

Launch Question: What is the best or worst advice you've ever received about prayer?

■ Or – What is the greatest joy or the greatest struggle in your prayer life right now?

1. These are the main Hebrew and Greek words for prayer as crying out to God:

→ *zawak*, which means to cry out but literally it means to shriek.

→ *shawvah* means to holler

→ *rinnaw* means to creak or make a shrill sound

→ *kradzo* (Greek) means to croak or scream

Just looking at the root meaning of these words, what conclusions do you draw about prayer?

2. As a group read through Psalm 107 out loud and without interruption. How does the phrase “they cried out to the Lord” function in this poem/prayer?

3. In Psalm 22:11 the psalmist said, “troubles are near.” Matt mentions troubles in his own life. What troubles could you relate to or what troubles are you facing right now?

4. Pride and insecurity were listed as two of the biggest barriers to crying out to God. Can you list any other barriers? What prevents you from crying out to God? (Keep in mind that this does not necessarily imply that you must be a certain personality type. The key here is the sense of deep dependence, even desperation, before God in the midst of our troubles).

5. Read Mark 10:46-52. How does this poor, blind beggar demonstrate the essence of crying out to God in our prayers? What can you learn from Bartimaeus, the master teacher on prayer?

6. The close of this chapter lists four “benefits” of crying out to the Lord: it deepens our worship, it makes community possible, it makes us compassionate towards others, and it makes us strong in God. Which of these benefits do you need right now?