

Schedule for Reading the Psalms

From *The Book of Common Prayer*

In 1549 the first English language prayer book was issued. It was then and is still known as *The Book of Common Prayer*. It was published during the reign of Edward VI of England (son of Henry VIII and half brother of Elizabeth I, who would be Queen from 1558-1603). Included in the BCP were the wedding service we still know, funeral services, along with words, prayers, and directions for all sorts of worship settings. Also included was a schedules for reading most of the Bible each year and the Psalms each month.

The schedule for the Psalms on the right of this page has remained the same in every *Book of Common Prayer* since 1549, whether Anglican or American Episcopalian. It was included in the first edition of the King James Bible. It was a revision of earlier schedules for reading the Psalms. Some of these went back another 1,000 years. Among other changes from these earlier traditions, this schedule is less ambitious. It only expects you to read the Psalms through once each month (rather than once a week or even once each day).

Even at a monthly pace, anyone who keeps to the schedule will, in time, come to know the Psalms rather well.

In this schedule the Psalms are divided into roughly equal parts. There is a section for morning prayers and another for evening prayers. It will take most people about five minutes to read a single section or about ten minutes a day. I have followed this since 1983, though not perfectly. It has been a great blessing. In more recent years I have taken to reading the Psalms through in two months. The numbers in brackets guide this two month schedule.

Jesus and the Jewish world around him knew the Psalms. Many would have known them all by heart.

I commend this practice to you. Please, give it a try.

Bill Ehlig, A.D. 2015

day of month	Morning Psalms	Evening Psalms	day of month
1 [1]	1—5	6—8	1 [2]
2 [3]	9—11	12—14	2 [4]
3 [5]	15—17	18	3 [6]
4 [7]	19—21	22—23	4 [8]
5 [9]	24—26	27—29	5 [10]
6 [11]	30—31	32—34	6 [12]
7 [13]	35—36	37	7 [14]
8 [15]	38—40	41—43	8 [16]
9 [17]	44—46	47—49	9 [18]
10 [19]	50—52	53—55	10 [20]
11 [21]	56—58	59—61	11 [22]
12 [23]	62—64	65—67	12 [24]
13 [25]	68	69—70	13 [26]
14 [27]	71—72	73—74	14 [28]
15 [29]	75—77	78	15 [30]
16 [1]	79—81	82—85	16 [2]
17 [3]	86—88	89	17 [4]
18 [5]	90—92	93—94	18 [6]
19 [7]	95—97	98—101	19 [8]
20 [9]	102—103	104	20 [10]
21 [11]	105	106	21 [12]
22 [13]	107	108—109	22 [14]
23 [15]	110—113	114—115	23 [16]
24 [17]	116—118	119:1-32	24 [18]
25 [19]	119:33-72	119:73-104	25 [20]
26 [21]	119:105-144	119:145-176	26 [22]
27 [23]	120—125	126—131	27 [24]
28 [25]	132—135	136—138	28 [26]
29 [27]	139—141	142—143	29 [28]
30 [29]	144—146	147—150	30 [30]

Matthew 13.52 [*The New Revised Standard Version, 1989*]

“Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.”

Luke 24.44 [*The New Revised Standard Version, 1989*]

Then [Jesus] said to [the eleven and their companions], “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled.”

Psalm 1 *Beatus vir qui non abiit* [Miles Coverdale’s Bible, 1535; *Great Bible, 1539; Book of Common Prayer, 1662-1977*]

Blessed is the man that hath not walked in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stood in the way of sinners,
and hath not sat in the seat of the scornful.

But his delight is in the law of the Lord;

and in his law will he exercise himself day and night.

And he shall be like a tree planted by the waterside,

that will bring forth his fruit in due season.

His leaf also shall not wither;

and look, whatsoever he doeth, it shall prosper.

As for the ungodly, it is not so with them;

but they are like the chaff, which the wind scattereth away from the face of the earth.

Therefore the ungodly shall not be able to stand in the judgement,

neither the sinners in the congregation of the righteous.

But the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous;

and the way of the ungodly shall perish.

Psalm 150.6 [Coverdale]

Let every thing that hath breath

Praise the Lord.

Types of Psalms

Laments: 3-7, 12, 13, 14, 17, 22, 25, 27, 28, 31, 35, 36, 38, 39, 40, 42-44, 51-61, 64, 69-71, 74, 77, 79, 80, 83, 85, 86, 88, 90, 94, 102, 109, 123, 126, 130, 137, 140-143

Hymns [musical expressions of praise to the Lord]: 8, 19, 29, 33, 47, 66, 92, 93, 95-100, 103, 104, 111, 113-115, 117, 145-150

Thanksgivings: 9(&10), 18, 30, 32, 34, 40, 41, 65, 66, 75, 107, 116, 118, 120, 124, 129, 138

Wisdom Songs [expressions of wisdom or teaching]: 1, 19, 37, 49, 73, 112, 119, 127, 128, 133, 139

Liturgies [formal expressions for worship settings]: 15, 24, 26, 50, 67, 68, 81, 82, 85, 132, 134

Royal Psalms [for a royal event (like a coronation)]: 2, 20, 21, 45, 72, 89, 101, 110, 144

Songs of Confidence: 11, 16, 23, 27, 62, 63, 91, 108, 121, 125, 131

Hymns of Zion [for worship near Jerusalem or the Temple]: 46, 48, 76, 84, 87, 122

Historical Psalms: 78, 105, 106, 135, 136

Messianic Psalms [favorite psalms of the early Church regarding the Christ]: 2, 8, 16, 22, 40, 41, 45, 68, 69, 89, 102, 109, 110, 117

Alphabetical Psalms [written according the letters of the Hebrew alphabet]: 9-10, 25, 34, 37, 111, 112, 119, 145

Penitential Psalms [the seven Psalms traditionally regarded as ‘THE penitential psalms’]: 6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, 143

Psalm 68.20,21 [*The Bible: A New Translation, James Moffatt, 1935*]

God is for us a God of Victories,

thanks to the Eternal we escape from death;

yes, God will shatter the head of his foes,

each long-haired sinner who defies him.