GROUP MODE · LEADER GUIDE

The Valley

Psalm 23 · a four-week walk for grief care groups

רֹעִי

RO'I · MY SHEPHERD

"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me..."

PSALM 23:4 · KJV

HEREPH
Be still and know

A ministry tool for group study
hereph.app

How Group Mode Works

Group Mode lets a group walk a Hereph path together while every member still walks it personally, at their own pace, on their own phone. You bring the room together. The app carries each person's walk. This guide gives you everything to lead it, so the only thing you ever have to ask us is a question about how the app works.

THE RHYTHM

The Valley walks Psalm 23 and the psalms of lament in 28 days: four weeks of seven words. The group meets once to launch, then weekly for four weeks, five gatherings of 45 to 60 minutes. Between gatherings, each person walks that week's seven days in the app.

KICKOFF
Launch together, say the names, set the covenant.

WEEKS 1–4
Members walk 7 days at home, then the group gathers to share.

CLOSE
The last gathering remembers, and plans what comes next.

FREE DAYS AND SUPPORTER DAYS

Week 1 (Days 1 to 7) is always free. Days 8 through 28 are supporter-backed ($4.99 a month or $39.99 a year) to cover what it costs to run Hereph. There is no pressure and no countdown. No one is behind, either: the app holds each person's place, and a member can share from whatever day they are on.

> **Your Role, In One Line**
>
> You are the shepherd of the room, not a counselor. You set the pace, open and close each gathering, and keep the space safe and kind. Hereph provides the structure and the word studies. Pastoral care comes from you, your pastor, and the group's care for one another.

HOLDING A GRIEF GROUP

Every gathering of this study will hold heavy moments. Keep tissues within reach, start and end on time, and let silence do some of the work. Honor a share without fixing it, and never ask for the story behind an answer. Expect holidays, birthdays and anniversaries to be the hardest weeks; name them when they come. Follow up privately with anyone who goes quiet or leaves early.

WHAT YOU NEED, AND WHERE TO GET HELP

- This guide, a member handout for each person (hereph.app/groups, with a code to scan into the app), and the app on each phone. Members find the walk under **Paths**, in the **Grief & Loss** lane.
- For app questions only, email **support@hereph.app**. For anything about leading the study, this guide is your source.

Leading The Valley

A short orientation to the walk your group is about to take, so you can lead it with confidence from the first gathering.

What it is. The Valley is a four-week walk for anyone who has lost someone: a spouse, a child, a parent, a friend. Each day pairs one word from Scripture with its plain-language meaning and one small reflective exercise drawn from evidence-based practice. It treats grief as terrain walked with a Shepherd, not as stages to clear.

Why Psalm 23. The whole walk hangs on one word, **רֹעִי** (*ro'i*), "my shepherd." The psalm does not promise a way around the valley. It promises company through it: "for thou art with me." Day 1 names the valley, Day 6 lands on "with me," and Day 28 ends in the house of the LORD forever.

The four-week arc.

- **Week 1 · You Are With Me** (free). Naming the valley, tears kept in His bottle, the God who is near, the broken place, comfort, "with me," and the door of hope.
- **Week 2 · The Long Sorrow.** The honest middle, when the meals stop and the world moves on. Lament is worship here, and the questions are allowed.
- **Week 3 · Carrying and Remembering.** Learning to carry the loss instead of being crushed by it: gratitude, fresh mercy, telling the story, the memorial stone, and the harvest after tears.
- **Week 4 · Hope That Outlives the Grave.** The Redeemer, resurrection and reunion, the last tear wiped away, becoming a comfort to others, and forever.

Grief is not a problem to solve

Let lament stand. Skip the quick sayings ("everything happens for a reason," "at least…"), do not rush anyone toward Week 4, and never compare losses. A child, a spouse, a sudden death, a suicide, a pregnancy, an estranged parent: every loss belongs in this room. Day 15 quotes Job, "the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away"; never use it to explain anyone's loss.

When hope is complicated

Week 4 speaks of resurrection and reunion, and four of its words are Greek, from the New Testament. Some in your group may not be sure of their loved one's faith. Do not settle that for them or speak about anyone's eternity; point to the character of the Shepherd, and let your pastor carry those conversations one to one.

