

created
for

community.

We're stronger and better in community. We can try to do life on our own, but if we do, we miss out on all the beauty that God has for us in community. We are our complete and whole self when we allow ourselves to connect with others. We've all experienced fear in life. Fear trips us up the most when we're incapable of vulnerability. Christ is calling us all to lean into vulnerability. To lean into courage. To lean into each other. Oftentimes the behaviors that we're least gracious for in others are the very behaviors that we struggle with the most. But in our own weaknesses and issues, that's when we have to rely on the people that Jesus has put in our lives to journey with us.

James 5:16

¹⁶ Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results.

Hebrews 10:24-25

²⁴ Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works.²⁵ And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near.

Genesis 3:7 & 21

⁷ Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so, they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

²¹ The Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them.

Article

Dr Joseph Maroon,

"Patients facing surgery often have sky-high levels of cortisol, the stress hormone. And high cortisol levels can reduce wound healing, prolong hospital stays and increase complications. In fact, cortisol is dangerous to every aspect of your health, including your brain health. MRI brain scans have shed light on the scientific underpinning of prayer's power. When people pray, the regions of the brain dealing with self-reflection and self-soothing light up. Prayer also stimulates the release of "happy hormones" like oxytocin that inspire feelings of trust and belonging.

While private prayers offer calm and comfort, prayers in a faith community bring huge additional benefits. People who pray together forge strong bonds that help them navigate the storms of life. Numerous studies have found that loneliness is a killer and that people who regularly attend religious services are more optimistic, enjoy better health and live longer."

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How did you feel when you read the article from Dr Joseph Maroon saying that prayer with others can provide healing?
2. In James, it doesn't say we need to quote scripture, give advice or judge when someone shares with us. What should our response be when a brother or sister opens up about their struggles?
3. Vulnerability is hard. We face rejection, judgement, betrayal and disqualification. But we invite such beauty and joy when we're vulnerable with others. Pastor Alex told us about how comfortable we are sharing about the things we did "before Christ". What are some struggles that you're facing NOW, even though you're attempting to walk this faith journey?
4. God covered Adam and Eve with an animal's skin. Proving that his methods are outside what we could imagine. The fig leaf solution is like us when we do it alone, but when we go to others for help, we're letting God over us with a covering that will never wear out. But we can't do it without faith. We're often filled with anxiety about different things in life. Complete the following sentence: I'm just so scared about
5. Kree was so afraid of the Dentist that she stayed with a bad tooth even though it would be better to have the tooth fixed. Adam and Eve made a mistake, but they covered it with a temporary measure. Have you ever limped through life unwilling to get help? (Maybe it's a family matter or work, or it could be personal, just feeling empty or unwanted.) Would you be willing to share?

Lastly, take time to find out if anyone would like to receive the prayers of their brothers and sisters. It could be regarding physical/mental health, finances/work, family/kids, etc.