**WOODLANDS CHURCH**

**April 29th 2018. Good Grief**

**Discussion notes: Lament: Lamentations 3**

Lament is a pouring out of grief and loss in music and poetry. The Psalms are full of lament and there is a whole book of the bible called ‘Lamentations’. It’s not a common experience to come to a Church service and sing songs of lament? Does lament have a place in modern worship?

Lamentations is a sophisticated and crafted work of Hebrew poetry (the first four chapters are written as acrostics, chapters 1,2 4and 5 each have 22 verses corresponding to the 22 letters of the Hebrew Alphabet and Chapter 3 has 66 verses, each letter beginning 3 lines). It is written in the aftermath of national disaster and the destruction of Jerusalem.

1. Can you think of any worship songs or material that we use that has an element of lament or longing in it? Could you have a go at writing something yourself? Are we really too ‘happy-clappy’ as a Church to integrate lament?
2. How does suffering affect our relationship with God? It is easy to withdraw in life when we are hurting. Does pain make you want to withdraw from God or from worship? What would mitigate that?
3. Certain passages of the Old Testament seem to depict God lamenting and Jesus lamented over Jerusalem. (Luke 19:41, Luke 23:26-31) How can we share in the lament of God? Does Holy Communion or Good Friday help us deal with sorrow and if so how?
4. Lamentations finds a place of hope in God in the heart of the book. What is it that has helped the author find hope and fresh perspective?
5. What would you say to someone who argued that in the light of Jesus resurrection, gift of the Spirit and ultimate victory lament has no place in Christian worship?

Many of us feel that it is almost blasphemous to bring lament into worship or have no model for it, yet the experience of suffering sometimes mean people avoid Church as they can’t relate to the buoyant atmosphere. How can we make Church inclusive in every circumstance of life.