

### Summary:

The Psalms are full of circumstances leading to the praise of God, and exhortations to lift our heads, hearts and hands to worship him.

### Call to Worship

Paul to the Philippians: **“Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!”** (Phil 4:4)

### Prayer

Lord God, as I look at spectacular gums, smell mown grass after rain, gaze on the expanse of a good year’s crops, enjoy the vastness of the night sky, and marvel at all you have made and provided, I lift my praise to you and extol your name

And as I look at those around me in in my church, enjoy the warmth of the love and fellowship of these brothers and sisters, rely on the support in prayer and ministry of this family for whom you are our Heavenly Father, I lift my praise to you and extol your name, my wonderful God, my loving Father, and my precious Saviour. Amen

Song:        AHB 91        *by Eleanor Farjeon*

1. Morning has broken like the first morning;  
Blackbird has spoken like the first bird.  
Praise for the singing, praise for the morning,  
Praise for them, springing fresh from the word.
2. Sweet the rain’s new fall sunlit from heaven,  
Like the first dewfall on the first grass.  
Praise for the sweetness of the wet garden  
Sprung from completeness where his feet pass.
3. Mine is the sunlight; mine is the morning  
Born of the one light Eden saw play.  
Praise with elation, praise every morning,  
God’s recreation of the new day.

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### Prayer of Intercession

Heavenly Father, I thank you for this nation and its relative freedom from violence and its political stability. I pray for our government as we are exhorted to do in your word. I pray for wisdom for our Prime Minister, Premiers and parliamentarians as they interact with other nations’ leaders, as they manage the many tasks of governing the nation and the states.

I pray that they will value the Christian roots that underpin all aspects of our society be it law, health, education, economics or arts. I pray for them as they legislate for so many issues that affect our well-being as a nation – care for the sick, elderly and poor, “hot-

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button” issues such as freedom of speech, gender and sexuality, abortion and euthanasia. I pray that your precepts, decrees and commandments, given for our good, will be valued by our government.

I pray too with those persecuted Christians living in countries that have little desire for a compassionate society, which prioritise power over the lives of others. I pray for their strength of faith and conviction that glorifies God and changes the lives of others.

Lord, have mercy on this world of ours and on me as I share the world-changing, redeeming grace of Jesus. Amen

### Song: “Far and Near” (by Graham Kendrick)

1. Far and near hear the call, worship him, Lord of all  
Families of nations come, celebrate what God has done
2. Deep and wide is the love heaven sent from above.  
God’s own Son for sinners died, rose again, he is alive.  
*Say it loud, say it strong, tell the world what God has done,  
Say it loud, praise his name, let the earth rejoice for the Lord reigns.*
3. At his name let praise begin, oceans roar, nature sing,  
For he comes to judge the earth in righteousness and in his truth.

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### Bible Reading:

- Psalm 8 Lord our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory in the heavens. Through the praise of children and infants you have established a stronghold against your enemies, to silence the foe and the avenger. When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him? You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honour. You made him ruler over the works of your hands; you put everything under his feet: all flocks and herds, and the beasts of the field, the birds of the air and the fish of the sea, all that swim the paths of the seas. O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

### Message: “Lift your Voice”

At my church we have regular Saturday morning bushwalks for fellowship and outreach for our internationals who make up the majority of the group. It is amazing how easy it is to strike up meaningful conversations about faith as we trek along the trails in the Adelaide Hills. Because my sure-footedness is not what it used to be I usually walk with my head down on these bushwalks, and my world shrinks to that little patch of ground where I’m going to take my next step. Occasionally I stop and lift my head to

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enjoy the views and marvel at, and enjoy, the bigger picture of God's creation – just wonderful!

And then I read Psalm 8. **Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory in the heavens..... I consider the moon and the stars which you have set in place.** Many reading or hearing this live in country areas, away from city lights and the nights are therefore darker. If you lift your head, you can see the full glory of what God has made. When I do this, I can't help but praise God for his goodness and majesty.

I want to take you through a bit of a tour of the Psalms where we encounter the glory and majesty of God, and we are asked to lift up our head, hearts, hands, eyes and voices to praise his name.

Sometimes a dark night, required to see the full glory of God in the heavens, is an analogy for a "dark night of the soul" when we can also see the glory and majesty of God. All of us face times when our spirits are low, we are in despair, or we are facing difficult life circumstances like bereavement, relationship breakdown, physical pain, failure, betrayal and even danger. In the middle of such times, it is good to lift our heads and behold the glory of God – and then he lifts us.

