

REST FOR THE STRESSED-3

God's Antidote For Damaged Emotions

"...He restores my soul."
- Psalm 23:3

"To all who mourn...he will
give: beauty for ashes; joy
instead of mourning; praise
instead of heaviness."
- Isa. 61:3

"Why are you downcast, O
my soul? Why so disturbed
within me? Put your hope in
God, for yet I will praise
him, my savior and my
God." - Psalm 42:5

Life is difficult. We struggle with failure, fears, frustration and fatigue. Often, we have hidden hurts from our past. The 23rd Psalm calls us to receive the spiritual and emotional renewal that only the Great Shepherd provides.

Welcome

What's the smallest space you've lived in? What was it like?

Worship

Through the centuries, God's People have regularly met to praise God and encourage one another through worship.

Ask, *"Have you had a song on your heart this past week? If so, what is the song and why has it been on your mind?"*

Begin with yourself, and have someone lead the songs as they are shared. The following are songs of thanksgiving, if needed: "Let Every Heart Rejoice and Sing" (8), "Doxology" (66), "Give Thanks" (68).

Word

Read Psalm 23, calling attention to the fact that this psalm offers some help for the greatest sources of stress in our lives, including the stress that comes from inappropriately dealing with guilt, grief or grudges.

1. Respond to the following statement, *"An emotion I often feel but don't usually express is..."*
2. *Can you think of a recent time when you had difficulty either forgiving yourself or another person? Can you share what makes it difficult to forgive? How has carrying this guilt or these grudges affected your spiritual and emotional well-being?*
3. *What is God's way of dealing with guilt or grudges? Do you need any help, encouragement or prayer from this group in dealing with either one of these two issues?*
4. *Is there any hurt or loss that you continually grieve--that causes you to either wallow in self-pity or withdraw--rather than getting on with your life?*
5. **Read 2 Samuel 12:22-24.** *What principles do you glean from this passage about dealing constructively with grief? Do you need any help, encouragement or prayer from this group in dealing with grief?*

Works

Is there anyone you know (who does not know the Lord) who is trying to live with the stress that comes from carrying a burden of guilt, grief or grudges? How would the Lord have you respond to that person this week?