GATHERING 1 · THE LAUNCH

Kickoff: The Valley

Before this gathering: nothing required. You launch the walk here.

OPEN (5 MIN)

Welcome everyone and read aloud together, slowly. Suggested: Psalm 23 and Psalm 46:10. Then a short opening prayer in your own words, asking the Shepherd to walk with each person through these four weeks.

SET THE FRAME (10 MIN)

- Explain the walk: twenty-eight words from Psalm 23 and the psalms of lament, one a day, four weeks. Each week they walk seven days at home, then the group gathers to share.
- Teach the one idea that carries the whole path: **רֹעִי** (*ro'i*), "my shepherd." He does not take us around the valley. He walks through it with us.
- Help everyone get in: scan the code on the handout or open app.hereph.app, find The Valley in the Grief & Loss lane, and start Day 1.
- Name the rhythm honestly: Week 1 is free for everyone; Weeks 2 through 4 are supporter-backed, and no one is pressured either way.

WALK DAY 1 TOGETHER (15 MIN)

Day 1 is **Emek**, **עֵמֶק**, "valley; a deep place between high places" (Psalm 23:4). Read the word and its meaning aloud. Then one round:

1. Say the **name** of the person you are grieving. If you want, add one word about them.

Passing is a full answer. Some will cry; let tears and silence be part of the room. Saying the names out loud is often the first gift of a grief group.

SET THE COVENANT (5 MIN)

- What is shared here stays here.
- We do not fix, compare losses, or put a timeline on anyone's grief.
- No one has to share, and no one is asked for the story behind an answer. Tears are welcome.

Send them out

This week, walk Days 1 through 7 in the app, one word a day. Next time we gather, we will share what the first week stirred. Close in prayer.

GATHERING 2 · WEEK 1

You Are With Me

Before this gathering: members have walked Days 1–7.

OPEN (5 MIN)

A short prayer, then read Psalm 23 aloud together, slowly. Ask: which of this week's seven words met you?

THE WEEK AT A GLANCE

DAY	WORD	HEBREW	MEANING	ANCHOR
1	**Emek**	עֵמֶק	Valley: a deep place between high places	Ps 23:4
2	**Dim'ah**	דִּמְעָה	Tear: every one kept in His bottle	Ps 56:8
3	**Qarov**	קָרוֹב	Near: close to the brokenhearted	Ps 34:18
4	**Shever**	שֶׁבֶר	Break: a real shattering, and He binds it	Ps 147:3
5	**Nacham**	נָחַם	Comfort: at its root, to breathe deeply with	Isa 40:1
6	**Immadi**	עִמָּדִי	With me: at my side in the valley	Ps 23:4
7	**Tiqvah**	תִּקְוָה	Hope: a cord you can hold	Hos 2:15

SHARE AND DISCUSS (30 MIN)

1. “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death” (**Emek**, Psalm 23:4). The psalm says through, not around. What has it been like to name your valley out loud this week?
2. “Put thou my tears into thy bottle” (**Dim'ah**, Psalm 56:8). What have you been holding back because you were afraid that if you started, you would not stop?
3. “The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart” (**Qarov**, Psalm 34:18). Where did He feel near this week, even a little, and where did He feel far?
4. “Comfort ye, comfort ye my people” (**Nacham**, Isaiah 40:1). Who has God sent to sit with you in this, and have you let them?

Go deeper (if time): Shever. Day 4 asked what you have been blaming yourself for that you would never blame someone else for. If you are willing, what would you say to a friend carrying that same blame? *(Passing is a full answer.)*

Send them out

This week, walk Days 8 through 14: The Long Sorrow. Close in prayer, naming each person's loved one aloud if the group is comfortable.

GATHERING 3 · WEEK 2

The Long Sorrow

Before this gathering: members have walked Days 8–14.

OPEN (5 MIN)

Prayer, then read Psalm 13 aloud. Ask for one word on how the week went.

