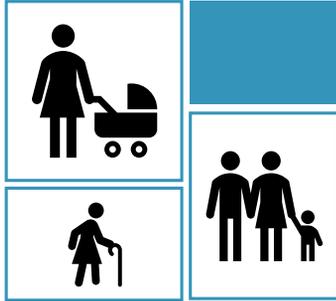


# Communities who care: for their brothers and sisters

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## Caring by creating a culture of sharing

*And that is what some of you were. (1 Corinthians 6:11)*

- Sin and suffering thrives in the darkness
- How likely are people to answer the question, "how are you?" with the answer, "I'm fine"
- What opportunities are there for sharing testimonies at church? (Services, small groups, evangelistic events, blog posts etc)
- Openness starts with us! Teaching it. Modelling it. Encouraging it. Wisely!  
"How are you really?"
- Anna's story of addiction to porn

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## DISCUSSION TIME

How can you (as an individual) and you (as a church) grow in confidence in sharing your struggles with people around?



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### Caring by creating a culture of listening

- Let people tell their stories
- Be hungry to know them more
- Love asking good questions (see Powlison's X-ray questions):
  - What do you love?
  - What do you want?
  - What do you fear?
  - Where do you find safety?
  - What do you trust?
  - Who are you pleasing?
  - What do you think you're entitled to?
  - What do you pray for?
  - What do you think about most often?
  - Where is your hope?
  - When do you say, "if only ... "?

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### Pastoral struggles are complex

Imagine a pastoral situation like a wall composed of many bricks – you will want to listen out for beliefs, behaviours, hurts, fears, rebellion and more (including biological factors):

Porn use	Lying	Fantasies	Alcohol
I deserve comfort	I'm not hurting anyone	I just need the stress to end	Everyone escapes sometimes
Work is hard	I feel alone	My hormones are out of control	I am unloved
God isn't helping	I can't pray	Why won't God let me get a new job?	I wish I felt excited by God's word

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### Caring by creating a culture of prayer

*Unless the LORD builds the house, the builders labour in vain. (Psalm 127:1)*

- Prayers of release ... *"Please take this away ... "*
- Prayers of reliance ... *"Help me trust in you, Lord ... "*
- Prayers of repentance ... *"I'm sorry for those moments when I've doubted ... "*
- Prayers of reorientation ... *"As I struggle, change me to be more like Jesus ... "*
- Prayers of resurrection ... *"Thank you, that one day I will be free ... "*

Pray on the phone, at church, typed onto messages, together, alone!

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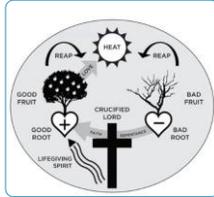
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### Caring by understanding biblical change



Jeremiah 17:5-14

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### DISCUSSION TIME

Meet Bob. Bob is retired and lives alone now his wife has died. He is not very technically minded so struggles to engage with online church during lockdown. Few people call him because he is, well, grumpy and increasingly bitter about the lack of care he is getting. He knows he deserves better from the people of God.

What is Bob's heat – bad fruit – bad root?

What good fruit would you like to see? What heart (root) change will be needed for that fruit to begin to show? How can you humbly help him?



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### Caring by creating an open Bible culture

*correct, rebuke and encourage - with great patience and careful instruction (2 Timothy 4:2)*

- Words that root
  - In who God is
  - In who God has made us to be
- Words that help relate
  - To God
  - To brothers and sisters in Christ
- Words that help refine

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### Surface v deep passages

• Surface passages have a surface connection with the presenting behaviour:

Anxious person: "do not be anxious but ... "

They are useful in raising awareness of what is right and wrong

• Deep passages look at the underlying issues

Anxious person: Ex 16 (the Lord WILL provide for you)

They are useful in promoting transformation



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### DISCUSSION TIME

Remember Bob? Think about what Bible passages you might want to look at with him to help him:

- Root
- Relate
- Refine



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### Caring by being good role models

*Because we loved you so much, we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well (1 Thessalonians 2:8)*

- Can people see you growing?
- Can people see how you are growing?
- Do your own struggles help you remember not to try to fix others?
- Do you allow people to minister to you?



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### Caring through support groups

*And we urge you, brothers and sisters, warn those who are idle and disruptive, encourage the disheartened, help the weak, be patient with everyone (1 Thessalonians 5:14)*

- Specific v multi-issue
- Time limited v open-ended v rolling
- Single gender v mixed
- Frequency and follow-up
- Leadership and accountability (and working with other churches)

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### Useful resources

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### Caring through wise structures

- Circles of concern
  - Corporate confidentiality
  - Clear lines of accountability
- Small group leader -> Cluster leader -> Pastor or Women's Worker  
 Care team leader -> Pastor
- Including specialist referrals (to parachurch organisations and secular bodies) where necessary

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### Caring through equipping

*so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us (Romans 12:5-6)*

- Develop everyone in some aspect of pastoral care (though not everyone will be gifted at everything!)
- Differentiate between those set aside for counselling and those set aside for Counselling
- Small group leaders – youth and children’s leaders – evangelism team – everyone!



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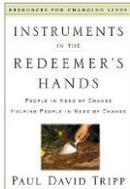
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### Useful resources



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### QUESTION TIME

Please use the chat function to send your questions directly to Helen



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