

Stress and Spirituality



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What is stress?

- ▶ A feeling of emotional or physical tension.
- ▶ Your body's reaction to a challenge or demand.
- ▶ It can come from any event or thought that makes you feel frustrated, angry, or nervous.
- ▶ In short bursts, stress can be positive, such as when it helps you avoid danger or meet a deadline.

Stress and Chronic Illness

- ▶ Chronic stress can weaken an immune system
- ▶ As Sjogren's patients many of us experience *feelings of emotional or physical tension.*
 - ▶ Finding the right physician
 - ▶ Getting symptoms under control
 - ▶ Finding balance

And now....it's not just your illness, the world is stressed!



But there's good news....spirituality matters



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What is Spirituality?

- ▶ An individual's relationship with a higher power like God or a connection to a metaphysical reality greater than oneself
- ▶ A universal human experience—something that touches us all.



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Spirituality is linked to

- ▶ Better health
- ▶ Less hypertension
- ▶ More positive feelings
- ▶ Less depression and anxiety
- ▶ Greater psychological well being
- ▶ **Superior ability to handle stress**
- ▶ **Less stress even in difficult times**

Spirituality decreases stress by allowing the person to

- ▶ **Create a sense of stillness and peace**

- ▶ Prayer and Meditation

- ▶ Breath prayer, fixed hour

- ▶ Practice Yoga

- ▶ Practice Mindfulness

- ▶ Reading Sacred Texts

Spirituality decreases stress by allowing the person to

- ▶ **Give up control**

- ▶ Believing in high power helps us to realize we are not responsible for everything
- ▶ Good and bad things happen despite our best efforts
- ▶ Recognizing there is no need to blame ourselves

I CANNOT CONTROL

(So, I can LET GO of these things.)

IF OTHERS
FOLLOW THE
RULES OF SOCIAL
DISTANCING

THE AMOUNT
OF TOILET
PAPER AT THE
STORE

I CAN CONTROL

(So, I will focus on these things.)

THE
ACTIONS
OF
OTHERS

MY POSITIVE
ATTITUDE

TURNING
OFF THE
NEWS

FINDING FUN
THINGS TO DO
AT HOME

HOW
LONG
THIS
WILL
LAST

HOW I FOLLOW CDC
RECOMMENDATIONS

MY OWN SOCIAL
DISTANCING

LIMITING MY
SOCIAL MEDIA

PREDICTING
WHAT WILL
HAPPEN

MY KINDNESS &
GRACE

HOW
OTHERS
REACT

OTHER
PEOPLE'S
MOTIVES



Spirituality decreases stress by allowing the person to

- ▶ Increase meaning of life experiences

- ▶ Examen

- ▶ Journaling

- ▶ Personal reflection

- ▶ What can I learn?

- ▶ How can I grow?

- ▶ What can I be grateful for?

- ▶ Gratitude practice

Spirituality decreases stress by allowing the person to

- ▶ **Enhance sense of connectedness**
 - ▶ Spiritual communities offer acceptance, solace, strength, even solutions
 - ▶ Helps us not feel alone and isolated
 - ▶ Send cards, make phone calls
 - ▶ Meet with small group or even family
 - ▶ Most stressors seem smaller and easier when we know there is support

Spirituality decreases stress by allowing the person to

- ▶ **Maintain a sense of purpose**
 - ▶ I am here for a reason!
 - ▶ Look beyond self
 - ▶ Love your neighbor as self
 - ▶ Steward of the earth
- ▶ Take responsibility for wider community and world

Spirituality decreases stress by allowing the person to

- ▶ **Gain perspective**

- ▶ Shrink obstacles that seem insurmountable to a manageable size
 - ▶ Stories of those who have gone before and how they managed
- ▶ Help us focus on other people versus our own desires
 - ▶ Food to local families
 - ▶ Supporting local businesses

Spirituality decreases stress by allowing the person to

- ▶ Create a sense of stillness and peace
- ▶ Give up control
- ▶ Increase meaning of life experiences
- ▶ Enhance sense of connectedness
- ▶ Maintain a sense of purpose
- ▶ Gain perspective

