

## God and Depression

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*"Struggle and pain is real. I was devastated and depressed. I reached a point where I didn't want to do a thing or go anywhere."*

Do you know who said that? I was surprised to find out it was the actor known as "The Rock", Dwayne Johnson, Hollywood's highest paid actor. But shame on me, I shouldn't have been surprised, because depression can impact anyone. Best estimates have about 16 million Americans diagnosed, about 7 percent of the population. That's a lot.

The good news is that we are learning more and more about depression. The not so good news is that the Church hasn't done a really good job addressing depression and ministering to the depressed. So two quick thoughts:

**If someone around you battles depression**, consider this: In Jesus' day, when a group of friends noticed a friend struggling, they often brought that person to Jesus (Mark 2:1-12, Mark 7:31-37). Although Jesus is no longer visiting our villages, He is on a throne in heaven, and cares just as much now as He did then.

**Bring your friends in prayer to Jesus.** Be a friend to the struggling. Be present; don't try to fix it or "make it better". Keep calling and checking in. You are doing more than you know.

**If you yourself battle depression**, know that you have a God who knows you and loves you (Psalm 139). He loves you so much that he sent his Son to the cross and grave to rescue you. Know that you have a church family that loves you and is for you. And receive wisdom from "The Rock" himself: *"Took me a long time to realize it but the key is to not be afraid to open up. Especially us dudes have a tendency to keep it in. You're not alone."*

Recently our office received a letter from Immanuel Lutheran in Hewitt, WI. I don't know the church, nor the Pastor. The letter merely stated that they would be praying for our church this week. How awesome, and what a boost!

Bottom line- we're not alone, and neither are you. Jesus: *"I am with you always"* (Matthew 28:20).