



Equipped to care

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How do we care in practice?

- We love
- We listen
- We lament
- We look at Scripture
- We do life together



How do we care in practice?

- Imagine a young man struggling with impurity.
- What support might he get in your church today?
- How might you wish to support him better?

We love

- We love by moving towards
 - Jesus and the woman at the well (John 4)
 - Jesus and Zaccheaus (Luke 19)
- We love by seeing people as equals
 - No favourites (James 2)
 - We are all more similar than different
- How might we move towards our young man who is struggling?

We love

- We love by understanding each other
- How might we understand our young man?

Triune God
(perfect)



Heart (mixed)

Body (mixed)

Circumstances
(mixed)



We listen

- Everyone's experiences are unique
- Everyone's responses are unique
- Everyone's needs are unique
- We listen because God listens – we listen because we need to list

Where might we make assumptions about our young man?



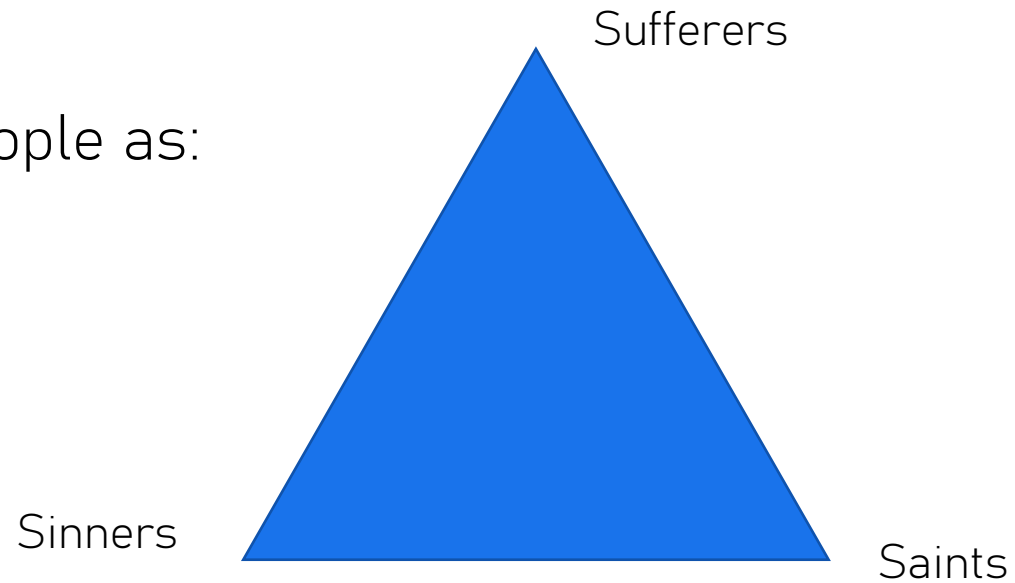
We listen

- How are they describing themselves?
- How are they describing their circumstances?
- How are they describing the people around them?
- How are they describing God? (Are they even talking about him at all?)

How might we listen to our young man?

Listening through a lens

Understanding people as:



How might we listen to our young man as a saint, sufferer and sinner?



We listen by asking good questions

- Not: "How are you?" But "What is encouraging you this week?"
- What is life like for you day by day? What's hard? What's hardest?
- How are you responding to the pressures? What do you want right now?
- What are you thinking about most often? What are you scared of losing?
- Who are you trying to please? What are you trusting in?
- Where is God in this?

How might we ask questions of our young man?

We lament

- Connecting Scripture and experience
- A lifetime of lament not an event
 - Call
 - Complain
 - Ask
 - Commit

How might we help our young man to lament with Psalm 24?



We look at Scripture together

- Avoiding over-simplification
 - I'm anxious ... do not be anxious about anything
 - I'm watching porn ... not a hint of sexual immorality
- Every verse is beautiful but not every verse is right for every moment ...

How might we be over-simple with our young man?



We look at Scripture to understand change

Ephesians 4:22-24

- Take off (desires / behaviour)
 - Mind renewed
 - Put on (desires / behaviour)
- Think of a brick wall – with each brick representing a belief, a behaviour, an attitude or emotion that could do with transformation.

How might we understand our young man?

I watch porn	I imagine sexual fantasies	I lie about my internet use	I keep my struggles a secret
I'm lonely	I'm sad	I'm stressed	I'm ashamed
I want to know love	I want to experience sex	I want people to think I'm holy	I want people to love and respect me
I've been bullied	I've been dumped	I've been abused	I've been scared
I don't think God loves me	I don't think he cares about my pain	I don't believe he could change me	I don't think he could accept me
I don't care about your opinions	I don't see why my actions are wrong	I'm not hurting anyone	I can live my life any way I want



We look at Scripture to promote change

Taking off and putting on happens:

- . As we listen to God in his word, applied to our experiences – and respond to him, personally, in prayer
- . As we listen to our brothers and sisters in the church – and respond to them in conversation

Where might we start with our young man? His relationship with Christ.

I watch porn	I imagine sexual fantasies	I lie about my internet use	I keep my struggles a secret
I'm lonely	I'm sad	I'm stressed	I'm ashamed
I want to know love	I want to experience sex	I want people to think I'm holy	I want people to love and respect me
I've been bullied	I've been dumped	I've been abused	I've been scared
I don't think God loves me	I don't think he cares about my pain	I don't believe he could change me	I am accepted because of Christ
I don't care about your opinions	I don't see why my actions are wrong	I'm not hurting anyone	I can live my life any way I want

We do life together

Keeping our words:

- Humble and gentle
- Paced
- Christ-centred
- Grace-hunting
- Collaborative

We do life together in practical ways

- Meals and lifts
- Financial care
- Practical help around the house
- Accountability
- Exercise

What help might we offer our young man?



We can testify to God's goodness

- Testify in church
- Testify in Bible studies
- Testify over coffee

Hunt for reasons to praise the Lord

We see change!

- We see those who doubt having more certainty
- We see those who drink heavily pursuing sobriety
- We see those who fear increasingly putting their faith in Christ
- We see those who hate themselves seeing themselves as God does
- We see those who are angry embracing peace and reconciliation
- We see those who are restless developing contentment
- We see those who follow idols turning back to the one true God in worship