

## QUICK GUIDE – IMPRECATORY PRAYER (60 minutes) *Scripture Passage:* \_\_\_\_\_

10 min **Community, Vision, Teaching** – *Lead an activity that helps your group get to know one another. Then tell the group your vision for why you are meeting and what you hope to see God do.*

"Imprecatory psalms (like Psalm 69, 109, 137, etc.) express anger and a call for justice. To 'imprecate' means 'to curse' or 'to call down.' Some modern readers feel uncomfortable with calling down judgment on enemies because it may seem vengeful or vindictive, but imprecatory psalms help us surrender our emotions to God and deepen our trust in him. Suppressing our rage can lead to unexpected outbursts of emotion and even illness, so we pray our rage as an act of faith, both to prevent it from damaging us or others and as a way of trusting God to lead us toward wise action. God longs for us to be transparent with him about our anger and sorrow."

3 min **Quiet and Pray** – "Let's take a moment to quiet ourselves and become fully present. Sit comfortably but remain alert. Take a few deep breaths. [Pause.] Reflect on your life or the lives of those around you and select one area that angers you – in your life, in the lives of other people, in your community, or in the world. [Pause.] Take this area of anger with you as we begin to pray today."

7 min **Read** – "As I read our psalm, follow along or just listen. Notice any words or images that resonate with you and the anger you identified. [Read the psalm slowly.] Now write down the words or images that stood out to you and allow yourself to feel your pain and anger in the presence of God." *Silence.*

10 min **Write** – "Write a short prayer that expresses your pain and anger and what you want God to do. Be as honest as possible, and trust how and when God may choose to act. You could model your prayer after the psalm or create from scratch." *Allow time to write. Write your own. Consider background music.*

15 min **Pray** – "I will read our psalm once more, and then let's pray aloud together. You could use this psalm as a starting point for prayer, or feel free to read what you wrote. Let's ask God to meet us and others who are hurting. If there are any parts of the psalm that bother you, talk with God about it. God can handle our strongest rage, our deepest sorrow, and all our questions. We need not hold back. I will allow 10-15 minutes, and periods of silence are okay." *Model yet leave space. Break into groups of 3-4 if big group.*

5 min **Rest** – “Most imprecatory psalms end with focusing on God and his character. God is powerful and loving, and we can trust him to take care of his creation and bring justice. Let’s take refuge in God and release our pain and anger, at least for the moment. Let’s sit in the presence of God, worship him, and renew our trust in him.” *Allow 3-5 min to sit quietly. Consider closing with a verse of trust or praise from the psalm.*

8 min **Debrief** – “What was this prayer time like for you? What did you appreciate? What was difficult? Is there any action you feel God inviting you to take?” *Ask whichever question(s) seems appropriate.*

2 min **Pray** – *Thank God for what the community experienced with him.*