

Psalm 61

Prayer during the Day Saturday Week 2
Office of Readings Feast of the Sacred Heart

It appears that the psalmist is distant from Jerusalem. He would love to dwell in the temple of YHWH* and pleads for protection. In verses 6-7 he prays for the king. The title reads: ‘To the leader: with stringed instruments. Of David’.

¹Hear my cry, O God; listen to my prayer.

²From the end of the earth I call to you with a despondent heart.*

Carry me onto a rock where they cannot get to me;

³for you are my refuge, my bastion against the enemy.

⁴I want to abide in your tent forever, find refuge under the shelter of your wings.

[Selah*]

⁵For you, O God, have heard my vows; you have given me the heritage of those who fear* your name.

⁶Prolong the life of the king; may his years endure for generations!

⁷May his reign be always under God’s gaze; may your kindness* and faithfulness watch over him!

⁸And I will continue to sing praises in your honour, as I fulfil my vows day by day.

The word ‘prayer’ [Hebrew תְּפִלָּה, t^epillâ] occurs 30 times in the Book of Psalms, though in only 5 of these is it used in the title (Psalms 17, 86, 90, 102 and 142).

YHWH is the protective God of Israel:

The name of YHWH is a bastion; the just run into it and are safe.

– Proverbs 18:10

YHWH, who may abide in your tent? Who may dwell on your holy hill?

– Psalm 15:1

One thing I asked of YHWH, this is what I seek: to live in the house of YHWH all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of YHWH, to admire his temple. For he will hide me in his shelter in the hour of danger; he will conceal me under the cover of his tent; he will set me high on a rock. Now I will lift up my head above my enemies who surround me, and I will offer sacrifices in his tent with shouts of joy; I will sing and make melody to YHWH.

– Psalm 27:4-6

See the Introduction for an article on ‘Fear of YHWH’.