



Caregiver Support Group
DISCUSSION GUIDES

**A SIMPLE,
SCRIPTURE-BASED GUIDE
FOR CHURCHES WALKING WITH
FAMILIES AFFECTED BY
SERIOUS MENTAL ILLNESS**

FOR DISPLAY ONLY

Thank you for taking a moment to explore our Caregiver Support Group curriculum.

Across our churches, there are families quietly carrying the weight of serious mental illness. They are often unseen and unsupported. The desire to walk alongside them, to bring comfort into places of deep suffering, reflects the very heart of Christ, our ultimate Comforter:

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction...

2 Corinthians 1:3–5

These discussion guides were written because of our own experiences as caregivers. Each gathering is designed to gently guide participants toward truth. Not by fixing their circumstances, but by walking with them. The ultimate goal of each meeting is to anchor hearts in God's Word and remind one another of the hope found in Christ.

The Caregiver Support Group is not about having all the answers. They are about faithfully showing up, prayerfully, patiently, and with compassion, bearing one another's burdens and entrusting them to the Lord.

Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

Galatians 6:2

With all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love.

Ephesians 4:2

Cast your burden on the Lord, and he will sustain you.

Psalms 55:22

It is our hope that as you explore these pages, you will begin to see how simple it can be to create space in your church for this kind of care, and prayerfully consider whether this is something God may be calling your community to step into.

DISCUSSION GUIDE #16

TOPIC:

**How Do I Persevere When
the Reality of My Loved One's
Prognosis Overwhelms Me?**



Discussion Guide #16: How Do I Persevere When the Reality of My Loved One's Prognosis Overwhelms Me?

ANSWER: Remember Jesus who gives grace in our suffering.

WELCOME

- Welcome attendees
- Share the group's mission statement:

This is a safe and judgment-free environment where caregivers can find support, encouragement, and help to lift their eyes to Christ.

- Review guidelines for the meeting:

- ***Begin and end at set times***
- ***Respect time allotted for sharing, set by facilitator***
- ***What is shared in the meetings is confidential, unless it involves abuse of a minor***
- ***Offer an empathetic and respectful ear to others***

- Share what the group is versus what it is not:

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| » <i>A place to biblically care for the caregivers</i> | » <i>A place to deal with 'patient care' solutions and diagnosis for your loved one</i> |
| » <i>A place to bring the hope of the gospel to their situations</i> | » <i>A place to give direction for patient care for your loved one</i> |
| » <i>A place to pray for God to meet and bless them with the hope of the gospel</i> | » <i>A place to hear answers to 'fix' your loved one and the situation you have</i> |
| » <i>A place to listen, to hear struggles, and give help from the bible</i> | » <i>A place to share political opinions</i> |
| » <i>A place to encourage</i> | |

- Open in prayer
- Encourage group to share current situations (3 minutes). Be sensitive to new attendees.

QUESTION

Tonight's question for discussion is, "How do I persevere when the reality of my loved one's prognosis overwhelms me?"

DISCUSSION

The apostle Paul had what he described as a "thorn in his flesh." Scholars can't agree on what this hardship was, but it's clearly a constant trial for him. He wrote about it in 2 Corinthians 12:7-10,

Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. But he said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly of my weakness, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

Let's open this up for discussion. Maybe you're struggling right now and wondering how you can persevere. Or perhaps you can share how God helped you with this in the past.

Allow for responses.

OBSERVATIONS

We know from scripture that God isn't unconcerned about our troubles. He cares for us. But we also know that God allows hard things. Jesus told us this would happen. He isn't asking Paul or us to pull ourselves up by our bootstraps, nor does he want us to fall back into hopeless resignation. He is saying here that He is with us in our trials and will give us the grace to endure. Our response is to look to him for strength and help and to trust Him.

HOPE

How can we trust him? By remembering his promises and his character. He is good; not only does he help us, but He is producing something eternal in us that far outweighs the trial.

Not only that but we rejoice in our sufferings knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

HOPE CONTINUED

This promise is for every Christian, not just Paul. The Holy Spirit helps us when we are overwhelmed by the prognosis of our loved one's suffering. Jesus is producing something in us; He's changing us as He gives us the grace to endure suffering. We also bring glory to God, who is holding us as we trust Him in our suffering.

OPTIONAL HOMEWORK

Read 2 Corinthians 12:7–10 this week and ask God to help you see his grace in your and your loved one's suffering.

Write down the things you are thankful for.

If you aren't a Christian and want to know more about the gospel and what Jesus has done, talk with another Christian you may know.

We encourage you to be a part of a local church that preaches from the Bible. If you need help thinking through that, feel free to reach out to us.