THE WEEK AT A GLANCE

DAY	WORD	HEBREW	MEANING	ANCHOR
8	**Ad-anah**	עַד־אָנָה	How long: the lament question	Ps 13:1–2
9	**Anachah**	אֲנָחָה	Sigh: groaning too deep for words	Ps 38:9
10	**Layla**	לַיְלָה	Night: weeping may endure for a night	Ps 30:5
11	**Shakach**	שָׁכַח	To forget: the lie that you are forgotten	Ps 42:9
12	**Tehom**	תְּהוֹם	The deep: waves you cannot touch bottom in	Ps 42:7
13	**Nephesh**	נֶפֶשׁ	Soul: speaking kindly to your own soul	Ps 42:11
14	**Yachal**	יָחַל	To wait with hope: watching for the morning	Ps 130:5–6

SHARE AND DISCUSS (30 MIN)

1. “How long wilt thou forget me, O LORD?” (**Ad-anah**, Psalm 13:1). The psalms let grieving people ask God hard questions, and they are still Scripture. What is the “how long” you have been afraid to say out loud?
2. The meals stop and the world moves on long before the grief does. What has the long middle been like for you, after everyone else went back to normal?
3. “Weeping may endure for a night” (**Layla**, Psalm 30:5). What hour of the day or night is hardest right now, and what is one gentle thing that helps you through it?
4. “Why art thou cast down, O my soul?” (**Nephesh**, Psalm 42:11). If you spoke to your own soul today the way you would speak to a grieving friend, what would you say?

Go deeper (if time): Tehom. “All thy waves and thy billows are gone over me” (Psalm 42:7). Grief often comes in waves. What happens when you stop fighting the wave and let it pass through?

Send them out

This week, walk Days 15 through 21: Carrying and Remembering. Close in prayer for the hardest hour of each person's week.

GATHERING 4 · WEEK 3

Carrying and Remembering

Before this gathering: members have walked Days 15–21.

OPEN (5 MIN)

Prayer, then read Lamentations 3:21–26 aloud. Ask: what did this week ask of you that you did not expect?

THE WEEK AT A GLANCE

DAY	WORD	HEBREW	MEANING	ANCHOR
15	**Laqach**	לָקַח	To take: the LORD gave, and hath taken away	Job 1:21
16	**Racham**	רַחַם	Compassion: womb-deep, new every morning	Lam 3:31–32
17	**Sapar**	סָפַר	To recount: telling their story	Ps 78:4
18	**Matstsebah**	מַצֵּבָה	Memorial stone: a marker set up to remember	Gen 35:20
19	**Keli**	כְּלִי	Vessel: broken, and not thrown away	Ps 31:12
20	**Tanchum**	תַּנְחוּם	Consolation: comfort when thoughts multiply	Ps 94:19
21	**Rinnah**	רִנָּה	Shout of joy: the harvest after tears	Ps 126:5–6

SHARE AND DISCUSS (30 MIN)

1. Job said, “the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away” (**Laqach**, Job 1:21), right after losing his children. Leave the hard questions in that verse open. What were you given in this person that you would still say thank you for, even now?
2. Telling the story (**Sapar**) is part of how grief is carried. If you would like, tell us one story about them that you do not want the world to forget.
3. Jacob “set a pillar upon her grave” when Rachel died (**Matstsebah**, Genesis 35:20). What is one lasting way you could mark this person's life?
4. “I am like a broken vessel” (**Keli**, Psalm 31:12). What has grief told you about your own worth that simply is not true?

Go deeper (if time): Rinnah. “They that sow in tears shall reap in joy” (Psalm 126:5). What might God be planting in you through these tears that you cannot fully see yet?

Send them out

This week, walk Days 22 through 28: Hope That Outlives the Grave, the last week of the walk. Invite everyone to bring a small stone, a photo, or their loved one's name on a card to the last gathering. Close in prayer.

GATHERING 5 · WEEK 4 · THE CLOSE

Hope That Outlives the Grave

Before this gathering: members have walked Days 22–28 and finished the walk.

OPEN (5 MIN)

Prayer, then read 1 Thessalonians 4:13–14 and Psalm 23:6 aloud. This is the last gathering. Let it be gentle and unhurried.

