

# PRACTICES OF REPENTANCE

## Exploring lamentation

Our second spiritual exercise is a day of lament. At different times throughout scripture, we see the people of God lamenting, setting time aside to lament the fact that they haven't followed God and have instead gone their own way. This practice allows us to do the deep work with God, and move on to greater freedom where these issues have less power over us. Perhaps ask the people who are close to you, to pray for you on this day.

### HOW TO UNDERTAKE YOUR OWN DAY OF LAMENT

Traditionally, the day of lament is a day of fasting and prayer. You might like to fast, or to eat only bread and water on your day of lament.

Set a focus for this day. Choose a part of your life or character where you've struggled, for example – greed, bitterness, sexual immorality, personal ambition, unforgiveness, etc.

On that day, come to God at the time you would normally eat breakfast (or while you are having your bread and water) and confess. Mourn deeply, and allow God to mourn with you.

*"These are days that God brings to mind  
the goodness that I've missed."*

*Bishop Eleanor*

These days full of tears are such a grace, because they allow us to journey more deeply into the character of God. Spending a whole day lamenting a part of our character, of being mindful of the cost of not following Christ often means you won't go back there as easily.

Together with your lamentation, let it be a day to enquire of the Lord, to ask Him to speak to you. You can do this in the morning, at midday and in the evening, asking if there are scriptures that God wants to use to speak to you.

*“You have turned my mourning into dancing,  
you have stripped off my sackcloth and  
clothed me with joy”  
Psalm 30:12*

It might be that you end the day in a state of rejoicing and thankfulness for God’s character, and for the gift of Jesus who poured himself out for us.