

Maintaining your Mental Wellbeing in Difficult Seasons

When life brings sudden changes, like COVID 19, it can be scary and affect our mental wellbeing. There are a number of things we can do at this time to keep well and help us focus on the One who is able to do immeasurably more than we could ever hope or imagine.

Prayer and daily Bible reading is obviously so important, but it can be difficult to focus our minds when we are anxious. Don't worry if this happens, it's perfectly normal, be gentle with yourself and maybe listen to some worship music or if you have CD's with the Bible being narrated listen to those. To those who can get online there will be plenty of resources there.

Thankfulness at these times can be such a help too. It changes the atmosphere around us and the way we think and feel when we begin to look around us and speak out what we are grateful for. Start being thankful for the small things and you will find your vision and thankfulness enlarges quite quickly.

Even though we are isolated at this time we can still stay in touch with our family and friends, we just need to do it differently. Phone calls, Skype, Facetime, emails and even through good old-fashioned letters!

A daily routine will help our mental wellbeing too. Taking time to 'feed' our mind, body and spirit by reading, walking and laughing! Do something you enjoy.

Try and achieve a task each day, this gives a sense of purpose & satisfaction when completed. Keep it simple and achievable.

Relax! Breathing exercises are brilliant at lowering our stress levels and helping our concentration. Why not read a book that's been gathering dust on the shelf? Or watch those movies that you have never seemed to have time to watch before now.

Above all be kind to yourself, this is a unique situation we find ourselves in, we will all have times of lowness, loneliness, boredom, frustration, panic and fear when these times come, acknowledge your feelings and tell God exactly how you feel. It's perfectly OK to feel these emotions but try to speak them out to the Lord and allow His perfect peace to wash over you. Then, if you can, reach out to someone else who is isolated and encourage them.

Fresh air and some form of regular exercise each day are brilliant for our mental wellbeing. Eat as healthily as possible and minimise alcohol intake.

A technique that some people find helpful is "Grounding" - Look around you and identify and name

- **5** things you can see
- **4** things you can feel
- **3** things you can hear
- **2** things you can smell
- **1** thing you can taste

Things to Avoid if possible

It can be easy to get caught up in the horrors of this current situation and let our imagination go wild! Try to avoid imagining the 'what if's' and going through the worst-case scenarios in your mind (they may never happen). Avoid speculation – this only feeds our anxieties

Manage the amount of time you watch the news – look once a day during the day. Avoid watching late evening news if possible, it certainly won't help you to get a good night's sleep!

Manage carefully the amount of time spent on social media, check the sources of any information there is so much misinformation around. Only use reliable sources for information and updates – not Facebook and other social media

If you are worried about your finances or unemployment, look at the government website – there is a lot of help on the GOV.UK website at the moment.

And keep washing those hands!