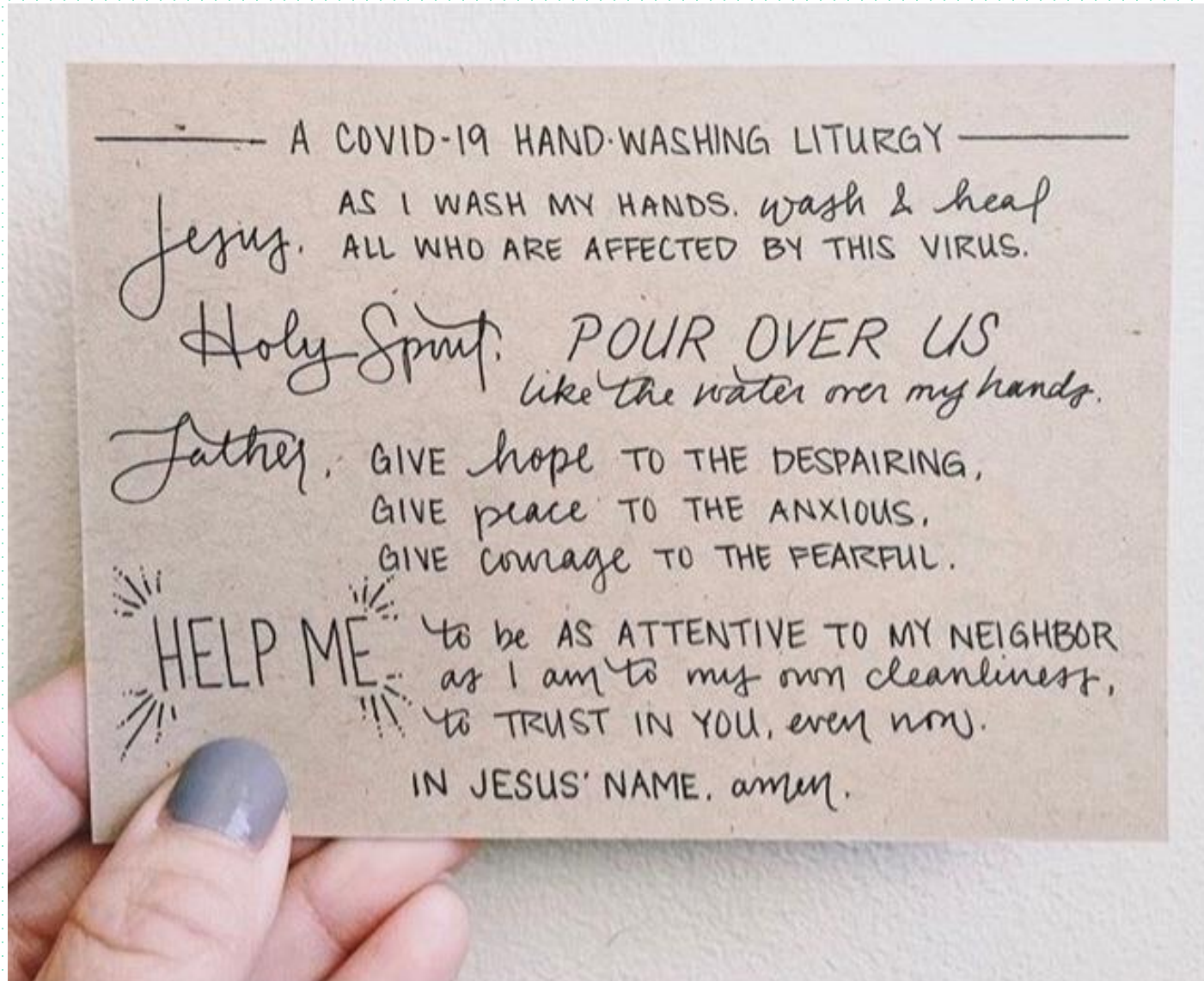
Some ways to increase your spirituality

- ▶ Begin a practice of prayer and meditation
- ▶ Take up journaling
- ▶ Take long walks (without technology)
- ▶ Read sacred texts or inspirational stories
- ▶ Start a discussion group
- ▶ Help someone out during pandemic
- ▶ Strive to see the good in others (AND the good in yourself)

Breath Prayers (World Relief)

- ▶ **Inhale:** Peace of Christ, **Exhale:** Fill my heart
- ▶ **Inhale:** Please remember, **Exhale:** Those in need
- ▶ **Inhale:** Holy Spirit, **Exhale:** Bring me rest (comfort, joy, etc.)

Covid-19 Hand-washing Liturgy



One final thought....

God, grant me the serenity
to accept the things I cannot
change,

the courage to change the
things I can,

and the wisdom to know the
difference.



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