

Creation Groans . . .

We are offering a series of reflections for individuals and churches who may be finding it difficult to provide midweek prayer and shared learning from Scripture. You can use these by watching the YouTube video, reading the relevant Bible passage and then reflecting on the questions below. To help make this a shared activity, you are encouraged to reflect on this together with friends using an online conference package, or simply arrange with a friend for them to watch it too. Then ring each other up, share what your thoughts and responses and then pray for one another, and pray together for our world.

Read Romans 8:18-25

Watch the YouTube video: <https://youtu.be/5DcEa-17XUQ>

Now spend some time reflecting on the words from Romans:

Release your inner groans! You are part of a groaning creation. Spend some time recognising the impact that current events are having on you. Bring these to the very centre of your prayer and reflection. How are you coping physically? How are you coping emotionally? How is this affecting your friends and relationships? What else is causing you dismay and despair?

What are the promises of God that give you cause for hope? Recognise that part of your current frustration is because you can see a better future. What “firstfruits” of our new inheritance can you see? Try to recognise that even your sense of despair is a sign of a greater hope.

Recognise that there is “no comparison” between our current struggles and our future promise. God’s word does not diminish our struggles – it magnifies our hope. Recognise the certainty of your inheritance - an inheritance of liberation, freedom & glory,

What can I thank God for in the here and now? The same creation that the Psalm writer speaks of praising God is one that Paul describes as groaning. Being thankful to God is not a matter of drowning out our groaning or pretending that nothing’s bothering us – recognise that we can praise God even when something is.

Seek God’s help to be patient and still? Seek patience through reflecting on the certainty of our inheritance; that our groaning is part of a bigger reality. Seek patience as the fruit of God’s Spirit at work in your life.

PRAYER

Loving God, you are the author of all creation – a creation that is infused with your goodness yet marred by its fallenness. Grant me the assurance of knowing that my own struggles and groanings are part of that greater reality and give no cause to doubt the certainty of your promises. Help me to release to you those things that disturb my spirit and to draw strength from knowing that one day, as part of the whole of creation, we will be set free into eternity. By your Spirit’s presence within, grant me the strength and understanding to find patience and peace amidst all my present struggles, until that day when our inheritance is revealed. Through Jesus our Saviour and friend. AMEN.