

Psalm 23: A Responsive Reading for Disability Awareness Sunday

Leader: The Lord is my shepherd, I shall lack nothing.
All: Help me, Lord, always to look to you as my shepherd and guide as I travel this road of illness or disability.

Leader: He makes me lie down in green pastures.
All: Thank you, Lord, for making this journey less difficult and for paving the road with flowers in the form of help along the way.

Leader: He leads me beside still waters;
All: You send peace into my troubled life.

Leader: He restores my soul.
All: Lord, you know how far away from you this trouble has taken me. You know how far I have sunk. You know when I couldn't pray, so you prayed for me.

Leader: He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.
All: Lord, even when I didn't want to acknowledge your care and love for me, you touched me and led me to turn to you. You answered my unspoken prayers.

Leader: Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death...
All: Sometimes my life just seems to collapse. It's like the walls are closing in on me and everyone has turned away from me. I'm so alone, and, Lord, you know how afraid I am. Dark shadows cover my life; it feels like the joy of my existence is gone forever.

Leader: I will fear no evil.
All: Lord, you have made me see that you are at my side as I walk this lonesome road. You, O Lord, have given me the courage to go on.

Leader: For you are with me;
All: I can feel your presence; I know that you carry me over the rough spots; I know that you'll never leave me or forsake me. As I travel through this depression, you are there to watch over me.

Leader: Your rod and your staff, they comfort me.
All: Father in heaven, I take great comfort from knowing that you are there for me always.

Leader: You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies.
All: O God, when my trouble looms large, you lay out good things for me to feast on. Good things like love, joy, peace, goodness, kindness, and gentleness. You send your angels to tend to my every need.

Leader: You anoint my head with oil;
All: You smother me with goodness and your helping oil helps me carry on.

Leader: My cup overflows.
All: Lord, I must admit that I have all that I need. I lack nothing and every morning I see new mercies.

Leader: Surely goodness and love shall follow me all the days of my life;
All: I know now that you will always be at my side, always – even through my most difficult days.

Leader: And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.
All: Lord, I know it. Even when my time here on earth is over, you will be my place of refuge and you will have a place for me to come home to. Amen.

(Litany by Bert Zwiers, from *A Compassionate Journey: Coming Alongside People with Disabilities or Chronic Illnesses* by John G. Cook)