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| Theme & Passages | Lamentations 3:1-33 Losing & Finding 3: Experiencing and expressing loss in community | Notes prepared by Caroline Oliveira, Dan Commandeur & Neil Casey |
| Welcome (10 mins) | Share something you lost and something you gained during, or as a result of, the Covid-19 pandemic. | |
| Worship (20 mins) | One of the tools in our journey through loss is to remind ourselves of the truth about God, especially in times when we struggle to perceive His presence. Use one or two of these songs to 'tell our souls' of God's goodness and faithfulness. Great is Thy Faithfulness Unchanging Faithful One | |
| Working with God (20 mins): Evangelism Discipleship Compassion Justice Creation Care | This week we hear from Peter, a Ukrainian who fled the war in his homeland with his family and has found hospitality in a Baptist Church in Poland (watch video here) It's an example of the Baptist Missionary Society's (BMS) humanitarian support. BMS is one of BBC's International Mission Partners. Their work involves compassion and standing against injustice, two of the five marks of mission. On the anniversary of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, take some time as a group to reflect on the impact of the war and to pray. Pray for those affected by the conflict, people in positions of leadership, the Church, the global impact of the war and for peace. Encourage your group to post prayers of solidarity with the Ukrainian people on the BMS website at https://www.bmsworldmission.org/ukraineprayer/ | |
| Word (20-25 mins) | <p>Read Lamentations 3:1-33 (you could read from verse 13 if you're short for time) What took your attention or interest from this passage? What has stayed with you from Caroline's sermon?</p> <p>Lamentations is written in response to the siege and destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple by the Babylonians in 587BC. The author of Lamentations is writing in the first person but is speaking on behalf of the whole community, which had experienced utter devastation.</p> <p>Discuss some of the ways the writer describes their loss. There are plenty of examples in chapter 3, but feel free to flick back to earlier chapters. Why do you think they spend so long recounting their grief?</p> <p>The book of Lamentations is read annually by Jews on the fast day of Tisha B'Av when they remember and mourn the destruction of Jerusalem in 587BC and then again by the Romans in 70AD. Remembering is an important theme in our journey with God.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the result of the author's 'remembering', particularly in verses 21-24? <p>Caroline used the framework of 'Orientation – Disorientation – Reorientation' to understand our journey through loss (see the image attached below for your reference)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which stage do you think our church and wider society are in at present, why? • Where do you think you are at present? How is God meeting you in that stage? | |

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| | Pray and listen to God for one another in relation to all that you have shared about your present stage. |
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| | ORIENTATION | DISORIENTATION | REORIENTATION |
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| Experience | Status quo | Disruption | New reality |
| Emotions | Typical emotions | Denial, anger, bargaining, depression | Acceptance Finding meaning |
| Lamentations parallel | | Outpouring of grief, accusations towards God, accusations towards enemies | Remembering who God is Hoping and waiting on Him |
| Spiritual life | Worship and normal religious expression 'works' | Worship & prayer no longer seem sufficient or appropriate. God seems distant. | Deeper, more authentic relationship with God. Less shiny. Greater acceptance of mystery. |

N.B.

'Orientation – Disorientation – Reorientation' model by Walter Brueggeman

'Emotions' section based on the Five/Six Stages of Grief work by Elisabeth Kubler-Ross and David Kessler

'Spiritual life' section based on ideas from Pete Scazzerro's *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality*