

## **Prayer of Lament (with verses from the Psalms, especially 19 & 74)**

God of the cross and the lynching tree,  
of the jail cell and the street corner,  
of the bible study and the police car,  
look upon the world you have made.

See how it is full of hatred and how violence inhabits the earth.

Gunshots ring out under the heavens that declare your glory,  
singing the destruction of your children.

Do you not hear our songs?

How long, O God, will you keep silence?

How long will we fail to be your voice?

The streets and sidewalks of your dwelling place flow with blood,  
pouring out the cries of your beloveds.

Do you not hear our cries?

How long, O God, will you keep silence?

How long will we fail to be your voice?

The breaths snatched from lungs swirl on wind that blew creation to life,  
echoing with the last gasps of your dear ones.

Do you not hear our gasps?

How long, O God, will you keep silence?

How long will we fail to be your voice?

The bones that you knit together in a mother's womb are broken,  
rattling with the earth-shaking suffering of your people.

Do you not hear our rattling?

How long, O God, will you keep silence?

How long will we fail to be your voice?

The clanging of cell doors resounds amidst the music of the spheres,  
tolling the lives stolen by systemic oppression and unspeakable violence.

Do you not hear the tolling?

How long, O God, will you keep silence?

How long will we fail to be your voice?

The crashing of fire-licked windows mingles with the praise and prayers of  
generations,

shattering the refuge and safety of your sanctuaries.

Do you not hear the shattering?

How long, O God, will you keep silence?

How long will we fail to be your voice?

In these days, as in days past,

our mothers and grandmothers have become mourners.

our fathers and grandfathers have become grievers.

our children have become wanderers in vacant rooms.

our kinfolk have become pallbearers.

our communities have become filled with empty chairs.

Remember the people you have redeemed, Holy One.

Remember the work of salvation brought about by your love.

You made a way out of no way for slaves to cross the sea on dry land.

Arise O God and defend your own cause.

Raise up in us the cries of outrage.

You made water to flow in the dessert for Hagar and Ishmael when they were driven out.

Arise O God and defend your own cause.

Raise up in us commitment to the long struggle for justice.

You cast out demons so that people might be restored to community.

Arise O God and defend your own cause.

Raise up in us the determination to drive out racism.

You witnessed the death of your Beloved Child.

Arise O God and defend your own cause.

Raise up in us the grief that cannot be comforted.

You brought new life from the crucifixion of state violence and the wounds of abandonment.

Arise O God and defend your own cause.

Raise up in us courage to speak truth to power, and hope to hatred.

God of the ones with hands up and the ones who can't breathe,

of those who [#sayhername](#) and those who [#shutitdown](#),

of "we who believe in freedom" and we who "have nothing to lose but our chains,"

look upon the world you have made.  
Do not forget your afflicted people forever  
so that we might praise your holy name with joyful lips. Amen.

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