



Psalm 23

Praying our fear

The world is a fearsome place. If we manage, with the help of parents, teachers and friends to survive the dangers of infancy and childhood, we find ourselves living in an adult world that is filled with terror—accidents, disease, violence and conflicts. What part does prayer play when we try to face our fears? Where is God when we try to conquer our fears? James gives us good advice.

Group Discussion:

Is there a time when you turned to Psalm 23 for comfort, perhaps during a time of sorrow, grief, or financial hardship?

- **READ PSALM 23**

1. This is a well-known psalm. It may take some effort to see it again in a fresh way. Read it through carefully a couple of times. Is there something here that you have never noticed before?

2. There are two metaphors in the psalm. Compare these two images. How are they the same or different?

- The Shepherd (v1-4) -

- The Host (v5-6) -

3. As we look carefully at the shepherd, discuss how exactly he cares for his sheep (v1-4)?

4. Compare the v4 with v1-3. What differences do you see between the two passages?

5. "I fear no evil" (v4) is a bold statement. What does it mean for you to say that? Do you believe it?

6. Look carefully at the host (v5-6). How exactly does he provide for his guest?

7. How many times does the first person pronoun (*I, me, my,*) occur in this psalm?

8. As you think about this fact, why do you feel it is important?

9. What are some of the *enemies*, real or implied, that are mentioned in this psalm?

10. Do you have people or things in your life that oppose you, that you might call an enemy?

11. What is the most comforting thing that you have experienced in the life of faith?

12. Psalm 23 is a weapon against fear. What fear in your life could you battle against with this prayer as your weapon?

13. Read Ephesians 6:10-19. How can we find the confidence and encouragement in God that this Psalm teaches?

Now or Later

Pray. Identify any fears that you may have, and then ask Christ the Shepherd (who watches over us) and Christ the Host (who supplies our every need) to relieve them.