**LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT GROUP**

Topic: **Practical Tools for Helping Others**Speaker: **Jill Steel**

15th June 2017

**Reflection: Psalm 13 – this is a person who is struggling**

Read Psalm 13 (and there are many other Psalms like this!)

* What are this person’s main concerns?
* Can you identify with any of these?
* How does the psalm writer (David) encourage himself?
* What can we learn from this Psalm about interacting with others in pain and distress?

**Question & Quotes:**

**Task: In groups of 3 discuss the question & come up with a few feedback points for the larger group**

* What insight do the quotes below give us about coming alongside people facing issues/ problems in life?

**Samuel Pfeifer MD makes a remarkable statement in his book:** *Supporting the Weak,* *Christian Counselling and Contemporary Psychiatry:*

“The Bible knows about the stresses people can undergo. It talks about tribulation and burdens, about opposition and testing. The Psalms present us with some of the most splendid prayers from people trapped in inescapable situations… Again and again the light of hope shines into the helplessness.” (1994 Word Publishing p66)

**Tim Keller makes the following comments in his sermon *The Wounded Spirit* (available on Youtube)**

“The Bible teaches an extremely nuanced vision of the human spirit. We are physical beings whose spirits can be brought low by physical ailments. We are relational beings who need the love and support of friends. We are moral beings who can be crushed by the weight of our sin. We are existential beings who seek to find meaning in our lives. Lastly, we are faith-based beings who will always put our hope in something. Unless we put our faith and hope in God, we will never satisfy the deepest longings of our hearts.”

**Brainstorming:**

1. What types of issues that people struggle with are most likely to leave you feeling out of your depth to help?
2. Can you give some examples of help offered that **is not** actually that “helpful”?
3. Have you experienced any times when another person’s care/counselling has really helped you during times of difficulty? What was most helpful?

**Basic people helping skills:**

* Be a good listener
* Know what to do when confronted with a range of life issues
* Have confidence to respond meaningfully to others, no matter what their situation.

**BE a good listener**

**Listen to –** the person, God, yourself, news of a difference

1. Listen to the person - focus on the whole person, not just the issue

* A person is always more than/bigger than the issue or the problem that they are experiencing. Learn to highlight their strengths, without minimising “the issue”.

2. Be holistic

* Body, soul and spirit are intricately interconnected.

Read Proverbs 3:7-8 and Proverbs 4:20-22

Help people identify what they are feeling, thinking, and believing and interpret how these are connected.

* Did you know that some people are very aware of their feelings but not very mindful of their thoughts?
* Did you know there are some people who are aware of their thoughts but can hardly verbalise what they are feeling?
* Most people are not very conscious of what they are believing at any particular point in time (or aware of their underlying assumptions).
* We train our emotions through learning to think clearly and to apply our faith in a situation.

People live in a context (we are not just individuals). We live in families, communities and societies.

* We grew up in families with entrenched belief systems and these are so deeply ingrained so that we think that is “normal”.
* We live in a western world that has an entrenched belief that everything can be resolved. Problem solving is our mode of operation, and we are in charge of our world.

We are not alone!

* What support from specialist agencies and individuals is the person prepared to call upon? Warm referrals (See Appendix 1)

Listen carefully to a person’s story with an ear that listens for themes, patterns, recurring thoughts, feelings and behaviours rather than content. These are the guiding stories that a person lives by and usually originate in childhood or through a traumatic life event. These are the person’s maps for life and they become guiding “fictions” when they conflict with God’s word about who we are. (See *Appendix 2* comparing personal truths with true identity in Christ).

“When we come to Him with all our past baggage, nothing will change if we do not let that old self be crucified. Something has to die, either the lie to which our feelings are subject, or the truth to which our feelings must conform. This is at the heart of what must happen to be crucified with Him. Truth clasps the hand of feeling and leads it to triumph.” (Source unknown)

2. Listen to God - focus on what He wants to impart

* Pray for the Spirit’s wisdom, wise counsel, and discernment.
* What does He want to say to this person? (Make time in prayer for this, expecting the Holy Spirit to impart something to the person… a picture, a scripture, a word.)
  + A word of encouragement
  + Deliverance from bondage
  + Exposing the devil’s lies
  + Healing of deep emotional wounds/scars
  + Deepening of faith and trust in Him

**Any examples….?**

3. Listen to yourself - focus on your attitude towards others

* Be mindful of who you are and your limitations.
* Do you slip into any of these roles?
  + a problem solver
  + a rescuer
  + a people pleaser
  + a distancer

**Task**: *In groups of 3, take 5 minutes to briefly discuss what impact any of these roles could have on a person’s capacity to help others and feedback to the whole group.*

**Self reflection**: *Read through the following verses and think about which of these attitudes/qualities you find most difficult/ easiest to demonstrate.*

Ephesians 4:2  
*Be completely humble and gentle; be patient; bearing with one another in love*

Romans 14:1  
*Accept him whose faith is weak, without passing judgment on disputable matters.*

1 Thessalonians 5:11  
*Therefore, encourage one another and build each other up.*

1 Thessalonians 5:14  
*…encourage the timid, help the weak, be patient with everyone*

James 1:19  
*Be quick to listen and slow to speak*

Galatians 6:2  
*Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.*

Anyone want to comment?

