

LET'S TALK
“...about Mental Health”
October 23, 2016

- Mental disorders are the number-one cause of disability in North America.
- More than 25% of Americans ages eighteen and older—suffers from a diagnosable mental disorder in a given year.
- That equates to around 50 million people in the United States.

The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) defines mental illnesses as:
“Medical conditions that disrupt a person’s thinking,
feeling, mood, ability to relate to others and daily functioning.”

When the church is silent to a person in crisis,
it can sound remarkably like silence from God.

“Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows.” John 16:33 (NLT)

“Dear friends, don’t be surprised at the fiery trials you are going through, as if something strange were happening to you.” 1 Peter 4:12 (NLT)

“Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy.” James 1:2 (NLT)

“My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness.”
2 Corinthians 12:7-9 (NLT)

“For 27 years I prayed every day that God would heal the mental illness of my son. Yet that prayer was never answered. We went to the best doctors in the nation. We had the best medications. We had the best therapies. We had thousands of people praying. We have an incredibly strong family, deeply loving, supportive, full of faith. It just didn’t make sense.”

-Pastor Rick Warren

What God does do to help?

“I will never leave you and I will never abandon you.” Hebrews 13:5 (NET)

“Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you! See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands.”

Isaiah 49:15-16 (NIV)

“Against its will, all creation was subjected to God’s curse. But with eager hope, the creation looks forward to the day when it will join God’s children in glorious freedom from death and decay. For we know that all creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. And we believers also groan, even though we have the Holy Spirit within us as a foretaste of future glory, for we long for our bodies to be released from sin and suffering. We, too, wait with eager hope for the day when God will give us our full rights as his adopted children, including the new bodies he has promised us.”

Romans 8:19-23 (NLT)

Getting Practical:

- Get help if you’re struggling.
- Talk about it.
- Avoid making our own experience the rule for others.
- Be patient. With yourself if you suffer – with a loved one if they do. mental illness is not resolved overnight. Much mental illness is never “resolved” but can be managed.

RESOURCES:

National Institute of Mental Health

- <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/index.shtml>

Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP)

- <http://www.mentalhealthrecovery.com/>

“Troubled Minds: Mental Illness and the Church's Mission” – Amy Simpson

Eden Counseling:

- <http://www.edencounseling.com>
- (757) 466-3336

Leadership Tip!

Embrace Feedback! Be open-minded when receiving feedback!

“The fastest way to change the feedback culture in an organization is for the leaders to become better receivers.” – Sheila Heen

LET’S TALK ...*About Mental Health*

STARTER QUESTION:

What were some things you got out of the sermon this week?

When you hear the term “mental health” what comes to mind?

MAIN IDEA:

Mental health is rapidly becoming one of the most prominent issues impacting our society. A realization mental health issues affects 25% of our population should urge us as Christians to want to know more about it and how we can help people who are dealing with this issue either directly or indirectly.

John 16:33 (NLT) - “Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows.”

How has your life been affected by mental health?

Pastor Hank said in his message “*when the church is silent to a person in crisis, it can sound remarkably like silence from God.*”

What part do you think the church plays in dealing with mental health issues?

Part of the difficult dynamic Christ followers deal with is our perspective of God’s role in the struggle, and what the Bible has to say about mental health. Part of our difficulty is a false assumption that the Christian life should always be an easy path.

Another reality of mental health is that it is often incurable. Unlike many other illnesses we pray for God to provide healing in, even in the most terminal cases of disease, mental health issues are often terminal and long lasting. People can live in the pain of mental health for a very long time. As a church we need to learn how to provide comfort and strength to those who are dealing with mental health issues in their lives.

How should we pray to God for help in dealing with mental health issues?

We should be a church that provides hope to those in need of healing and comfort from mental health issues. That movement and process starts with each and every one of us. We need to remember that God loves us regardless and he loves those affected by these issues equally as much.

Our hope is rooted in our knowledge that something much better is on its way:

Rom 8:19-23 (NLT)

“Against its will, all creation was subjected to God’s curse. But with eager hope, the creation looks forward to the day when it will join God’s children in glorious freedom from death and decay. For we know that all creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. And we believers also groan, even though we have the Holy Spirit within us as a foretaste of future glory, for we long for our bodies to be released from sin and suffering. We, too, wait with eager hope for the day when God will give us our full rights as his adopted children, including the new bodies he has promised us.”

Hope is the answer to getting through issues that are associated with mental health.

How can we help provide HOPE to those dealing with mental health issues?

PRAYER POINTS:

- Pray that people with mental illness no longer feel that God has rejected them
- Pray that they have hope and know that the church cares for them.
- Pray the church will be that hope in the minds of people who can find hope nowhere else.
- Pray that we will learn to carry one another’s burdens so they can keep going.

Our prayer should be that Jesus’ words would ring true:

John 13:35

“Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples”

FINAL THOUGHTS:

Do you know someone you can start to pray for?

The biggest thing people need to know is that mental health issues are real diseases with real symptoms that need real treatment. People who have mental illnesses aren’t just weak minded. Their minds are suffering which makes everyday things much more difficult for them so they need support more than they need advice or pity.

How can our group pray for you?

CLOSE IN PRAYER

Additional Scripture:

Isaiah 49:15-16

Hebrews 13:5

2 Corinthians 12:7-9

James 1:2

1 Peter 4:12