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## Psalm 84: To the choirmaster: according to The Gittith. A Psalm of the Sons of Korah.

Walter E. Keller

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## **Psalm 84**

**To the choirmaster: according to The Gittith.<sup>(a)</sup>  
A Psalm of the Sons of Korah.**

(ESV)

- 1 How lovely is your dwelling place,  
O LORD of hosts!**
- 2 My soul longs, yes, faints  
for the courts of the LORD;  
my heart and flesh sing for joy  
to the living God.**
- 3 Even the sparrow finds a home,  
and the swallow a nest for herself,  
where she may lay her young,  
at your altars, O LORD of hosts,  
my King and my God.**
- 4 Blessed are those who dwell in your house,  
ever singing your praise!** *Selah*
- 5 Blessed are those whose strength is in you,  
in whose heart are the highways to Zion.<sup>(b)</sup>**
- 6 As they go through the Valley of Baca  
they make it a place of springs;  
the early rain also covers it with pools.**
- 7 They go from strength to strength;  
each one appears before God in Zion.**
- 8 O LORD God of hosts, hear my prayer;  
give ear, O God of Jacob!** *Selah*
- 9 Behold our shield, O God;  
look on the face of your anointed!**
- 10 For a day in your courts is better  
than a thousand elsewhere.  
I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God  
than dwell in the tents of wickedness.**
- 11 For the LORD God is a sun and shield;  
the LORD bestows favor and honor.  
No good thing does he withhold  
from those who walk uprightly.**
- 12 O LORD of hosts,  
blessed is the one who trusts in you!**

### **Footnotes:**

- a. (v.1) Probably a musical or liturgical term  
b. (v.5) Heb lacks *to Zion*

**Psalm 84** is a Psalm regarding the beauty and peace found by those who enter the house of the LORD. The contemplations of the Psalm can be best appreciated by dividing the Psalm into three sections, each of which are centered around a beatitude (verses 4, 5, and 12). This Psalm was likely sung by pilgrims as they traveled to Jerusalem for a festival. They offer their praise to God for the Temple, beautiful and the object of their longing, and for those who live there, even for the sparrows and swallows who have found a place for a nest (verses 1-4). They offer praise for those who travel there through the dry places now become pools of water, and who go from strength to strength on a wearisome journey in the joyful expectation of seeing the LORD, the God of gods (verses 5-7). In verses 8-9 there is a prayer for the LORD's anointed, the King. And in verses 10-12 the Psalm concludes with a final praise of God: a day in his courts is better than a thousand elsewhere, he is both the illuminating sun and the protecting shield, the God who is generous to his own, and who amply rewards those who place their trust in him.

We can meet God anytime and in any place through prayer, but going into a church or chapel building, away from the distractions of the secular world, helps us to step aside from the business of life into a place where we can quietly meditate and pray. Our forebears in the faith were thus inspired by Solomon's Temple. But one greater than Solomon has come (Matthew 12:42), the one who is greater than the Temple (Matthew 12:6), the one whose very body is now the residence of our God, and who receives our heartfelt praise. And so we pray (verse 9): "Behold our Defender, O God, and look upon the face of your Anointed Messiah Christ, Jesus." He will satisfy our deepest longings (verse 2), and we are the people who now find our strength to go our pilgrim way in him (verse 5).

**Prayer to accompany Psalm 84:**

Almighty God, you heard the prayer of Christ, your Chosen One, and raised him to the lasting joy of your presence. Help us in our pilgrimage toward you to love your Church and to offer the sacrifice of praise at your altar, that we may hasten to your home and joyfully look upon your glorious splendor, which we have seen in your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.