconciliation. We’re still waiting, Wise and Loving God, to sing that new song.

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**Jung Pyo (JP) Hong**  
*Lead Pastor of Christ  
Crossman UMC  
Falls Church, VA*

***Dear God.***

Are you *dear*? To me. To us.  
To we who live afraid. Of violence and harm.  
Simply because. We look. Sound.  
Different.

**Be dear to all your children, O God.**

Near God.

Are you *near*? To me. To us.  
When walking by a man who screams go home!  
When a global pandemic is blamed on my face.  
My difference.

**Be near for all your children, O God.**

Hear God.

Can I *hear* you? Do you hear me? Us?  
Our lament. My asking with the psalmist.  
*How long? How long must I bear pain in my soul?*  
Be *dear*. Be *near*.

**Be hear to the cries of all your children, O God.**

**AMEN.**