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**Online Book Club: Mental Health and Your Church**

**by Helen Thorne and Steve Midgley**

**Session 1:**

 Set text: Chapters 1-5 Understanding Mental Illness

Discussion questions:

* Reflect personally: what are some of the ways in which you find it challenging to walk alongside people who struggle with their mental health?
* What stood out for you from these opening chapters?
* What are the roots (causes) of mental illness? How does understanding those roots biblically give us real hope that churches have something to offer?
* Diagnoses, medication and talking therapies are accepted “norms” in our society. In what ways can we as Christians welcome such things? And in what ways may we want to nuance our approach?
* How might we respond, biblically, to someone who holds the opinion that someone with depression “just” needs some antidepressants and some CBT?
* How might we respond, biblically, to someone who thinks that all psychotherapeutic approaches are to be treated with suspicion?
* What questions do you have about these chapters?

**Session 2:**

Set text: Chapters 6-11 What can we do?

Discussion questions:

* Reflect personally: what are some of the things you’d like to celebrate about your church (in regard to caring for those who struggle with their mental health)?
* When thinking about how to love others well, what stood out to you from these chapters? What challenged you?
* In what ways are these chapters helpful in galvanising us to build wise, Christ-centred relationships? What was missing?
* How might we wisely help someone with depression pursue biblical change?
* What initiatives have you seen that work well to support carers?
* How can we talk helpfully about confidentiality in the local church?
* What questions do you have about these chapters?

**Session 3:**

Set text: Chapters 12-16 Caring in practice

Discussion questions:

* What stood out to you from these chapters? Out of the case studies, who might you find it tricky to walk alongside and why?
* Reflect in turn on the case studies of Chi and Siobhan.
  + What questions do you have about the pastoral care approaches given? Is there anything that doesn’t make sense, or you wonder why it was written?
  + What might you add to the responses given? What goals for change might be appropriate?
  + How would you structure caring for each of these precious image-bearers?
  + How would you continue to care well for them in your setting?
  + How would you take care of yourself as you do?
* Any final questions or comments on the book?