Guided Prayer Exercise for a Service of Lament

Reflect and Write: Think of a situation in your working life that might warrant lament. If nothing comes to mind, think of someone close to you whose experience of work requires lament. Write out the circumstances of this situation following these steps:

- Read two lament psalms. (Some possibilities are Pss. 13; 22; 44; 88; 89.)

- Think through the emotions that you (or the psalmists) are feeling in the workplace. Be as descriptive and specific as possible. Good poetry communicates emotion and experience, not just facts.

- Identify images and metaphors that capture the experience of these vocational emotions and circumstances. You want your metaphors to evoke empathy in the one hearing your lament (which in this case is God). This is a difficult step, for it's at this point that the depth of your grief is beginning to be articulated.

- Finally, gather these reflections and write your own psalm of lament to God. Make sure that you're addressing God and writing this as a prayer to him. You might include a plea for God's attention; an articulation of your circumstance; expressions of pain, shock, anger, frustration that you have felt through words and metaphors; questions to God; and pleas for deliverance.

- Once you have written your lament, pray your way through it.

Written by Matthew Kaemingk and Cory Willson in "*Work and Worship*" p. 218