

Connect Group Notes – Googling God Week 2

Getting started

- What kind of experiences do people most often quote when they find the idea of a God of love and suffering contradictory?
- Have you ever struggled with this thought too? If so, are you able to give an example?

Getting stuck in

Read Psalm 38 together.

- How is the Psalmist's life affected by his suffering?
- Can you identify with any of these areas?

Psalms 23:4 *“Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.”*

- How has your relationship with Jesus helped you see suffering differently??

Finding hope

Dame Cicely Saunders – the founder of the modern hospice palliative care movement – said: *‘you matter because you are you, you matter until the last moment of your life, and we will do all that we can to help you to live until you die.’*

Read 2 Corinthians 4:7-18

- *What difference does an ‘eternal perspective’ make to suffering?*

Christians have a lot to offer people who are struggling with sickness, disease, bereavement, and a wide range of human suffering. We know a clear hope beyond the here and now: the firm promise of eternal life with God. We may or may not have the chance to share this hope with those who suffer but it can help us to support those in need, leading us towards, rather than away, from them.

What does God promise His people?

1 Corinthians 10:13; Matthew 11:28-29; 1 Peter 5:7; Romans 8:18, 28

Read and meditate on these fantastic promises and take them to God in prayer. Ask for the way of escape, the rest, the lightening of the load and the perspective that He promises. He has all power, and His thinking is far above our thinking, so He can make seemingly hopeless situations work out for our good in the long run.

Prayer

Pause as a group to pray for one another that each of you will experience the perspective the Spirit brings to our suffering but also help us to bring God's love and hope to the lives of those we know who are suffering.