

Day By Day: Simple Suggestions for Daily Living During Difficult Time

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During difficult times, often we will find ourselves out of the rhythms and routines of normal life and that can cause stress and unease. It is important to remember that through it all, God is always with us, but often we need to be encouraged to make use of what John Wesley called, “means of grace” in order to connect with God and with others. As we deal with the current COVID-19 crisis of social distancing and essentially hitting the pause button on normal life, let me offer some suggestions and encouragement to practice some very simple disciplines if you are feeling untethered right now. This list is not exhaustive, there are many other things you can do in each of these areas. Below you will find some suggestions on caring for yourself, caring for others, giving, and additional resources to help out during all of this. If you find yourself struggling in this moment, I pray these things might be of some help and comfort.

Care of Self

Finding ways to capture of sense of normalcy is important in difficult times like this. Sometimes the most normal and simplest things we can do to care for ourselves are the things we do each and every day. Wake-up, get dressed, brush your teeth, eat breakfast, etc. These things might seem silly to mention, but they are not. This kind of routine is important for keeping a sense of normalcy.

Read scripture each day. Whether you are someone who likes to open up the Bible and just read wherever it falls, or if you like to follow an order, reading scripture each day roots us in the story of God and God’s action in our lives and world. As the people of Israel wandered in the desert following their departure from Egypt, they shared the stories of their God and practiced the traditions of their faith. It rooted them in something larger than their current moment. We need that now and daily reading scripture will help accomplish that. One resource for this is the daily lectionary readings. You can find them at <https://www.bcponline.org> under “Daily Office Lectionary.” Each day will have old and new testament readings to help you with this discipline.

Finally, set a goal for yourself each day. What is something you want to accomplish in that day? Perhaps it’s a home project, or a project in your yard, or reaching out to someone else. Whatever it is, set a goal and work to accomplish it in that day.

Care for Others

One of the biggest reasons we are doing the social distancing right now is out of concern for others. However, even as we do that, we can continue to find ways to connect with other people and the love and care of Jesus Christ. Call someone each

day and ask them how they are doing. This isn't that hard. Grab your phone and call some to check-in on them, find out if they have a need for anything (if they do let the church know) and maybe even offer to pray for them. It doesn't seem like much but it can mean a whole lot to a lot of people.

Pray for people. Intercession is one of the great gifts and callings we have been given by God. We can lift others to God and pray for their needs, their health, their families, etc. I hear countless testimonies about how people can "feel" the prayers being lifted on their behalf when they know it is happening. To help you with this, at the end of this document are some prayers that you can pray for others. Take a look and make sure you pray for someone every day.

One final thing you can do to help care for others is to simply write them a note. I have received several little notes and cards during all of this COVID-19 crisis and it means the world to me that someone took the time to write me a note. That is a great way care for other people in this time.

Give

There is never a bad time to be generous. However, during a crisis time, it becomes even more important. Now is not the time to hoard or worry to the point that we put our security in finances or material things. Now is a time to be generous and join others in helping during the crisis moment. You can give to Coker and continue to support our ministry of worship, evangelism, discipleship, and outreach. Those gifts go to continue our Health and Wellness ministry to the economically disadvantaged - a group that is growing larger by the day. You can give to other non-profits in the city who are working to get food and other services to that population. Whatever it might be, find a way to practice generosity during an uncertain time.

Another simple way to give is to do business with local businesses. When you are going to get takeout food find a local restaurant or a larger one that is locally owned and operated and give them your business. This helps to support our community and the workers in our community.

Be Intentional

You hear me say this a lot but it is extremely important now - be intentional. The more intentional you are in a day the better you will feel. These simple little disciplines (and many others not listed here) can go a long way to helping you find some normalcy and connection in the midst of a time of distancing. Connection with God, connection with others, and a rootedness for yourself. Take a look at the additional resources below and know that we at Coker continue to hold you all in prayer. I miss you all, I love you all, and I pray you find this helpful.

Additional Resources

A Note from the Coker Stephen Ministers

We know these times are extremely difficult for everyone, and the Coker Stephen Ministers are always here to help. Truly, now is the time for all of us to become Stephen Ministers to each other. A Stephen Minister is a Christian friend who really listens, a child of God who walks beside a hurting person, never betraying the confidence. It is a Ministry that is grounded in Jesus' command to love one another. We can all do this. We encourage everyone to wake up every morning with a Christian "agenda" in mind that involves prayer, scripture reading, and making phone calls to family, friends, and even people we do not know. If you do this, they will not remain a stranger for long. We have before us a great opportunity to develop our spirituality, get closer to Christ, and to forgive and ask for forgiveness. We encourage all Coker members to embrace this challenge. If you would like a Stephen Minister to call you, do not hesitate to contact the Church or Carol Churchill at cechurchill@msn.com or David Schneider at davidandcindy@sbcglobal.net.

Prayers from the Book of Common Prayer

For the Human Family

O God, you made us in your own image and redeemed us through Jesus your Son: Look with compassion on the whole human family; take away the arrogance and hatred which infect our hearts; break down the walls that separate us; unite us in bonds of love; and work through our struggle and confusion to accomplish your purposes on earth; that, in your good time, all nations and races may serve you in harmony around your heavenly throne; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

For the Church

Gracious Father, we pray for thy holy Catholic Church. Fill it with all truth, in all truth with all peace. Where it is corrupt, purify it; where it is in error, direct it; where in anything it is amiss, reform it. Where it is right, strengthen it; where it is in want, provide for it; where it is divided, reunite it; for the sake of Jesus Christ thy Son our Savior. *Amen.*

For the Unemployed

Heavenly Father, we remember before you those who suffer want and anxiety from lack of work. Guide the people of this land so to use our public and private wealth that all may find suitable and fulfilling employment, and receive just payment for their labor; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

For the Poor and Neglected

Almighty and most merciful God, we remember before you all poor and neglected persons whom it would be easy for us to forget: the homeless and the destitute, the old and the sick, and all who have none to care for them. Help us to heal those who are broken in body or spirit, and to turn their sorrow into joy. Grant this, Father, for the love of your Son, who for our sake became poor, Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

For Recovery from Sickness

O God, the strength of the weak and the comfort of sufferers: Mercifully accept our prayers, and grant to your servant *N.* the help of your power, that *his* sickness may be turned into health, and our sorrow into joy; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

For Strength and Confidence

Heavenly Father, giver of life and health: Comfort and relieve your sick servant *N.*, and give your power of healing to those who minister to *his* needs, that *he* may be strengthened in *his* weakness and have confidence in your loving care; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

For Doctors and Nurses

Sanctify, O Lord, those whom you have called to the study and practice of the arts of healing, and to the prevention of disease and pain. Strengthen them by your life-giving Spirit, that by their ministries the health of the community may be promoted and your creation glorified; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*