

Christ the King Lutheran Church  
Tigard, Oregon  
Anti-Racism Conversation Handout  
February 25, 2021

### Writing Lament.

Lament is part of our antiracism work. When we see the brokenness in ourselves and the cultural surrounding us, lament is the heart's prayer for reconciliation and healing. Writing a lament in the fashion of the Psalms can lead us to that prayer.

Here are some ideas to help you write your own lament Psalm.

1. Remember the event that is causing your lament.
2. Name the ways that event crushed you or someone you care about.
3. Tell the story fully.
4. Tell God what you expect as an answer. Seriously!
5. Express confidence that God will hear and respond to the lament.
6. Praise God for the response.

What is the reason for the lament?

1. Confession
2. Despair
3. Protest

Scriptural patterns for writing or voicing lament.

1. Confessional/Repentance lament
  - a. Corporate: Daniel 9:5: "We have sinned and done wrong, acted wickedly and rebelled, turning aside from your commandments and ordinances".
  - b. Individual: Lamentations 1:18: "The Lord is in the right, for I have rebelled against God's word".
  - c. Individual: Psalm 25:11: "For your name's sake, O Lord, pardon my guilt, for it is great".

These examples show expressions of anguish at having forsaken God. They ask for forgiveness and restoration. Relating the lament to racism, we might confess our individual and corporate exploitation of the benefits we enjoy simply by being a part of the dominant culture (White) in this country. "Penitential lament confesses personal and corporate sinfulness and pleads for God to act in order to cleanse and restore the supplicant(s)"

2. Laments of despair/pain/suffering
  - a. Pointing out enemies as the source of suffering: Lamentations 1:16: "For these things I weep; my eyes flow with tears; for a comforter is far from me, one to revive my courage; my children are desolate, for the enemy has prevailed".

These types of lament are commonly heard in African American Spirituals, laced with hope in God's promise to restore, reconcile and set free the oppressed and bring down the oppressor. Read Mary's song, Luke 1:44-55

Try your hand at writing you own lament.

(insights from Christian Century, January 27, 2021, pg 28-31 'Lament as antiracism work by Rob Muthiah).