

Anxiety & Depression: Helping the Fearful and Hopeless

Two Goals:

- 1) Think biblically about anxiety and depression
- 2) Provide practical tools to help people in your group who are struggling

Pandemic Stats

- Symptoms of anxiety are 3x pre-pandemic levels
- Symptoms of depression are 4x pre-pandemic levels
- People are less physically active
- People are less social and more isolated and lonely

What Not to Do:

- Ignore it
- Give them a Bible verse and send them on their way
- Make the primary solution seeking medical care
- Assume that if you aren't a mental health professional, you have nothing to offer

Three Roots of Anxiety and Depression

- The world (and our bodies) don't work as intended
- People sin against us
- We each struggle with our own sinful desires, inclinations, and behaviors

Thinking biblically: Our emotions tell us what we love

Our ultimate hope isn't in a method, medication, changing circumstances, or therapy - it is in a Person. (2 Timothy 3:16-17; Colossians 2:8; Hebrews 4:15; Ephesians 2:4-5)

How to help someone who is struggling with worry, fear, or hopelessness

1. Listen and lead with care (1 Thessalonians 5:14)
2. Encourage them, meet a need
3. Read through a book of the Bible with them (Ephesians, Philippians, 1 Peter)
4. Pray through the psalms together (Psalm 6, 23, 27, 43, 46)
5. Encourage honest prayers; ask for God's help
6. Read a book together

The goal is not relief from suffering, but to know Christ in the midst of it. (James 1:12; 2 Corinthians 4:7; Philippians 3:10)

Resources

- Northridge's biblical counseling ministry - <https://www.northridgerochester.com/counseling>
- Fieldstone Counseling (remote biblical counseling - <https://fieldstonecounseling.org/>)
- Books:
 - *Untangling Emotions* by Alasdair Groves and Winston Smith*
 - *Suffering* by Paul Tripp

- *A Small Book for the Anxious Heart* by Ed Welch
- *A Small Book for the Hurting Heart* by Paul Tautges
- *When People are Big and God is Small* by Ed Welch
- *A Praying Life* by Paul Miller

*Great book to start with if you're unsure