

## **On Lamenting – some resources for clergy**

In recent days, there has been a return of interest and a recognition that to lament is an emotionally healthy response to change, loss, and deprivation.

Individuals, groups of people and even whole nations can and do lament and there are many narratives in the Bible, particularly in the Old Testament, that speak to the depth, unity and change that collective lamenting can release.

Where people avoid expressing their grief (and anger) through the process of lamenting (in order to appear well self-managed and in control of their feelings) internal physical and psychological tensions and intrapersonal tensions build which may lead to an individual's breakdown in mental and physical health, and to potential breakdown in relationships.

Some individuals need sensitive and skilled support to enable them to feel emotionally safe enough to express their powerful and (to them) frightening emotions. To provide a distressed individual with a ministry like this, is to provide a route through to a relieved and stronger person.

We offer some resources for you to draw from as you may be experiencing your own season of lament, and as you lead your congregation through and onwards from the significant losses which the Covid pandemic has brought to individuals, our congregations and whole communities.

Pete Greg has written in his book 'God on Mute':

*"Struggle and travail are important expressions of biblical spirituality. Lamenting is more than a technique for venting emotion. It is one of the fruits of a deepening spiritual life that has learned to stand naked before God without shame or pretence . . . Honest lament can express a vibrant faith; one that has learned to embrace life's hardships as well as its joy, and to lift everything—everything—to the Father in prayer."*

(Pete Greig. God on Mute: The Silence of Unanswered Prayer, p312. Published by Baker Books).

### **Resources from Books and Websites**

Lucy Winkett.

Our Sound Is Our Wound: Contemplative Listening to a Noisy World. Chapter 2. 'The Sound of Lament'. (Publisher - Continuum)

The Book of Lamentations in the Bible

Psalms of Lamentation in the book of Psalms (The Bible)

Walter Brueggemann.

Virus as a Summons to Faith: Biblical Reflections in a time of Loss and Grief in Ministry. (Pub. Cascade Books)

Rev. Kenneth Howcroft. A Psalm of Lament and Praise in a time of Coronavirus

<https://www.methodist.org.uk/about-us/coronavirus/prayers-during-the-coronavirus-pandemic/a-psalm-of-lament-and-praise-in-a-time-of-coronavirus/>

5 Psalms of Lament

<https://www.christianity.com/wiki/bible/psalms-of-lament-to-remind-us-we-are-not-alone.html>

From Franciscan Spirit Blog

<https://www.franciscanmedia.org/franciscan-spirit-blog/biblical-laments-prayer-out-of-pain>

Sheldon Hub.

10minute interview video with Rev. Dr. Carla Grosch-Miller on trauma and lament. <https://www.sheldonthub.org/resources/4841>

### **Lament in music and singing**

Robert Smith.

Belting out the Blues as Believers: The importance of singing lament.

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/themelios/article/belting-out-the-blues-as-believers-the-importance-of-singing-lament/>

Songs of Lament

A selection of modern songs composed during the Coronavirus Pandemic

<https://licc.org.uk/resources/songs-of-lament/>

John Taverner Song for Athene

Eric Clapton Tears in Heaven

There are many African/American spiritual songs from the slavery days. It is worth looking up the words of these songs to sense the deep expression of lament that also contain woven threads of hope.

This resource is offered by the Derby Diocese Clergy Wellbeing Team.

If at any time you sense a need for emotional or spiritual support from a team member, please contact:

Rev. Canon Karen Hamblin.

Email: [Karen.Hamblin@derby.anglican.org](mailto:Karen.Hamblin@derby.anglican.org)

01246 913688 or 07432 705285

If you sense that some supportive counselling would be of help, please contact Sheila Pigott (Diocese of Derby Clergy Counselling Service Coordinator)

Email: [sheila.pigott@derby.anglican.org](mailto:sheila.pigott@derby.anglican.org)

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