

Service of Lament 27 November 2022

Leaders' Guide

In light of the unique nature of the service the questions this week will focus on the service as a whole rather than just the sermon. Depending on the comfort level of your group this could be an opportunity to explore your losses and journeys of lament in a more intimate setting.

1. What were the four movements in our service of Lament? Does it help to know that Christian lament has a trajectory?
 - a. Lament, Surrender, Praise & Hope
 - b. Without such a trajectory it is far easier to get stuck in the grief.
2. What was the most helpful part of the service for you? And why?
3. The second movement was surrender. Is surrender an important part of the process? Why or why not? How did you feel about this part of the service?
 - a. This is a part of the service that surprised me (James) in preparing the service. The moment of epiphany came when I realized that surrender did not mean no longer caring, but recognizing that what I had lost was no longer in my power to keep safe.
4. The third movement was praise. Why is it important for praise to be a part of the process? What if we're just not feeling like praising God?
 - a. At an emotional, psychological & spiritual level it is important to recognize that loss, grief & pain can function like an emotional black hole, seeking to suck up all the light in our universe. Praise reorients us to the character of God, a key attribute of which is faithfulness. Letting in even some light dispels the myth of the all-encompassing nature of our loss.
 - b. Praise is a spiritual discipline that is most necessary to exercise when we feel least like it.
5. How realistic is it to say that our lament ends in hope?
6. It was only addressed indirectly in the sermon, but do you think this four part movement in our journey or dance of lament is strictly linear?
 - a. In his comments on the poetic imagery of dancing with pain James said: "Our service today is a movement in that dance with our loss, grief and pain. The dance will continue for all of us, and some days we will dance better than others. And some days we will feel like there is no dance left in us." There will be good days and bad days, but with the pattern of lament in mind, and exercising that pattern in our times of mourning, our chances of moving forward in our grief are much better.
7. Where do you individually and we as a community go from here in our journey of lament?