

INTRO

We are complicated. Genetics, ancestry, family of origin, life experiences, journey of faith have contributed to who we are today.

- Share an interesting, unusual or unknown fact or story about your family or family history.

READ

The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit. Ps. 34:18

Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life. Prov. 4:23

Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. Gal. 6:2

REFLECT

As we considered the area of mental health over the past month, we have been reminded that being a person of faith does not mean we are exempt from the struggle. We all will face times of disillusionment, or isolation & loneliness, anxiety & depression.

The expression of God's care and concern for the condition of our soul is three fold.

First, we can be assured of this: God Himself is near to us even on our darkest days.

Second, God wants us to know and be honest about the condition of our own heart.

Third, God wants us to be there for one another.

RESPOND

- **Know your story**

There are times when our journey through difficult times requires looking deep into the roots of our anxiety, our sin, our struggle as the first step to healing.

- **Tell your story**

Is it difficult for you to open up and share your struggles with another person? Do you feel like

you should be able to solve all life's problems on your own?

- **Learn to listen**

Sometimes, instead of listening well to others, we are busy sorting out our own thoughts, constructing our response. Sometimes, we are trying to figure out how to correct or fix the person who is talking to us.

Qu: What is one thing you could do to become a better listener?

- **Be a safe haven**

Jesus summed up the Law of God with 2 statements - loving the Lord our God with all our heart and loving our neighbour as ourselves. Paul wrote in Galatians that bearing one another's burdens is the fulfillment of this law.

PRAY

As we pray for one another, be reminded of the honest words of Augustine:

God of our life, there are days when the burdens we carry chafe our shoulders and weigh us down; when the road seems dreary and endless, the skies gray and threatening; when our lives have no music in them, and our hearts are lonely, and our souls have lost their courage.

Pray that we would know Jesus as the one who, according to the prophet Isaiah, 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.”