

Worship Material
Growing deep roots
Material from Roots Bible Study
Sunday 16th February

Begin with an opening prayer

We come as we are,
knowing we are loved.
Some of us joyful, some of us weighed down,
together we are here,
looking to you, Lord,
to speak, to inspire, to comfort and to guide.
Meet us where we are and help us to grow in you.
Amen.

Read Psalm 1

Bible notes

Psalm 1 is one of the 'Wisdom' psalms that consider the meaning of life, and, in particular, the problem of God's people suffering while the wicked prosper. In the psalms 'the wicked' are those opposed to God and therefore to God's people; 'sinners' are those who are out of step with God, and 'scoffers' are those who are proud at their own self-sufficiency. In today's psalm, these people are described as 'like chaff that the wind drives away' (v.4). They are easily rocked and thrown off course by circumstances. In contrast 'the righteous', those who are in relationship with God, are not self-sufficient. They focus on God's instruction (the 'law'), on living God's way – and God watches over them. This gives them stability and a reason to feel secure and confident in their resilience – a stronger feeling than the translation 'happy' would suggest.

There is a picture here of fruitfulness, of the flourishing of healthy plants that have all they need to grow and thrive. This is a common picture in the Hebrew Bible for God's people. It speaks of permanence, rootedness in God, depth and stability of faith. It takes time, nourishment and consistency to grow into a strong tree. The suggestion that God's people prosper is one that we could easily argue with when we consider the suffering that is often part of life.

However, it is the deep-rootedness of a tree that enables it to stay standing, to live and eventually to flourish once again. It may not come through adverse circumstances unscathed, but it can still stand firm.

Prayer

Living, loving God, we praise and thank you for opportunities to follow you, to do your will, to love our neighbours and to grow in faith.

We thank you for places and times that enlarge our vision, our love and concern for the world and its people.

We thank you for all that nourishes us in body, mind and soul.

We thank you for challenges that cause our faith to deepen.

Living God, keep us growing, keep us loving,

keep us faithful to your call.

Amen.

A prayer to conclude

Life-giving God,
keep us well rooted in you,
so we can grow and be strong
through all that happens this week.

As you encourage us,

may we encourage others to live and grow well.

Amen.