Church's Essential Role in Times of Crisis

Gleanings from the Community Crisis Intervention Training Webinars (continued)

Churches are an on-going part of the community and can have on-going input into the crisis ...

- cooperation and hospitality
- stable presence when it seems the world around is collapsing
- safe place to acknowledge doubt and fears (we are fragile and finite)

Scripture Reflections
- sense of abandonment of Jesus in Gethsemane or on cross
- people are loved by God, regardless what may happen – Isaiah 43:1-4
- laments – Psalm 102, Ezek 3:27 we sense a terror deeper than words
- affirm the value of the wounded one
- talk about local, contemporary situation – relation with ancients across time
- look at debt and interest: Exodus 22:25 ; Lev. 25:35-36; Nehemiah story 5:8-12
- challenge “survival of the fittest” thinking - Corinthians 1

Prayers
- churches can offer sense of grace and non-judgment, if issues are named in prayers the struggle becomes publically affirmed
- whatever you are going through, you need to know God really does love you
- honest-talk about things are they really are, be as simple as needed

Pastoral Visiting and Counseling
- clergy have access to visit people in their homes
- safety and acceptance are very important
- important to distinguish between guilt (something I've done) and shame (feeling of worthlessness). Our value is a gift from God that we can't improve on.

Support Groups
- “I'm not alone anymore”
- with high degree of social support, diminishment of health issues
- handing out of supportive material
- situation may be caused by a system that needs to be changed (not the fault of individuals). Groups may be formed to try to make changes in these systems.

Rituals and Liturgies
- foot-bathing – for people who haven’t had chance to bath for extended time (e.g. Tsunami in Japan) … and a time to talk
- blessing activities – e.g. blessing of the seedtime
- service may have the following parts:
- voice of lament – we complain to God, knowing that God hears the cries of our heart (see Psalms)
- voice of hope – what frustrates you about this situation, and what do you need from God right now - Habakkuk 6
- voice of blessing – how do God’s promises help you in this time of trial?

- prayers of relinquishment (for those having to leave the community) - “you matter to us, we care about you” People need to know they are being thought about and cared for.