

PC 28: DEATH, LOSS, GRIEF AND TRANSFORMATION

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Course Description: This course will focus upon ministry to the dying, the bereaved, and those suffering from different kinds of losses. We will explore the particularities of the grief process ensuing there from and those factors that enable some people to grow through their losses. In addition, we will examine the interacting influences of religious beliefs, faith, gender, culture, and race on the dying and healing process. All participants will be expected to have some practicum experience and to ground their ministerial practice in solid theological perspectives.

Class Objectives: Students will learn to

1. Address theological and pastoral issues relating to ministry to the dying, the bereaved, and those suffering from other kinds of losses;
2. Examine current theories of mourning and their relevance for pastoral care;
3. Identify what makes for resilience or transformation in the face of loss/ trauma;
4. Learn some practical pastoral skills pertaining to ministry in the wake of loss.

Requirements:

1. Attendance: Since this is a highly interactive course, if anyone misses more than 2 classes, they will not receive a passing grade for the course, and if anyone is late for more than one class, their grades will be docked proportionately.
2. Read materials prior to class in order to participate in class discussion;
3. Visit two dying patients/families (to be arranged by the Chaplain in charge);
4. Interview someone who is grieving some form of loss;
5. Write reflection/ process paper on your visitation/interview experience;
6. Attend May 9th End of Life Conference (Morning sessions required)
7. Final paper (approximately 15 pages) on course subject matter. Topic must be approved.

Required Reading:

Billman and Migliore, ***Rachel's Cry: Prayer of Lament and Rebirth of Hope***, Cleveland, United Church Press, 1999.

Doka & Davidson, Eds. ***Living with Grief: Who we Are, How We Grieve***. Brunner-Routledge; 1998

Mitchell & Anderson, ***All Our Losses, All Our Grievs: Resources for Pastoral Care***, W/JK Press, 1983.

Walsh and McGoldrick, ***Living Beyond Loss: Death in the Family***, W.W.W. Norton, 1991. Read esp. Chs: 1,2,3,4,7,8,9,11,12,13,14

Ch. 9 Wimberly, Edward, "Pastoral Care and Nurture in the Soul Community"
Ch. 10 Wimberly, Anne Streaty, "Health, Illness, and Death in the Context of the Soul Community" in Anne Wimberly, Ed., **Honoring African American Elders**. San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 1997, pp. 137-170.

Lewis, Alan ***Between Cross and Resurrection: A Theology of Holy Saturday***, Eerdmans, 2001. Ch. 3 & 10 & Epilogue

Additional articles as noted.

CHOOSE ONE 1 OF THE FOLLOWING BOOKS:

Wolpe, David. ***Making Loss Matter: Creating Meaning in Difficult Times***, Riverhead Books, 2000.

Sittser, Gerald. ***A Grace Disguised: How the Soul Grows Through Loss***, Zondervan Publishing House, 1998.

Wolterstorff, Nicholas. ***Lament for a Son***. Eerdmans, 1987.

Strongly Recommended

Bregman, Lucy. ***Beyond Silence & Denial: Death and Dying Reconsidered***. W/JK, 1999.

On Library Desk Reserve in addition to above required books & articles,

"Theological and Biblical Interpretations of Current Movements and Emerging Paradigms Within Bereavement Studies" ***Pastoral Psychology***, Vol. 48, No. 6, 2000.

Sunderland, Ron. ***Getting Through Grief: Caregiving by Congregations***, Abingdon, 1993. ISBN: 0687158826 (Covers grief theory and shows how to develop a congregational grief ministry program)

Meeks, Blair. ***Standing in the Circle of Grief: Prayers and Liturgies for Death and Dying*** Abingdon, 2002. ISBN 68705167-3 (Prayers that address Suicide, death of parent, infant, group of people etc. – for local and global situations etc).

Waters, Brent. ***Dying and Death: A Resource for Christian Reflection***, Cleveland: United Church Press, 1996. ISBN 0-8298-1121-4 (Excellent book facilitating Christian reflection on Dying and Death in today's world with all its complexities. Great summary chapters on the historical and theological attitudes towards suffering, creation, life, death as well as chapters putting forth principles for moral decision-making at end of life.)

Karaban, Roslyn. ***Complicated Losses, Difficult Deaths: A Practical Guide for Ministering to Grievers***. San Jose, CA: Resource Publications, 1999. (Outline of all key points pertaining to the particularities of grief from different types of losses in an outline format. Also included are questions for

reflection and training exercises to become better at ministering to those who are grieving.)

Wimberly, Anne (Ed.), ***Honoring African American Elders***. San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 1997. (Excellent book on different aspects of ministry to African American Elders from a perspective of their continuing contribution to the Soul Community.)

Lewis, Alan ***Between Cross and Resurrection: A Theology of Holy Saturday***, Eerdmans, 2001.

