The Big Church Read

Discussion Starters
Session 5 Praying with Lament

SELECTION OF BIBLE PASSAGES

Job 3—a lament of Job, Psalm 13—asking God how long, Psalm 44:23-26—a cry for God to awake, Lamentations 1:11-16—cries of suffering, Mark 14:32-36—Jesus' prayer in Gethsemane, Matthew 27:45-50—Jesus' cry on the cross

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Lamenting means "to complain, grumble, question, and protest" (page 93). What role does lament play in your life? In the life of your church? What is your response to complaints—your own or others'?
2. How do the Psalms help you pray (page 93 and following)? How comfortable are you praying through the range of emotions they represent?
3. Although the Bible even contains a book named Lamentations (page 97 and following), why do you think some Christians shy away from a practice of lament?
4. The way that the character May in The Secret Life of Bees handled her feelings of sadness was to release them into a wall of stones (page 104 and following). How do you give your pain to God?

PRAYER PRACTICE

Choose which practice of lament you'd like to lead. If you aren't able to meet outside for the "Praying at the Wall" exercise (starting on page 104), you could fashion a representation of a wall with slots cut out of cardboard. Or "Praying with Our Senses" (from page 107) is especially effective in a group of people.

