

## Life Group Questions w/b Sunday 21 March 2021

### 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Lent: Facing the Future

#### Introduction

- What have you missed most in the past year?
- How have you managed to cope with your losses?
- What have you been grieving? How difficult has this been?
- Have you learned anything from this time about what you value most in life?
- What other issues has the last year thrown up for you?

This is a long reading, but it's worth looking at the whole story as it highlights so much of the sense of loss that we have been experiencing recently.

#### Read: John 11:1-44

- In the first part of the story, why are the disciples so confused? (11:1-16)
- Why do you think Jesus waits before going to Bethany? (11:4-6, 14-15, 41-44)
- Why is the timing so difficult for those in the story? (11:3, 5, 21, 32)
- What is Jesus response? (11:11, 40)
- The sisters both say to Jesus, 'Lord, if (only) you had been here, my brother would not have died.' (11:21, 32) What have been the big 'if only's in your life, and how have they affected you?
- In the face of suffering, it can feel as if God does not care. What in this story either supports or contradicts that point of view?

The well-known Kubler-Ross Model of 'The Five Stages of Grief' has the following emotions associated with it each stage. They do not necessarily arise in this order, and are often mixed up and erratic, but are normal for those experiencing any sort of loss.

Stage	Emotions
Denial	avoidance, confusion, elation, shock, fear
Anger	frustration, irritation, anxiety
Bargaining	struggling to find meaning, reaching out to others, telling one's story
Depression	overwhelmed, helplessness, hostility, flight
Acceptance	exploring options, new plan in place, moving on

Look at the table, and search in the passage for evidence of these emotions, and how Jesus engages with people in their sense of confusion and loss.

- How do you usually deal with your emotions? Do you find it helpful to share with others, or do you think of yourself as a more private person?
- Have you ever known Jesus walking beside you, empathising with how you feel?

### **Prayer Focus Suggestion**

Either: write down, or draw, the things you have been missing, and the way in which you feel about them.

Or: Make a list, or use drawings, of your 'if only's.

Be honest before God, asking for his help, remembering both that 'he took up our pain and bore our suffering' (Isaiah 53:4), and also that Jesus' promises, 'I am the resurrection and the life'. (11:25)