

Creating a new routine

These are unsettling and unprecedented times, but we are people of faith and whilst it is right for us to lament all that has been taken away we are also called to seek God in new ways in the days and weeks to come. As Bishop Julian reminded us early in the pandemic, this is a time to pause and reflect on what is truly important about our faith, our prayer life and our worship and to be courageous enough to explore new ways of being, at least for a short while.

Some suggestions

- Accept the restrictions imposed by the government and the national church. Recognise that for a while the working out of our roles as clergy will change, but the core of our ministry and vocation has not.
- Set a **new** routine for each day. Do not try and reproduce a typical day from last week.
- Prayer and care for our community is at the heart of who we are and what we do but can be done at home and there is a biblical precedent for it being somewhat hidden from sight of all except God (Luke 18: 9-14). Establish a new routine around prayer and reflection that ministers to yourself as well as others.
- Establish a new routine around reading and studying the Bible both on your own and with others, both within your household and virtually with others. Think about reading one of those theology books that has been on the shelf gathering dust for a while.
- Whilst clergy are used to working *from home*, we are not used to working *at home* so think how you will differentiate ministerial time from personal time. Perhaps wear different clothes such as a clergy shirt when undertaking ministerial duties and very deliberately change when having down time. Work with the rest of the household to work out a routine that works for all of you.
- Be realistic about what you can do and how many phone calls, social media posts and emails you can and should send each day.
- Make sure you incorporate time that feeds your spirit in addition to prayer for the world, nation, community and parish. Do that thing you have always been meaning to do but have never had time for. Be courageous and imaginative.
- Do not try to plan too much or too far ahead, things are changing very fast and what might work today may be impossible tomorrow.
- Give attention to yourself, your family and to your friends and use time to reconnect and appreciate them. You may not get time like this again.
- Try not to listen to/ read/ watch too much media. If you can limit the places you get information from and the time you spend getting that information.
- Keep a journal. Record your thoughts and prayers and ideas that come to you as you slow down a little from the usual hectic round of ministerial tasks. Dare to dream some dreams about how to use the lessons learnt in your community once the pandemic has passed, which it will.