



Mental Health and Your Church

Discussion Guide for Church Leadership & Care Teams

Chapter 1

- To what extent do you feel people in your congregation feel free to share about struggles with mental health? Why or why not?
- Which of the reasons for not getting involved with those suffering from mental illness most resonate with you?
- How do you think your church is currently doing in regard to helping those with mental-health struggles?

Chapter 2

- How does the “spider scale” of anxiety impact the way you think of mental illness and mental health struggles? How might that affect the way you seek to care for people in this area?
- How do you feel about the label of mental illness? Have you ever pulled back from someone who has a diagnosis like this? Why?
- What parts of the Bible have given you comfort and help when you have faced stress, anxiety or confusion? How might you share your experiences and the effect those truths had on you with others?

Chapter 3

- What are some pressures that members of your congregation may be facing? Is there anyone who may need extra support or care?
- How does it help our mental health to know that we are both gloriously made and fallen?
- As you consider friends with mental-health problems (or your own struggles) how might it help to be aware of the impact of circumstances and body and heart?

Chapter 4

- Are there any cultural biases about mental health and psychiatric drugs in your area? How might that impact people within your church and community?
- What stories have you heard about drugs being helpful, or profoundly unhelpful, for those struggling with mental illness? How have they affected your view of drugs and their value in helping?
- What would you say to someone who suggests that Christians should never take psychiatric drugs?

Chapter 5

- Look back over the therapies described in this chapter. Which of these approaches, in essence, can come out in everyday conversations?
- How do you feel about secular therapy and therapists? Do you lean towards being suspicious or affirming?
- What help do you think you need to “connect the dots” between therapy and theology?

Chapter 6

- How do you think your church is currently doing in regard to mental-health awareness? What is on the bookstall? When was a mental-health condition last mentioned in a sermon or Bible study?
- In your own church setting, how can you raise awareness of mental-health struggles? Who can help with this process of raising awareness?
- Is there anyone in the congregation who may be struggling? How might sharing your testimony or a giving them a book speak into their life right now?

Chapter 7

- Are there ways for you to encourage your fellow church members to invite others into their regular activities as a way of encouraging them?
- Are your boundaries with those who struggle a bit high or a bit low? How can you tweak them to a healthier place?
- Is there anyone in your congregation who would be encouraged to have someone to walk alongside them in a process of lament? Who might be a good fit for them?

Chapter 8

- Have you ever struggled with seeing God as fundamentally good, gracious and kind? What helped you see God more clearly?
- How do you hold together the two truths that you are wonderfully made and loved, and yet fallen and sinful? How would you explain that to someone who struggles to understand it?
- How flexible are your methods in opening Scripture? How could you grow in this area?
- Where in Scripture might you go to remind someone struggling of just how good God is?

Chapter 9

- What has your experience of change and growth as a Christian been over the years? Is it continuing now, or are you “cruising”?
- Are you more likely to push for quick change or pull back from encouraging any change? How can you help to create a church culture that encourages the appropriate amount of growth over time?
- Think of someone you know who is struggling at the moment. What one small thing can you encourage them to take off or put on this month?

Chapter 10

- What structures are in place in your church to ensure people can access practical help in times of need?
- Are there any needs that people may have which aren't currently being covered in the current structures?
- Who do you know who is caring long-term for someone? How can you offer to help support them?

Final Reflection Questions

- What was your biggest takeaway from this book?
- What are three steps you or your church leadership can take to better care for your church family in this area?
- What are the mental health needs in your community, and is there any way for your church to help to meet those needs and point people to Jesus?