



Small Group Study Guide

The
*Caring
Congregation*
What to Say When You Don't Know What to Say

November 8, 2020
"Christianity and Suicide"

OPENING PRAYER

God of mercy, when we feel that we are drowning in hardships, disappointment or pain, remind us of your presence. When we are thrashing through the jungle of despair, speak to us of your love. When poisonous feelings of shame haunt us, lift us up so that we might face the world with hope. When we are weary from the struggle, strengthen us with the power of your Spirit. Amen.

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES:

Psalm 13:1-6 (NRSV)

- ¹ How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever?
How long will you hide your face from me?
- ² How long must I bear pain in my soul,
and have sorrow in my heart all day long?
How long shall my enemy be exalted over me?
- ³ Consider and answer me, O Lord my God!
Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep the sleep of death,
- ⁴ and my enemy will say, "I have prevailed";
my foes will rejoice because I am shaken.
- ⁵ But I trusted in your steadfast love;
my heart shall rejoice in your salvation.
- ⁶ I will sing to the Lord,
because he has dealt bountifully with me.

INTRODUCTION

Suicide is a serious issue in the United States and is the 10th leading cause of death. Clinical depression is the number one cause of suicide. Clinical depression becomes devastating when we believe that there is no hope. Those that have thoughts of suicide believe things will never get better and everyone would be better off without them.

What we learn in scripture is that there are no hopeless circumstances with God and he walks with us through the darkest places. As followers of Christ we are called to never give up and to put our faith in God. God will bring beauty from the ashes, joy from mourning, a heart of praise for a heart of heaviness and despair.

QUESTIONS

- 1) Have you ever known anyone who committed suicide, or who contemplated suicide? What impact did it have on the family and other survivors?
- 2) Based on your current thinking, how helpful do you think it is to tell a depressed person to “snap out of it,” or similar kinds of messages?
- 3) Dr. Stephen Ilardi who is a Professor at the University of Kansas and author of “The Depression Cure.” Gives us six practices that reduce depression:
 - Intense physical activity.
 - Omega 3 Supplementation
 - Daily light exposure.
 - Sleep.
 - Social connection.
 - Engaging activity.
- 4) Theologian Frederick Buechner once said “The worst thing is never the last thing.” What is he trying to tell us?
- 5) Lamentations 3:22-23 says, “his compassions never fail. They are new every morning.” What habits can we develop, each morning, to feel God’s presence in each new day?

FINAL APPLICATION

At the beginning of each day, prayerfully consider how you might be able to bring some small degree of added peace and hope into every person you come into contact with. Pray that God, working through you, might redirect those many lives in a way that builds and strengthens their faith and strengthens them emotionally.