THE WEEK AT A GLANCE

DAY	WORD	ORIGINAL	MEANING	ANCHOR
22	**Go'el**	גֹּאֵל	Redeemer: the one who buys back what was lost	Job 19:25–27
23	**Koimaō**	κοιμάω	Greek: to fall asleep; until, not forever	1 Thess 4:13–14
24	**Exaleiphō**	ἐξαλείφω	Greek: to wipe away every tear	Rev 21:4
25	**Nikos**	νῖκος	Greek: victory over the grave	1 Cor 15:54–55
26	**Paraklēsis**	παράκλησις	Greek: comfort, a calling-alongside	2 Cor 1:3–4
27	**Yaqar**	יָקָר	Precious: their homecoming, precious to Him	Ps 116:15
28	**Olam**	עוֹלָם	Forever: the house of the LORD	Ps 23:6

SHARE AND DISCUSS (30 MIN)

1. “I know that my redeemer liveth” (**Go'el**, Job 19:25), from a man who had lost nearly everything. What is the one thing you still know is true, even when grief has taken almost everything else?
2. Paul wrote so that believers would not “sorrow, even as others which have no hope” (**Koimaō**, 1 Thessalonians 4:13). He did not say not to sorrow. What is it like to hold grief and hope in the same hand?
3. “God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes” (**Exaleiphō**, Revelation 21:4). What would it mean to you to have God Himself wipe away your last tear?
4. He comforts us “that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble” (**Paraklēsis**, 2 Corinthians 1:4). Who is walking a valley right now that you, of all people, are now equipped to comfort?

Go deeper (if time): Yaqar and **Olam**. Psalm 116:15 calls their homecoming precious in the sight of the LORD, and Psalm 23 ends in His house for ever. Twenty-eight days ago you named the valley. Where are you now?

Close the walk

Place the stones, photos and name cards on a table. Each person says their loved one's name and the one word they will carry. Read Psalm 23 together and pray over each person by name. The end of a group can feel like one more loss, so before anyone leaves, make sure each has a next step (a friend to call, the pastor's number, a group to keep meeting with), and set a date for a reunion meal a month from now.

All 28 Words

The whole walk at a glance. Days 23 to 26 are Greek; the rest are Hebrew. Anchors are starting points for reading aloud.

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Care, Boundaries, and Support

Crisis Resources (always available in the app)

Grief can bring thoughts of not wanting to go on, or of wanting to be with the one who died. If anyone says that, take it seriously and stay with them while they reach out. **Call or text 988** (Suicide and Crisis Lifeline). **Text HOME to 741741** (Crisis Text Line). In an emergency, call 911.

When to point someone to more help

Grief has no deadline, but some signs call for more than a group: grief that is not easing at all over many months, trouble getting through ordinary days, leaning on alcohol or pills to cope, or any thought of not wanting to live. Gently connect that person with their pastor and a licensed grief counselor; a local hospice may also offer grief support open to the community. After a suicide loss, the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention offers programs and lists support groups at **afsp.org/loss**.

The Leader's Boundary

You are a shepherd, not a counselor. Your job is to keep the room safe and kind and to walk alongside people, not to diagnose or treat. Hereph provides the structure and the word studies. When something surfaces that is bigger than the group, point the person gently toward their pastor or a licensed professional. That is not failing them; it is caring for them well.

ABOUT HEREPH

Hereph (formerly Selah) is a free, mobile Bible-based reflection app that pairs the wisdom of Scripture, in the original Hebrew and Greek, with evidence-based reflective practices. It is a ministry tool. The first seven days of every walk are always free. The extended days are supporter-backed so the app can stay free at the door for everyone.

SUPPORTING THE WALK

If your group wants to continue past Week 1 together, becoming a supporter ($4.99 a month or $39.99 a year) unlocks Days 8 through 28 and helps cover what it costs to run Hereph. There is no pressure. Support is a way to help keep the door open for the next person, not a toll for walking through it.

Hereph · “Be still and know” · Psalm 46:10 · hereph.app · support@hereph.app
Scripture references are for reading aloud; members read full text in the app or their own Bible.