

Hope in God.

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I haven't experienced a time like this before. I suspect you haven't, either. All the change we are experiencing can wear us down. When dealing with the stress of these changes, how do you maintain spiritual and emotional health?

Consider these things:

1. Change is stressful. Some doctors define stress as your body's reaction to any change that requires an adjustment or response. We have been through a lot of changes in the past weeks; we have had to adjust our schedules and routines. For example, you used to see your family once a week, but now you can only talk on the phone. The ongoing distance leaves you feeling stressed and discouraged. Further, you can't go out. You are running out of things to do while at home. This new routine leaves you feeling isolated or restless.

The Bible tells us about stress, too. But it also shows us that God cares for us in our anxious times. *Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you* (1 Peter 5:7). God is ready to hear us when we pray to him about the stress we feel. Again, we read: *Cast your cares on the LORD and he will sustain you* (Psalm 55:22). Part of what helps us get through anxious days is giving your cares to God in prayer.

Another part of what gets us through is seeing and hearing kind words from a godly friend. *Anxiety weighs down the heart, but a kind word cheers it up* (Proverbs 12:25). Words of hope and encouragement can help lift us out of a dark mood. A godly friend can help lift your spirit; give them a call and share how you are doing.

2. Reflect on God's care and comfort.

To help you cast your cares on God, consider using the following self-guided meditation over the next few days.

Take a few moments to let your inner thoughts settle. Be still.

Reflect on the following passages (they are written out on the back side)

Psalm 145:8-19	God's Care
Philippians 4:6-7	Prayer
2 Thessalonians 3:16	Peace in Christ

As you begin, ask God to speak to you through the Scripture. Read one passage slowly and focus on God's care or the benefits of prayer and the peace God gives. Sit quietly for a minute and pray your thoughts to God.

Read the passage once more, resting in God's presence in Christ Jesus for you and with you.

Psalm 145

⁸ The LORD is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love.

⁹ The LORD is good to all;

he has compassion on all he has made.

¹⁰ All your works praise you, LORD; your faithful people extol you.

¹¹ They tell of the glory of your kingdom and speak of your might,

¹² so that all people may know of your mighty acts

and the glorious splendor of your kingdom.

¹³ Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom,

and your dominion endures through all generations.

The LORD is trustworthy in all he promises and faithful in all he does.

¹⁴ The LORD upholds all who fall and lifts up all who are bowed down.

¹⁵ The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food at the proper time.

¹⁶ You open your hand and satisfy the desires of every living thing.

¹⁷ The LORD is righteous in all his ways and faithful in all he does.

¹⁸ The LORD is near to all who call on him,

to all who call on him in truth.

¹⁹ He fulfills the desires of those who fear him;

he hears their cry and saves them.

Philippians 4:6-7

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

2 Thessalonians 3:16

Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times and in every way. The Lord be with all of you.