

Part 21: God as Mother

Still yourselves with a few minutes of silence and in it reflect on your past week and any sense you may have had of God as Father. Share something of this in the group. (20 minutes)

God as Mother

Inasmuch as the image of God as Father is often used and familiar, that of God as mother is far less known. Since we are all created in God's image ('male and female created he them'), God embodies the full potential of our masculine and feminine selves. Thus the image of God as our mother is rich in nurturing and sustaining realities.

Reflect on the following passages:

'Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Yet even if she forgets (her child), I will not forget you! See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands.' (Isaiah 49:15)

'As a mother comforts her child, so will I comfort you; and you will be comforted over Jerusalem.' (Isaiah 66:13)

'He is like a shepherd . . . gathering lambs in his arms, holding them against his breast . . .' (Isaiah 40:9–11)

'How often have I longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings . . .' (Matthew 23:37–39)

'Yahweh . . . has sent me . . . to soothe the broken-hearted . . . to comfort all who mourn.' (Isaiah 61:1–8)

'When Israel was a child I loved him . . . It was I who taught Ephraim to walk, taking them by the arms, but they did not realise it was I who healed them. I led them with cords of human kindness, with ties of love; I lifted the yoke from their neck and bent down to feed them. (Hosea 11:1, 3–4)

'For in God we live and move and have our being.' (Acts 17:28)

'For you created my inmost being, you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, your eyes saw my unformed body . . . When I awake I am still with you.' (Psalm 139:13–18)

The time of formation in our mother's womb was for each of us our first experience of being, and that in a warm, soft and nurturing environment. Our senses developed in a muted world through our mother's body, and all we knew was what we felt through her. At term, we came to our first crisis and the birth process was a very difficult passage into a new world. Our first months of life in our mother's body are a parallel to our life now, in God our mother.

For 20 minutes, reflect first on your experience of being in your mother's body and then on your life in God now, in whom you 'live and move and have your being'.

Write in your journal and then share in the group.

At home this week, explore praying to God as mother, using appropriate names, sharing with God some of your feelings about living and moving and having your being in her.



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