Prayer of Lament and Hope

Dear Lord, we look to you tonight and lift our overwhelming burdens to you. If we're being honest, we do not feel like rejoicing in our suffering. In fact, we would prefer that you take our difficulties away from us. But that is not the way you designed it, even though you can do that. Instead, you desire to give us something better, which is yourself. Help us to recognize the many ways you hold us up and give us grace to persevere. Help us to not lose heart or to give in to anger or fear, but to trust you instead. We wait for you; grow our faith, help us to see you and interact with you in our trials. In Jesus' name, Amen.

DISCUSSION GUIDE #27

TOPIC:

**WHAT DO I DO WITH MY
CRUSHING BURDENS?**

WELCOME

- Welcome attendees
- Share the group's mission statement
- Review guidelines for the meeting
- Share what the group is versus what it is not
- Open in prayer
- Encourage group to share current situations (3 minutes). Be sensitive to new attendees.

QUESTION

We're all walking through very hard trials. We know this is part of living in a broken world, but our situations and burdens can make us buckle at times under the weight of them. The good news is that the Bible gives words to this experience, and one of those words is "crushed." We can feel crushed by our difficulties. ***Leader: give an example from your own life.**

DISCUSSION

Let's read from Psalm 34:15-18 and think about this question, what do I do with my overwhelming burdens?

"The eyes of the Lord are toward the righteous and his ears toward their cry. The face of the Lord is against those who do evil, to cut off the memory of them from the earth. When the righteous cry for help, the Lord hears and delivers them out of all their troubles. The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit."

How does this passage help us think about how to respond when we feel crushed by our burdens? What do you do with your burdens? **Allow for discussion.**

OBSERVATIONS

Thank you for sharing, this was a great discussion. Isn't it good to know that God's ears are open to his children's pain? And that he promises to save us. It's not always in the timing or way we would like, but he will answer us. Not only that, but he is very near to us when we are broken-hearted and seemingly crushed by our difficulties.

HOPE

The apostle Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 4:7-9:

But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us. We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed.

We are weak, but God is strong. Though we experience trials now, we can look to Jesus who was crushed on our behalf so that we will never be crushed. Isaiah 53:5 says,

But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed.

One day our troubles will be over, and our enemy will be the one who is crushed forever. Romans 16:20 promises:

“The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.”

When we are overwhelmed by our burdens, we can remember to look to the God who saves the crushed.

OPTIONAL HOMEWORK

Read Psalm 34 this week and note how many promises we have in Jesus.

If you aren't a Christian and want to know more about the gospel and what Jesus has done, talk with another Christian you may know.

We encourage you to be a part of a local church that preaches from the Bible. If you need help thinking through that, feel free to reach out to us.

Prayer of Lament and Hope

God, I thank you that you are ruling over all of this brokenness in the world. But some days it's just too much. The trials that press in seem like they're crushing us, to the point where it's hard to breathe. Please help us to lift our eyes to you. Remind us of the hope we have in you. Take care of our loved ones and give us the strength we need to persevere. May we be quick to go to you in prayer. Thank you that one day Satan and sickness will ultimately be crushed under your feet. Serious mental illness will not have the final word. Help us to rest in that truth tonight as we lay our heads on our pillows.

Amen

Could this be for your church?

Not every church is called to this work in the same way. But every church is invited to prayerfully consider how they can walk alongside those who are suffering.

The Caregiver Support Group is designed to be simple, sustainable, and led by your church body.

You don't need to have all the answers.

You don't need a team of experts.

You simply need a willingness to step toward those who are hurting.

***NO DIAGNOSING. NO FIXING.
JUST LIFTING OUR EYES TO CHRIST.***

**IF YOU WOULD LIKE MORE INFORMATION
ON THE CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP,
SCAN THE QR CODE BELOW**



**IF YOU WOULD LIKE MORE INFORMATION ON THE OTHER
SERVICES WE PROVIDE OR WHAT WE BELIEVE ABOUT SMI, SCAN
THE QR CODE BELOW**



Psalm 82

*God has taken his place in the divine council;
in the midst of the gods he holds judgment:*

*2 "How long will you judge unjustly
and show partiality to the wicked?"*

Selah

*3 Give justice to the weak and the fatherless;
maintain the right of the afflicted and the destitute.*

*4 Rescue the weak and the needy;
deliver them from the hand of the wicked."*

*5 They have neither knowledge nor understanding,
they walk about in darkness;
all the foundations of the earth are shaken.*

*6 I said, "You are gods,
sons of the Most High, all of you;*

*7 nevertheless, like men you shall die,
and fall like any prince."*

*8 Arise, O God, judge the earth;
for you shall inherit all the nations!*



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