

God Meets Us at the Bend in the Road

Each of us needs to connect and to integrate our pain of goodbyes. If we enter the goodbye prayer of recognition, reflection and ritualization, the healing connections and reorientation can be there for us. The fragments of our lives will come together and life will begin to make sense again. Hope will return to our hearts. I believe this because I have known it myself and have known so many others who have experienced this reorientation. It has assured me that the God of healing is ever present with us and will never fail us. God, who is love and light, will be the illumination we need and will rekindle our hope as we meet that significant bend in our road of life. It is then that the images and words of Psalm 18 will take hold in our hearts and be the kindling for the future:

I love you, Yahweh, my strength . . .
 you, yourself, are my lamp,
 my God lights up my darkness (Ps 18:1,28).

Questions for Reflection, Integration, Discussion

1. What prayer do you return to when times are tough? What is there about this particular prayer that draws you to pray it?
2. What image has most spoken to you about your experience of loss? How has it spoken to you?
3. Have you ever personally ritualized a goodbye experience? If yes, what were some of the characteristics of this and how did you feel about it?
4. What scripture passage would you choose to use for praying your own present goodbye experience?
 What is the message in it that leads you to this choice?

5. Name a goodbye that you are currently experiencing. Review the aspects of praying a goodbye. How would you pray this particular one? (How would you identify it, reflect upon it, ritualize it?)

Joyle Rupp, osm