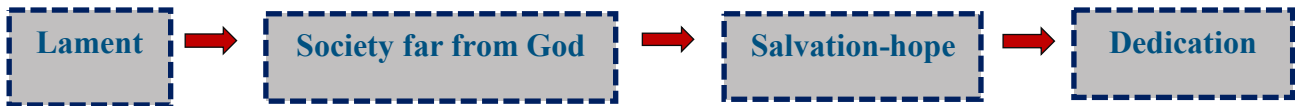


# Year of Lament – A Pathway to God

## Resource Pack - 'Introduction'

Jennifer Hercott  
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### Lament – a pathway to God



In a world where the tide of human suffering threatens to overwhelm whatever dams we build to contain it, having a year of lament for the church seems both necessary and appropriate. Lament has the power to gather up and accept bitter pain and tears of a broken world; it accepts them, and presents them to God who is always waiting and ready to receive them.

Scripture is filled with lament. Habakkuk lamented the coming judgment on Israel. The book of Lamentations is one long lament. Our Savior cried out a lament in the garden of Gethsemane; and the psalms of lament are poetic songs that give voice to the sorrows and pains of God's people.

The language of lament does more and goes further than just voicing and releasing painful or pent-up emotions. Christian lament far beyond mere catharsis, is in itself a theology, a doxology, a form of worship. Lament is a reminder of truth, and an exercise in faith. True lament is transformative for the believer; it refuses denial of past events, practices truth telling and compels us forward in the strength of Christ to restored relationship with God.

Corporate lament calls for maturity of faith, a confidence in who God is, and who we are in him; as well as Christian compassion capable of weeping for those who 'are like sheep without a shepherd'. It calls for spiritual maturity capable of feeling another's pain so deeply that it causes us to forget ourselves and sob, calling out for restoration, justice and hope. It remembers that God is love, that he is compassionate and good, and places all our hope in God's mercy and salvation.

A year of lament for the church, we pray, will be a blessing to our communities, enriching for church, and a personal journey of faith for all who participate. Through the year we will bear witness and pay heed to the reality of human suffering both inside and outside the church; it will be a year of purposeful seeking the heart, mercy and faithfulness of God, and of finding great comfort in his love, mercy and promises.

### Scripture

Psalm 51:16-17

You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it;  
you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings.  
My sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit;  
a broken and contrite heart  
you, God, will not despise.