
Newsletter

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Depression and the Disciple

It's estimated that 45% of the adult Australian population (16-85 years old) will experience a common mental illness such as depression or anxiety at some point in their lives. Despite the advantages we may experience in this life through our relationship with our Heavenly Father and his Son, we still suffer from the effects of mortality and this includes mental illness. Many of us will know brothers and sisters who suffer from, or have suffered from, anxiety and/or depression.

In an attempt to increase awareness of mental illness, the AACE produced a paper titled, "[Depression and Anxiety – An Overview for Christadelphians](#)" and distributed this to all Australian ecclesias in January. It provides a brief background on mental health in Australia, what anxiety and depression look like and, anxiety and depression in the Bible. Also discussed are their potential effects on discipleship and how we as individuals and ecclesias might respond when we encounter these disorders in ourselves, in our families or in those attending our ecclesias.

We'll focus on [depression](#) in this newsletter. We might sometimes find it hard to accept that an illness such as depression could be a problem for a faithful disciple of Jesus. But, we have only to turn to our Bibles to see that this can be the case. There is ample evidence to establish that David, a man after God's own heart, suffered from depression. Check out passages in some of David's psalms. e.g. Psalms 6, 13 and 31. David experienced depression despite having one of the closest, most faithful relationships with God that we know about. Consider, also, the example of Heman the Ezrahite. Read the despair-filled verses of Psalm 88 where this far less well-known but very accomplished Bible character describes the blackness of depression. Depression is undoubtedly a major burden for a disciple to bear but the examples of David and Heman show us that a close relationship with our Father and His son and a productive life remain possible.

Education is the starting point if we want to be as equipped as we can be to deal with depression in

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ourselves and those close to us. This means developing a better understanding of what depression is and how it is best managed. For disciples of Christ, management of depression is necessarily a two-pronged effort. We seek the help of the Lord, and we seek the help of mental health professionals. Depression is an illness in a similar sense to diabetes or epilepsy. We do need to seek professional help.



There is much that individuals and ecclesias can do to lighten the burden of depression for sufferers and their families. We seek to serve and support others in the spirit expressed by Paul in 2 Cor 1:4 where he reminds us that God "comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God".

Finally, check out the information and suggestions in the AACE paper and in the other links below.

Some Christadelphian resources include: the AACE paper -
<https://adelphicare.org/documents/049-depression.pdf>

A quite comprehensive booklet by a UK sister based on personal experience -

[https://www.chsn.org.uk/media/files/Dealing%20with%20Depression%20Booklet\(3\).pdf](https://www.chsn.org.uk/media/files/Dealing%20with%20Depression%20Booklet(3).pdf)

Video interviews with a UK brother and his wife:

Part 1 - <https://youtu.be/zgijJzhoO68>

Part 2 - https://youtu.be/PF7_MUYaju8

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