



PSALM 23
GARDEN



'You prepare a banquet'

A Psalm 23 meal



A Psalm 23 meal is a chance to bring together people who might be lonely, grieving or hurting because of what they've been through during the pandemic. It allows God's people to live out the words of the psalmist, who said: *'You prepare a banquet for me, where all my enemies can see me'* (verse 5, GNB).

How you plan your banquet is up to you, and will depend on how many people you want to cater for and what sort of atmosphere you want to create. Will this be a grand occasion with lots of cutlery, or a cosier and more family-style meal? Inside or outside? Whom will you invite? As well as bringing together people who've experienced sadness and loss during the pandemic, it's probably a good idea to have one or two people who can be relied on to sensitively lift the mood.

Whatever sort of event you're planning, we hope it will be a spiritual as well as a social experience, in which people will engage with the Bible. We also hope that among your guests will be people who aren't churchgoers. So these ideas for you are designed to make them feel included and welcome, whatever their stage of faith. They're also designed to be used at whatever point in the event you feel is best – they aren't a timetable.



Share

Psalm 23 was written by King David about 3,000 years ago. He grew up as a shepherd boy, and he used that experience of caring for his sheep to talk about how God cares for us today. Like the sheep, sometimes life is good and we're in green pastures. But sometimes we feel as though we're in the valley of the shadow of death; the year of the pandemic has been like that. But he also writes about God's care for us through everything, and his promise of an eternal home.

Talk

This is a banquet, not a Bible study, but as people relax and chat, it's a chance to open up some deeper conversations.

Ask people to share some of the good things they've experienced during the last year – the green pastures and quiet waters.

Ask them to share things that weren't so good – the 'deepest darkness' of which the psalmist speaks.

Ask them what they're hoping for – where do they see goodness and love?

Bless

May God bless you with green pastures and quiet waters.

May God strengthen, hold and defend you through dark valleys.

May God refresh you and restore you on your journey.

And may each of us know his goodness and love, now in this life and forever in his eternal home.

Read



The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.
He makes me lie down in green pastures.
He leads me beside still waters.
He restores my soul.
He leads me in paths of righteousness
for his name's sake.

Even though I walk through the valley
of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil,
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff,
they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
all the days of my life,
and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD
for ever.

PSALM 23 (ESV)



**We're here together because we've
all faced enemies this year due to the
pandemic – and we're having a
banquet anyway.**

Pray

God, thank you for food and friendship;
thank you for being there in our joys, and
there in our sorrows. Bless us as we share
this meal together, each one of us as your
own guest. Amen.