

## Emotional Well-being Sermon Series - Sermon 3

### Sharing and Caring in the Community

Scripture text: Job 2:11-13

#### **Note to leaders:**

*Some of the experiences shared by members during this sermon series may contain sensitive information. Do take some time to emphasize the importance of respect and confidentiality in the group before you start each session.*

*We pray that your small group will be a safe place for members to share and receive support.*

The recommended time allocation for your group meeting is:

#### **If you meet weekly :**

- Worship through song (10 mins)
- Discussion - 1 session worth of core questions (40 mins)
- Discussion - 1 session worth of additional questions (30 mins)
- Sharing, Prayer, Fellowship (30 mins)

#### **If you meet fortnightly :**

- Worship through song (10 mins)
- Discussion - 2 sessions' worth of core questions (60 mins)
- Optional - additional questions (10 mins)
- Sharing, Prayer, Fellowship (30 mins)

#### **Introduction:**

In the midst of an ever-changing environment, we observe a growing trend of more young and elderly persons facing mental health concerns. How should we, as a Christian community, relate to these persons, priceless made in the image of God, who may be our family members and friends? What does a biblical and care-filled response look like?

The narrative in Job reveals some inadequacies in how Job's friends attempted to show care amidst Job's suffering. It also gives some indications to how a Christian community can support the well-being of such persons in practical and helpful ways.

#### **Core Questions:**

(If your group meets fortnightly, combine Core Questions of two sessions and choose one Further Question from either session.)

Consider which may be the crucial points for your group to focus on.

**1) Job experienced one crisis after another that left him physically, emotionally, mentally and socially depleted of well-being. From Job 2:11-13, 6:14-30, 16:1-5, 19:1-4, 42:7-9, consider the different ways Job's friends related to him and addressed his predicament.**

- **Which of their various actions were helpful and which were unhelpful for Job's emotional well-being?**

2) The sermon presents three forms of care (*Company, Co-suffering and Consolation*) where, we as individuals or as a community, can extend to someone who is facing a mental health concern.

- Which of these three is your small group strongest at?
- Which can you improve on as a group?

“The most useful thing a friend can do is keep in constant contact with the mentally ill patient. This is true whether or not the person is suicidal. To know that your friend remains your friend even though you are mentally ill, or even before you know that, when you think you are just miserable and grumpy, is a great aid toward health. A phone call, a lunch, or even an e-mail can bolster a sagging mood. Don't expect your mentally ill friend, however, to be fun to be with. It is important for you to realize that the friend's poor mental health may look like rejection of friendship, but it is not really this. It is just a sick brain, barely functioning. [...] Being a friend or clergy to a mentally ill individual can be difficult. Because of the stigma of mental illness, the ill person may not feel able to open up to you. Do not be offended. Be consistent in your concern, prayer, and inquiries. Let them know that your friendship or care [...] is unconditional. And remember, since mental illness can be a terminal disease, you may be helping to improve or even to save a life.”

- Kathryn Greene-McCreight,  
*Darkness Is My Only Companion*,  
chap.12.

**Further Question:**

(Optional question for discussion if time permits. Do allocate adequate time for prayer and fellowship.)

- 3) *“The Church can be that welcoming community that embraces people with Alzheimer’s and dementia, a place where those who are suffering from illnesses and limitations are seen not as outsiders but as part of the communal reality”*

– Dr. Roland Chia, *“Darkness has become My Companion”*

(full article available at <https://ethosinstitute.sg/darkness-has-become-mycompanion/>)

- What does Dr. Chia mean by describing “as part of the communal reality”?
- What does it take for your church community to be one that welcomes others and actively cares for their well-being, regardless of their emotional or mental concerns and well-being?
- Are you ready to be a part of this community that cares and shares? Why or why not?

**Suggestions for Prayer:**

- 1) Recall an occasion where you were helpful/less helpful in aiding someone towards their well-being. If you could do it again,
  - How would you do it differently?
  - What would you ask of God to help you change?
  - Which of your gifts or abilities would you use to show care and share?Share with your group members and pray for one another.
- 2) Pray for divine opportunities where you can be involved in ministries that care for persons in need and help them in their well-being.
- 3) Pray for your small group.
  - How can God use your small group to be a community that welcomes, cares and shares?
- 4) Pray for BRMC to be a community that cares and shares.
  - What do you think God would desire BRMC to be and do so that she be such a community? What needs to change?
  - Commit these observations and needs to God and ask Him to work His purpose and will into His church.