

Media

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.
- Have any selected video or music clips ready to show
- Encourage your group to listen to the Faithelement podcast ahead of the next session (Share the link via email or social media)

Intro

Fiddler on the Roof

Say something like this: "The movie Fiddler on the Roof is set near the beginning of the twentieth century, telling the story of Jews living in the little village of Anatevka in the pre-revolutionary Russia of the Czars. Poor and powerless, they are persecuted by the government because of their race. In the film, the father Tevye, often laments aloud to God — complaining of their situation in life, and asking why. Let's view this extended scene (it's 7 minutes long) to watch a few excerpted scenes. The final scene in this clip is set during the wedding of one of Tevye's daughters.

After the clip has been viewed, ask questions like these:

- Even in this brief view into the story, where did you see clues as to how the Jews were perceived?
- What role did the larger "system" play in the oppression of the Jews? What pressures did the local officer feel from his superiors?

- The wedding celebration was still a celebration, even though the gifts were meager and the setting a dusty barn. How did it feel watching the destruction of that celebration?
- What did Tevye seem to be saying to God as the camera zoomed out at the end of the clip? Was he expressing lament?

Content

Say: Much like Tevye and his family, this passage from Lamentations was penned by Jews who had been taken from their homeland and whose way of life was dismantled by a foreign power.

Read together Lamentations 3:22–32 and watch the Bible Background Video.

Suffering & Lament

Lead the group to list situations in our world today where people suffer. (Hunger, war, oppression, poverty, disease...)

Then list personal situations in our communities where people suffer. (death, cancer, loss of job, divorce, estrangement from children, etc.)

Lead a discussion using questions like these:

- How do most people respond to suffering?
- How have experiences of suffering changed you or someone you know?
- When you suffer, how easy or hard is it to share your complaints or questions with God?

Sharing with God

Lead the group in a time of silent reflection.

Say: All of us experience difficult times and hardships. In this moment of silence, think of an area in your life where you or a loved one are struggling or suffering.

Then, after several moments, say: Sharing our pain, questions or doubts with God is a healthy part of faith. Please take the next few minutes to silently express yourself to God in prayer.

After the experience, ask questions like these:

- Which is hardest to express to God: Hurt, questions, or doubts? Ask those who share to explain their responses.
- When you share deeply with God, how does it change your relationship with God?

Closing

Close by viewing and sharing in this prayer. It was offered at the 2015 General Assembly of the CBF (cbf.net), a few days after the shooting in Charleston, SC. The prayer is given by Kasey Jones, Senior Pastor, National Baptist Memorial Church in Washington DC.