

### Reflection & Discussion Questions

#### **Joel writes after a horrible tragedy has happened**

We are exposed to much tragedy due to the times we live in.

- \*What types of response to tragedy have you seen Christians/the church give?
- \*How does that contrast with the ways we have seen the prophets speak about it?

#### **Joel guides us in our response to disaster and tragedy**

Read and discuss Joel 1:8-13(NIV)

<sup>8</sup> *Mourn like a virgin in sackcloth  
grieving for the betrothed of her youth.*

<sup>9</sup> *Grain offerings and drink offerings  
are cut off from the house of the LORD.*

*The priests are in mourning,  
those who minister before the LORD.*

<sup>10</sup> *The fields are ruined,  
the ground is dried up;  
the grain is destroyed,  
the new wine is dried up,  
the olive oil fails.*

<sup>11</sup> *Despair, you farmers,  
wail, you vine growers;  
grieve for the wheat and the barley,*

*because the harvest of the field is destroyed.*

<sup>12</sup> *The vine is dried up  
and the fig tree is withered;  
the pomegranate, the palm and the apple tree—  
all the trees of the field—are dried up.  
Surely the people's joy  
is withered away.*

<sup>13</sup> *Put on sackcloth, you priests, and mourn;  
wail, you who minister before the altar.  
Come, spend the night in sackcloth,  
you who minister before my God;  
for the grain offerings and drink offerings  
are withheld from the house of your God.*

- \*What does Joel call for in response to the locust plague?
- \*What is your painkiller strategy in tragedy?
- \*How has a failure to grieve affected you? Is there a loss festering in your life that you want to share about?

#### **In moments of great grief, people of God turn to Him with all of their hearts**

Read and discuss Joel 2:12-14 (NIV)

<sup>12</sup> *"Even now," declares the Lord,  
"return to me with all your heart,  
with fasting and weeping and mourning."*

<sup>13</sup> *Rend your heart  
and not your garments.  
Return to the Lord your God,  
for he is gracious and compassionate,*

*slow to anger and abounding in love,  
and he relents from sending calamity.*

<sup>14</sup> *Who knows? He may turn and relent  
and leave behind a blessing—  
grain offerings and drink offerings  
for the Lord your God.*

- \*What would 'rending your heart' look like?
- \*How does blame or some other painkilling strategy keep our hearts from returning to God?
- \*How have you seen God be gracious and compassionate in tragedy or grief?