Journey with people through life: be a listener, an advocate, an encourager, a burden bearer, a pray-er.

**4. Listen for news of a difference - focus on asking questions that could bring clarity**

4.1 Seek negative explanation

* What is stopping you from doing something different?

4.2 Look for differences

* When does this happen most/when doesn’t it happen?
* When is this a problem/ when isn’t it a problem?

4.3 Draw comparisons

* What was it like before this happened?
* What was it like after this happened?

4.4 Relative influence

* What percentage of the time is this a problem?
* When is this most problematic/least problematic?
* Who has been most affected / least affected by this?
* On a scale of 0…. 10 (0 being least), how much is this currently affecting you?
* When are you most in control of this issue?

4.5 Challenging restraints

* How might that view of yourself keep you from seeing life differently?
* What other beliefs might a person hold that could prove to be more freeing?
* How do you think other people might view this? What would stop you embracing their view?
* Is this the only possible way to think about this?
* Do all families believe this or might this be peculiar to your family?
* Can you think of a family that doesn’t believe this?

**Caution: Never bombard people with questions!**

**Practical: What can I do when confronted with … ????**

Refer back to issues listed in Brainstorming Q1 (and any others people want to raise)

Let’s talk about:

* What to listen for
* Questions to ask
* Practical steps to take
* Prayer
* Referrals – See Appendix 1

**Notes:**

***Appendix 1* Referrals**

Local GP’s Note: Dr Helen Spencer @ Grange Medical Centre Military Road is very thorough in regard to depression

**Mental health triage:** 13 14 65

Life Line: 13 11 14

Suicide Call Back Service: 1300 659 467

All hours suicide support: 1800 859 585

**Links to Well Being**: 08 83263591

Provides counselling and support services with an experienced mental health clinician for people who are experiencing mental illness. Free service

**Abuse and Assault Services**

National sexual assault, family and domestic violence counselling service: 1800 RESPECT (1800 737 732) 24 hour

Adults surviving child abuse: 1300 657 380

Rape and sexual assault service Yarrow Place: 8226 8777 / 8226 8787 (AH) 24 hour

Domestic violence and Aboriginal Family Violence Gateway Service: 1800 800 098 24 Hour

Kids Helpline: 1800 551 800 24 hour

Alcohol and Drug Information Service: 1300 131 340 24 hour

Beyond Blue: depression, anxiety & related disorders 1300 224 637

Statewide Eating Disorder Service: 8198 0800

Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) western community team Port Adelaide: 8341 1222

SA Health Mental Health Services - Emergency (all hours) 13 14 65

Mifsa (Mental Illness Fellowship SA): 8378 4100 mifsa@mifsa.org / www.mifsa.org

***A good read:***

1. Cloud, Henry Dr. *Changes that Heal* Zondervan 1992
2. Pfeifer, Samuel MD *Supporting the Weak Christian Counselling and Contemporary Psychiatry* Word Publishing 1999
3. Vasilakis, Bill Pastor *The Me I Can Be* Christian Family Centre Inc Seaton, Dec 2016

***Appendix 2* Practising the habit of confronting personal truth with Godly truth.**

**Life issue: approval and rejection**

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| **Personal truth** | **True identity in Christ** |
| “I’m a reject” | “I am loved and accepted  by God.” |
| “If I try hard enough, people and God will like me” | “I am accepted, I have nothing to prove.” |
| “I can’t like me if you don’t like me.” | “God accepts me and embraces me, in Christ.” |

**Life issue: performance and failure**

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| **Personal truth** | **True identity in Christ** |
| “I’m a failure.” | “I failed but I am still loved and valued.” |
| “If I try hard enough God will forgive me.” | “ In Christ, God sees me as righteous as He is.” |

**Life issue: blaming and punishing**

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| **Personal truth** | **True identity in Christ** |
| “I’m worthless, I deserve to be punished.” | “The fear of punishment is finished.” |
| “People get what they deserve.” | “All punishment that was due to me was put on Christ.” |

**Life issue: shame**

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| **Personal truth** | **True identity in Christ** |
| “No one would want me around.” | “I am a child of God.” |
| “There’s no point in trying, I’ll never be anybody.” | “I can grow and I am changing daily into God’s image.” |
| “I’ll never be any good. I can’t change. I am hopeless.” | “In Christ, I am a new creation. The old has gone, the new has come.” |