

HOW DO I CARE FOR A GROUP MEMBER WHO IS STRUGGLING OR SUFFERING?

Suffering and struggle is a part of life. In fact, if those two things are not seen in your group, it is dysfunctional. Remember that suffering is not an interruption to life, but a part of God's plan. There are many challenges when leading to encourage others in times of struggle. Here are some things you can do to help:

Remember, We Have a Big God

- The only God sufficient for a Big Storm (or in any kind of suffering) is a Big God — the omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent, omnibenevolent God of the Bible. He hasn't lost control.

Admit Your Need for Help as a Leader

- You don't have all the answers and it's not your job to save the group members. While you are the first in line to care for people in your group, you are not alone. If you have questions or need help call your coach. If that is not enough help your coach will engage a Care pastor to help your group in their need.

Listen-Seek

- Seek to understand the circumstances surrounding the suffering. You cannot fix their problem, but you can spend time listening before speaking truth in love.

Presence

- Be there. Even if you can't do anything or know what to say, being with the person in suffering is a tangible reminder of God's presence with us. The Holy Spirit resides in all those who believe. It's okay to just sit in silence and lament. Resist the urge to offer platitudes, or promise that everything will be ok.

Remind

- Remind them that we have a suffering Savior (Hebrews 4:14-16). You are not alone. God, in Christ has suffered as well and he is with you and will empower the person to endure until the end for God's glory and their good.

Pastoral Counseling

Many times, your relationship will be far more powerful than counseling. Whatever further help is needed, it is important for you to stay involved. If you have met personally with someone in your group you believe needs greater pastoral or professional counseling you will need to communicate that need to the Discipleship Pastor or member of the Northeast Staff Team.