

A Liturgy of Loss

(Please respond as prompted, praying the lines in **bold**.)

God of our whole lives; **of every moment, mundane and profound. Of every job well done. Of every careless thought and deed. Of every mountaintop of unbridled joy. Of every valley of deep despair.**

This week we have lost _____
(take a moment to speak those things which have been lost in your life this week)

We don't pretend this hasn't been hard; **we had found joy and a sense of security in the rhythms of our lives, now we ache and groan at having those rhythms disrupted.**

We look, not only to our own needs, **but also to the needs of others. We pray for those faced with serious illness, with the loss of livelihood, with the death of a loved one.**

Faced with such loss, we choose to feel the full range of emotion; **everything that these bodies – made fearfully and wonderfully – are capable of feeling.**

Happiness, sadness, joy, sorrow: all belong to life; **these human lives we live as a gift from your hand – the life which you yourself share in Jesus, living fully 'with us'.**

As he was tested in every way, so we now feel the tension of mortal life – **finding and losing bound together, and life somehow discovered through death.**

We cling to you, God of peace; **comfort us in our mourning – replace our ashes with a crown of beauty, our grief with the oil of joy, our despair with a garment of praise.**

And fill us with hope at your promised restoration: **heaven and earth – all things – made new in goodness.**

Brimming with hope, and remembering your promise to be with us always, we lift our voices to bring you glory:

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and evermore shall be. Amen.

Psalm 23 (adapted by Sally Lloyd-Jones for *The Jesus Storybook Bible*)

*God is my shepherd,
And I am his little lamb.
He feeds me.
He guides me.
He looks after me.
I have everything I need.
Inside, my heart is very quiet.
As quiet as lying still on soft green grass,
In a meadow,
By a little stream.
Even when I walk through the dark, scary,
lonely places,
I won't be afraid.
Because my Shepherd knows where I am.*

*He is here with me.
He keeps me safe.
He rescues me.
He makes me strong and brave.
He is getting wonderful things ready for me –
Especially for me.
Everything I ever dreamed of!
He fills my heart so full of happiness,
I can't hold it all inside.
Wherever I go, I know:
God's never stopping,
Never giving up,
Unbreakable,
Always and forever Love will go, too! Amen.*