

# Current

## The Importance of Lament

Lamentations 3:22-32 | Session 7.26

### Before the Session

Facilitator: In advance of the session

- Review today's scripture text and the session activities to help better facilitate the discussion.
- Have the Bible Background Video ready to view.
- Review and have ready the two videos relating to the Charleston shooting.
- Encourage your group to listen to the Faithelement podcast ahead of the next session (Share the link via email or social media)

### Intro

Recently, a Bible study group, not unlike the one you are currently enjoying, gathered at the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina. In an act of hatred, 9 persons were killed.

There has been much news coverage of the event and its aftermath. If history is any example, the story will fade from the news soon. Yet, Charleston, this congregation, and the families of those killed will feel the pain of this act for years to come.

Let's view two videos. The first, narrated by a prayer given at the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church by Pastor Clementa Pinckney, shows the names and faces of those killed. The second shows the response of victims' families in the courtroom, as they faced the one who killed their loved ones.

### The Victims and a Prayer

#### Victims' families offer forgiveness

After viewing the videos, ask questions like these:

- What feelings do you think are strong in this congregation (the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church)?
- What fears do you think are there?
- What might it feel like to be hated by persons who do not know you?
- What is your reaction to the videos we viewed?
- Regardless of the news cycle, how long do we mourn?

## Content

Read together Lamentations 3:22–32 and watch the Bible Background Video. Afterwards, ask questions like these:

- How was the experience of the people in Lamentations similar to the Charleston congregation?
- What is the lament they share?
- In the passage, the author speaks of waiting on God. How are people waiting on God today? How might the congregation in Charleston say they are waiting?
- Why is God taking so long?
- What are other parts of our world and experience where we are waiting on God?
- When people are suffering, as are the family and congregation in Charleston, is it possible to keep hope and faith alive? How?
- Lamentations includes honest expressions to God — real questions, real feelings, real doubts. What are some of the questions, feelings and doubts we should be offering to God as we lament this terrible event?

## Closing

Close by viewing and sharing in this prayer. It was offered at the 2015 General Assembly of the CBF ([cbf.net](http://cbf.net)), a few days after the shooting in Charleston, SC.

There was much loss from this act of hatred and violence. In the face of such suffering, we call to God, who knows the pain of these families, and this congregation.

The prayer is given by Kasey Jones, Senior Pastor, National Baptist Memorial Church in Washington DC.