Psalm 40 recounts what God will do for us. **I waited patiently for the Lord; he turned to me and heard my cry. He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire; he set my feet upon a rock and gave me a firm place to stand.** God is faithful and never abandons us in our dark places or miry pits. And when he lifts us, the Psalmist goes on to say, **He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God.**

It's a big comfort to know that God hears my cry, although sometimes I am impatient, and say like Psalm 13 says, **How long Lord..... How long will you hide your face from me?..... How long must I wrestle with my thoughts.** And it seems like that sometimes, doesn't it? But the Psalmist teaches us a wonderful lesson at the end of this complaint, this lament. He concludes by saying, **But I trust in your unfailing love, my heart rejoices in your salvation. I will sing the Lord's praise for he has been good to me.** So, even dark days are a launching pad for praising God. He lifts us, and we lift our voices in praise to him.

There are so many occasions when we should be lifting our voices to God. Psalm 34: **I will extol the Lord at all times; his praise will always be on my lips.** Do we make a habit of lifting our voices to exalt God? When we see a prayer answered, when we see someone respond to the gospel, when we look at our families, when we see God's glory in his creation and in his people, we should be lifting our voices to give God the glory for what we see, what we experience and what we feel. If you know a song or a hymn, sing it! If you've got something to say, say it! "Say it strong, say it loud" as it says in the song above! You may not want to do that in the street, but when you are reflecting on it when you are on your own, lift your voice! Psalm 135:3: **Praise the Lord, for the Lord is good; sing praise to his name, for that is pleasant.** Find time to do it. Make time to do it, for it is good for us. As we lift our voices to the Father, the Holy Spirit fills us with joy. Lifting our voices is a physical thing, with a spiritual benefit.

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Do you know that when you go to church you are going to do a strange and unusual thing? Where else in this day and age do a group of people of all ages go to a building in the community and 3 or 4 times in an hour or so, stand up and sing? They don't seem to do it much at funerals anymore, or even at weddings. But we do! Why? Not to show off our magnificent singing voices (not in my case anyway!), but by singing we lift up our voices to praise the name of our amazing God and tell of his wonderful grace and works. By singing we enter into his presence and enjoy him. Psalm 81: **Sing for joy to God our strength; shout aloud to the God of Jacob. Begin the music.....** Lifting our voices is a physical thing with a spiritual benefit.

We sometimes look askance at our charismatic brothers and sisters who praise God with lifted hands. A bit extravagant perhaps!? And we have a few jokes for it. Be careful of the ceiling fans! Psalm 134:3 says, **Lift up your hands in the sanctuary and praise the Lord.** And in times when our heart may not be spilling over with joy, Psalm 28, **Hear my cry for mercy as I call to you for help, as I lift my hands toward your Most Holy Place.**

The Psalms often mention lifting our heads, hearts and hands in the “sanctuary” or the “Most Holy Place” because before the coming of Jesus and the Holy Spirit the temple was the place where they would meet God, or at least the High Priest did. We have the Holy Spirit who lives in us (making us the temple of God – 1 Cor 3:16), and through Jesus we have access to God at all times and wherever we are. When we worship together it is usually in our church, but we can praise him with lifted heads, hearts and hands when ever we are moved to, or prompted to, when we are on our own. It's a physical thing with spiritual benefits.

Sometimes our praise, thanksgiving and worship are the product of a rejoicing, happy heart, springing from being overwhelmed by God's glory in creation, from being thankful, from the sheer pleasure of being in God's presence. Sometimes our praise is a decision we make in the face of affliction. Either way we lift our head, hearts, and hands, our eyes and voices, to give God the glory. It's a physical response with spiritual benefits. His glory is my good!

**Song:** “His Glory and my Good” *by B Fielding, J Robinson, R Thompson*

1. I have seen my Father's glory revealed in Jesus Christ.  
And the more that I behold Him, the more He satisfies.  
When I gaze upon His beauty, when I see Him as I should  
Then my eyes are lifted upward for His glory and my good.
2. There is hope in every trial for I can trust the Lord.  
He can turn my heart towards Him and help me bear the thorn.  
So in faith I follow Jesus on the road not understood  
For I know that he is working for His glory and my good  
*To our God be the glory, to our God be praise.  
He alone, the name above all names,  
I will boast ever only in the Lord my God, for I know His glory is my good.*

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3. See the open arms of Jesus upon the cross that day  
What they understood as weakness deserves my every praise.  
For the charge that was against me, it was nailed into the wood.  
Yes, I know that He has saved me for His glory and my good.
4. Would I gladly be made nothing that Christ would be made more.  
Would I seek the only kingdom that far outweighs them all.  
I will stand before my Father where the faithful saints have stood  
And with joy my heart shall praise Him for His glory and my good.

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### Benediction

Go into the world with praise on your lips.  
Go into the world with faith that bears all circumstances and turns pain into praise.  
Go into the world and by your faith and your words make disciples.  
In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.  
Amen

*This service was prepared by Ron Tiller, HopeNet SA*