

Dear Church Family,

When I left Aperia on 15 March, little did I know that it would be the last time in a long while before I could gather with my church family again. Six weeks in, with COVID-19 still showing no signs of abating (and CB extended!), many among us are increasingly feeling worried, anxious and even depressed. If you feel so, you're not alone.

We're in difficult times. Our lives disrupted, routines crumbled. Many of our couples' weddings are in limbo, and they are left frustrated and disappointed. Work front, some are retrenched, job offers withdrawn, pay cut. With the economic gloom deepening, the uncertain future is worrying. WFH poses its challenges. We suffer fatigue from overworking and Zooming. Relational tensions at home can be stressful. Occasional news of panic buying and new clusters fuel our hyper-vigilance. Besides, there's the nagging fear of contracting COVID-19 and infecting our loved ones, or even dying from it. Our HCWs increasingly suffer compassion fatigue. And COVID-19 is still claiming lives everyday.

We certainly have good reasons to worry, to be depressed, to panic or even suffer anxiety attacks. It's a scary and dangerous world we live in and God's word sides us on this. The Bible is utterly honest how broken and hostile our world is post-Fall.

Now, you may not be worried by everything I've mentioned. But I'm sure you'd be personally drawn to at least one or two. So ask yourself: Which ones? What worries you? Name them. What keeps me up at night, may not be for you. What what-if scenarios rerun in your head? And what do you do when these anxieties visit and hijack your mind like mobsters ravaging towns. Like mine, your fallen instinct probably leads you to either "I'm scared" or "I'll overcome". When instead, we can take our struggles to God. Amidst panic, there is someone we can turn to. In fact God invites us to do so.

**“God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.
Therefore we will not fear, even though the earth gives way.”
Psalm 46:1-2**

A Christian said of these verses: “These are not just words in a book. When you take them to heart, you'll find them true. Those who actually ask receive.” Imitate the Psalmist. You can tell God honestly all that you're facing, feeling and fearing, even your anger, without sugarcoating. “God, you say you're my refuge and strength. Please preserve and strengthen me. You promise that you're my ever present help in trouble. I'm stuck. I'm in trouble now Lord... (name your worries). Lord give me grace for today to know you are God and to trust your word”.

God hears. He cares. He's near. He loves you. He promised that He'll never leave you or forsake you. He'll give you perspective that brings peace. He'll still your stormy soul, and silent the noises. He'll re-anchor your hope to that which is truly secure. So while we do have plenty of reasons to worry, we've better reasons not to.

In difficult times, remember that you're not alone in this. God is near. Remember also that God bought you by the precious blood of Christ into His church. He surrounds you with His people. So call or text someone. Tell them your worries. And be the someone who listens and cares when someone shares with you. Pray together. You have favourite songs that speak of God's steadfast love and relentless mercies? Listen to them. Sing them. Recently, I've picked one of Buchanan's to remind me that God rules the world, not me nor the virus. Allow God's truths to drown out the anxious voices.

Fellow Sinner, Sufferer & Saint,
Kenneth Lo

P.S. There is much more we can learn from God's word concerning our mental health e.g. how anxious moments are opportunities to grow as they reveal our hearts, or how faith moves us to love others even when we ourselves are barely afloat. Look out for the Biblical Counseling Webinar coming in May.

Need help or have any questions? Please contact us:

For 9am - Zoe Tan: zoe.tan@thecrossing.com.sg

For 11am - Elsie Cheong: elsie.cheong@thecrossing.com.sg

For 4pm - Charmaine Ng: charmaine.ng@thecrossing.com.sg