

Hope and Fear

(INSTRUCTIONS for class: take turns, each person reading one paragraph or question. Then each one select one of the numbered questions paragraphs to answer, and for the group to discuss.)

The September 11 events caused an entire nation to think about the meaning of these words: hope and fear. Fear came first. “Will this happen again? Will I die soon? Will I fly on an airplane again? Will I work in a skyscraper again?” The feelings of fear revealed or showed our hopes. “I want to see my children grow up” “I want to live and work in a safe place” “I want my friends and family to be safe”.

QUESTIONS:

1. What kinds of things do you fear? Are there some things you fear once in awhile but choose not to think about? Are there some things that you fear often or all the time? How do you handle your fears? Which of these fears are positive or helpful? Which of these fears are negative or unhelpful? Do you have any fears for the world as a whole?
2. Do you remember a time that you would call a ‘fearful’ time of your life? What was the threat? How did you get through that time? Was your fear “realized” or did the cause of fear go away or not happen?
3. Do your personal fears reveal your personal hopes? If yes, give examples. What are some of your hopes about the future for yourself, or others close to you, or for the world?
4. How do your hopes and fears fit into your goals and daily activities? Do you feel hope and fear every day? Give examples. How do your hopes and fears affect your mood on a regular basis? Do your hopes or fears have more influence on you?
5. When you look at people around you, do you see people who are more hopeful or more fearful? Sometimes we describe people as optimists or pessimists. How would you describe yourself? Have you changed as you have gotten older?

Jesus speaks to his friends and followers about fear:

Jesus gave these promises to those people who received Jesus as the Son of God, their Savior, and who put their lives under his supervision and protection.

“Don’t be afraid; believe in God, believe also in me. In my father’s house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you.”

“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you; not as the world gives, do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful.” (From the Bible: John 14:1-2, 27)