

A Long Obedience in the Same Direction

by Eugene Petersen

This book is based on the Psalms of Ascents, the Pilgrim psalms (Psalms 120-134), which were sung by the ancient Israelites as they travelled to Jerusalem for the great festivals.

Petersen takes us through 16 chapters in this book towards mature Christian discipleship; our day-to-day life is our pilgrimage. I found the short chapters helpful to enable me to read, re-read and digest the teaching (it takes a while to sink in with me).

Petersen writes: *'There is a great market for religious experience in our world; there is little enthusiasm for the patient acquisition of virtue, little enthusiasm to sign up for the long apprenticeship in what earlier Christians called holiness',* obedience in the same direction, a life-long apprenticeship.

It is a very down to earth book with deep teaching, not to be rushed or read in haste. Although written 40 years ago to a society in a hurry, we are now more than ever a society 'obsessed with instant response, the quick fix'. This applies to the Christian life as much as anything else.

Petersen looks at the Christian Life as an apprenticeship, as a lifetime's journey with God as we pray and read the Scriptures. It is not enough to read Scripture, we have to grow to live it through prayer. He warns there is *'often little enthusiasm... for the long apprenticeship when the novelty wears off'* and encourages Christians not to adopt the lifestyle of a tourist – only wanting the high points, under which Christians cannot mature'.

This book is not light, bedtime reading. It asks us to examine our own walk with God and how we convey to others what it means to be a Christian and walk the Christian life. We should read this book and be prepared to be challenged to look at our own Christian walk.

- Do we dip in and out as we feel like it?
- Do we pray and read scripture to develop our relationship with God?
- Do we walk in obedience to God or our feelings?

Read this book...be challenged.

Review by Dorothy Peat