

## Connection Group Discussion Questions

For the week of August 2, 2015

Psalm 22:1-15, 25-28

### New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

<sup>1</sup>My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from helping me, from the words of my groaning? <sup>2</sup>O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer; and by night, but find no rest.

<sup>3</sup>Yet you are holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel. <sup>4</sup>In you our ancestors trusted; they trusted, and you delivered them. <sup>5</sup>To you they cried, and were saved; in you they trusted, and were not put to shame.

<sup>6</sup>But I am a worm, and not human; scorned by others, and despised by the people. <sup>7</sup>All who see me mock at me; they make mouths at me, they shake their heads; <sup>8</sup>“Commit your cause to the LORD; let him deliver—let him rescue the one in whom he delights!”

<sup>9</sup>Yet it was you who took me from the womb; you kept me safe on my mother’s breast. <sup>10</sup>On you I was cast from my birth, and since my mother bore me you have been my God. <sup>11</sup>Do not be far from me, for trouble is near and there is no one to help.

<sup>12</sup>Many bulls encircle me, strong bulls of Bashan surround me; <sup>13</sup>they open wide their mouths at me, like a ravening and roaring lion.

<sup>14</sup>I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax; it is melted within my breast; <sup>15</sup>my mouth is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to my jaws; you lay me in the dust of death.

<sup>25</sup>From you comes my praise in the great congregation; my vows I will pay before those who fear him. <sup>26</sup>The poor shall eat and be satisfied; those who seek him shall praise the LORD. May your hearts live forever!

<sup>27</sup>All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the LORD; and all the families of the nations shall worship before him. <sup>28</sup>For dominion belongs to the LORD, and he rules over the nations.

### **Common English Bible (CEB)**

<sup>1</sup> My God! My God, why have you left me all alone? Why are you so far from saving me—so far from my anguished groans? <sup>2</sup> My God, I cry out during the day, but you don't answer; even at nighttime I don't stop. <sup>3</sup> You are the holy one, enthroned. You are Israel's praise. <sup>4</sup> Our ancestors trusted you— they trusted you and you rescued them; <sup>5</sup> they cried out to you and they were saved; they trusted you and they weren't ashamed.

<sup>6</sup> But I'm just a worm, less than human; insulted by one person, despised by another. <sup>7</sup> All who see me make fun of me—they gape, shaking their heads: <sup>8</sup> "He committed himself to the LORD, so let God rescue him; let God deliver him because God likes him so much." <sup>9</sup> But you are the one who pulled me from the womb, placing me safely at my mother's breasts. <sup>10</sup> I was thrown on you from birth; you've been my God since I was in my mother's womb. <sup>11</sup> Please don't be far from me, because trouble is near and there's no one to help.

<sup>12</sup> Many bulls surround me; mighty bulls from Bashan encircle me. <sup>13</sup> They open their mouths at me like a lion ripping and roaring! <sup>14</sup> I'm poured out like water. All my bones have fallen apart. My heart is like wax; it melts inside me. <sup>15</sup> My strength is dried up like a piece of broken pottery. My tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth; you've set me down in the dirt of death.

<sup>25</sup> I offer praise in the great congregation because of you; I will fulfill my promises in the presence of those who honor God. <sup>26</sup> Let all those who are suffering eat and be full! Let all who seek the LORD praise him! I pray your hearts live forever!

<sup>27</sup> Every part of the earth will remember and come back to the LORD; every family among all the nations will worship you. <sup>28</sup> Because the right to rule belongs to the LORD, he rules all nations.

### **Connection Questions:**

1. Define what prayer means to you.

2. Over our church's history there have been various forms people have used to develop their prayer life. Discuss if you can, the various forms you have used to develop your prayer life.
  
3. Psalm 22 is a prayer for deliverance from mortal illness or a lament, which means to mourn deeply. Discuss the relationship between prayer and suffering. When we pray for deliverance from mortal illness, what does that mean to you?
  
4. Do you think it matters what form we use as we pray? (*sprawled out on the floor, folded hands, kneeling on a prayer bench, head bowed*) If so, why?
  
5. Respond to this statement. The form or style of prayer is not as important as just being committed to doing it. Do you agree or disagree?
  
6. When someone makes the statement that there is power in prayer, what do you think they mean?

7. If you agree that prayer is a helpful tool in growing in your faith, how often should you do it? Hourly, daily, weekly or whenever it suits you?
  
8. Respond to the statement by Phillip Brooks, a noted preacher of the 19th century. "I do not pray for a lighter load but for a stronger back."
  
9. Most of the Psalms written took place while the Israelites lived in Babylonian captivity. How do you think the sentiments of the Psalms might have helped the worshipers of the Jewish faith?
  
10. Is it possible to live your life in constant prayer? If so, how would one live out such a life? Would it mean living constantly in a meditative state?