Clark, David (Ed.) ***Clergy Response to Suicidal Persons and Their Family Members***, Chicago: Exploration Press, 1993.

Ch. 3 "A Protestant Perspective on Suicide" by Herbert Anderson

Amy Jo Jones, "The Anniversary of a Death" ***Journal of Pastoral Care***, Fall 1999, Vol. 53, No. 3.

Articles from:

The Path Ahead: Readings in Death and Dying, (Eds., Lynne Ann DeSpelder & Albert Strickland), Mayfield, 1995.

"It's a White Thing" – An Exploration of Beliefs about Suicide in the African-American Community

"Premature Exists: Understanding Suicide" by Judith Stillion

"Interpreting the Evidence: Competing Paradigms and the Emergence of Lesbian and Gay Suicide as a 'Social Fact'". By Kathleen Erwin

"Contemporary African-American Funeral Rites and Traditions"

"Care of the Dying Child: The Demands of Ethics" by William Bartholome

Working with the Dying and Bereaved: Systemic Approaches to Therapeutic Work, (Eds., Pauline Sutcliffe, Guinevere Tufnmell, Ursula Cornis). Routledge, 1998.

Ch. 2. "The Relevance of Tears: Reconstructing the Mourning Process from a Systemic Perspective"

Ch. 5. "On the Brink – Managing Suicidal Teenagers" by K. Eia Asen

Ch. 7. "Working Systemically with Older People and Their Families who have 'Come to Grief' by Alison Roper-Hall.

Death, Loss, Grief and Transformation
COURSE OUTLINE

- Mar. 10** **Exploring the Boundaries: When Life Meets Death**
Introductions
Overview, Syllabus, Practicums
Video: “Death in the Family”
Guest: Neal Griebing: “Accompanying the Dying
as Contemplative Practice” *Peaceful Dwelling Place*
- Mar. 17** **Biblical & Theological Perspectives on Death and Grief**

Read: Lewis, Alan ***Between Cross and Resurrection: A Theology of Holy Saturday***, Eerdmans, 2001. Ch. 3 & 10 & Epilogue

Living with Grief, Intro., Chs. 1-4 (Choose 2 chapters)

Rachels’s Cry, Intro., Ch. 2

“Theological and Biblical Interpretations of Current Movements and Emerging Paradigms Within Bereavement Studies”
Pastoral Psychology, Vol. 48, No. 6, 2000.
- Mar. 24** **All Our Losses and All Our Grievs/ Paying attention to “Our”**

Read: Chosen Book (Sittser, Wolpe, Wolterstorff)
Mitchell and Anderson, ***All Our Losses...***, Chs. 1-3

Guest Facilitator: Tamara Balliet, L.S.W., Bereavement Care Coordinator, Forbes Hospice
- Mar. 31** **Grief & Mourning Processes**

Read: ***All Our Losses...***, Chs. 4, 5
Living With Grief... Chs., 5, 7, 9, 10, 11
Living Beyond Loss, Chs. 1, 2, 3
Ch. 10 Wimberly, Anne Streaty, “Health, Illness, and Death in the Context of the Soul Community” in Anne Wimberly, Ed.,
Honoring African American Elders. San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 1997.

Apr. 7 Ministering to the Dying & Their Families

Read: *All Our Losses*, Chs. 6-8
Living with Grief, Chs. 12

Choose 2:

Ch. 9 Wimberly, Edward, "Pastoral Care and Nurture in the Soul Community" in *Honoring African American Elders*

"A Special Report: Spiritual Care at the End of Life" by Edwin R. DuBose in *Second Opinion*, No. 10, April, 2002.

Alan Lewis, "Theology of Death and The Care of the Dying: Affirmations, Attitudes and Actions" *Insights*, Vol. 110, Fall, 1994

Meet at Forbes Hospice with Janet Schaffran, Chaplain CDP
Corner of Franstown and Washington Roads

Apr. 14 Addressing Guilt, Suicide, and Traumatic Loss

Read: *Living Beyond Loss*, Chs. 12-14

Guest: Adrienne Young, founder of *Tree of Hope*

Apr. 21 Happy Easter Monday (Make up class is on May 9)

Apr. 28 Loss, Resiliency, and Spiritual Transformation

Read: *Living with Grief*, Chs. 15, 17, 21
Rachel's Cry, Chs. 4, 5, 6

May 5 Funerals and Rituals for Healing

Read: "Contemporary African-American Funeral Rites and Traditions"
Living Beyond Loss, Ch. 11
Amy Jo Jones, "The Anniversary of a Death" (service for young boy whose father suicided.)
Foley and Anderson: "Encountering Death" in *Mighty Stories, Dangerous Rituals*, Jossey-Bass, 1998.

May 9 Exploring the Boundary: When Life Meets Death – Conference
Morning Sessions Required

May 12 Integrative Seminar: Sharing our Interviews/Insights

Senior Papers due: May 9 All other papers due: May 27