

A Ministry Of Tears

"...weep with them that weep."

Romans 12:15

In modern English there is a term "party animals" This term was originally used for a British Television drama series but has been taken over by people to mean someone who lives to party. Such people are quite popular. It seems that the majority of people want to laugh and have fun in life. Some people seek to be popular by using humour to get others laughing.

The use of humour is approved in Scripture and Proverbs 17:22 says, "A cheerful heart is good medicine..." (NIV). A sense of humour is a good thing for many occasions and we do well to maintain our ability to laugh at times.

The verse today is designed to speak to other situations in life where humour is not applicable. There are situations that bring tears to our eyes and, when such an event happens, there is comfort in someone coming alongside us and sharing in our grief.

I recall someone telling the story of a situation where terrible news was given by a doctor to the family of a patient. As the doctor described

how the disease would progress there were tears in his eyes. The doctor's tears did not solve the patient's medical problems or keep the family from tears themselves, but it certainly comforted them to know someone outside the family felt their pain at such a level.

Some people are more suited to sharing the pain of others than other people are. Certain of us feel very uncomfortable in the presence of suffering and need to "escape" as soon as possible. I know a wonderful friend who simply cannot visit a hospital to see someone. The idea of going by room after room of suffering and seeing people hooked up to a lot of medical equipment is frightening to them.

Such individuals can find other ways to help the needy, perhaps in financial counselling people in debt, or babysitting for a single mom while she has a night out with friends. We all have our calling and we should never "blame" a person for not having the emotional equipment to suffer with those who weep.

However, if you know

someone who is suffering and you have that heart to come alongside and share their emotional burden, you should make a contact with the one who weeps and see if they would like a visit from you. This is what I call a ministry of tears.

The person's problem may be complex and you know you cannot solve the issue. Just spending time with the person and letting them know you hurt with them can be a powerful ministry in its own right. Do not despise the ministry of tears. You may never know just how much you assist the other person with a brief visit, a listening ear and a tear.

Often a person who suffers is not really looking for answers to the difficult problems they face as much as they desire someone to feel their pain along with them. They likely know there is no answer to the question, "Why?" So do not try to give answers where there are none to give. Hold the person's hand, listen carefully and that will be enough.

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