

# Mental Health Reflections published by the Church of England; plus helpful links to NHS and other sites

A series of reflections on how to cope with anxiety and loneliness in the face of the coronavirus pandemic, including simple Christian meditation techniques and five tips, have been published by the Church of England.

A number of actions that could help people feeling isolated or worried, as well as those who grieve, are put forward in a new guide [Supporting Good Mental Health](#) and written by Durham University academic Revd Professor Chris Cook with Ruth Rice Director of the Christian mental health charity Renew Wellbeing.

The booklet gives advice ranging from putting aside time to rest and eating and sleeping well, to using the phone and the internet to reach those who may be struggling on their own. Making a list of all the good things – and people – that you miss when you are on your own and thanking God for them, can be a way of helping cope with loneliness, the guide says.

Simple prayers can be said repeatedly as a mean of helping to deal with stress, the booklet says, and lighting a candle, where safe, can be a helpful form of prayer for some people. Quotations from the Bible can be a useful aide to meditation and calming fears, including writing down and repeating short passages, it suggests.

A phrase such as Psalm 18:1 ‘The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer’ could be chosen for each week and used as background for a mobile phone as a ‘go to’ thought when someone is anxious.

It also suggests repeating a simple phrase from the Psalms such as Psalm 4:8 ‘I will both lie down and sleep in peace; for you alone, O Lord, make me lie down in safety,’ to help calm the mind before sleeping.

The Rt Rev James Newcome, Bishop of Carlisle and the Church of England’s lead bishop on health and social care, said: “I welcome publication of these further resources and reflections around mental health, which build on resources already made available by the Church of England nationally.

“For some time now the issues of loneliness and isolation have been identified as

major problems within our society. The coronavirus pandemic will only create further challenges in this respect. So it is vital that we do all we can as a church to protect people's mental wellbeing.

"The reflections are beautifully presented and scripturally based, with the 'Have A Go' sections intentionally focussing on how people should be kind to themselves. That is so important at this time. My prayer is that as many people as possible are able to draw upon these new resources over the coming weeks and months."

In addition, the Church has [published five tips for tackling loneliness and isolation](#):

1. Pray. Light a candle, if safe, and pray for hope, faith and strength to keep loving and caring for each other during this time of struggle.
2. Talk about how you feel. This may be difficult if you are self-isolating, but do use the telephone, internet, and social media. If you need to contact a counsellor this can be arranged by your GP, or via local agencies, or privately. [Samaritans are there](#) 24 hours a day, every day, and it's free to call them on 116 123.
3. Focus on the things that you can change, not on the things you can't.
4. Look after yourself - physically, emotionally, spiritually. Plan in things that you enjoy at regular intervals during the day – a TV programme, a phone call, a book, a favourite dish, a game.
5. Look after others. Even if only in small ways, but do what you can: a smile, a kind word, writing a letter or an email.

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- If you need to speak to someone please visit [the Mental Health Foundation website](#), which has helpful resources and contacts.
- Read the [NHS mental wellbeing guidance whilst staying at home](#).