

Hello Friends,

This whole Covid-19 thing is new to most of us. Not many peacetime events have had such a widespread and potentially lasting effect on our world, our neighbours and on us. Arthur has asked me to say a few words about Covid-19 and anxiety.

- First up I want you to know that **feeling anxious** in the face of uncertainty and threats is **a God given response** – it's part of how the Creator made us. Anxiety gets us ready to face threats in two ways;
 - it tends to focus our attention, and
 - it often gives us a sudden burst of energy.
- God made us and our bodies with the ability to **respond to threats, and then to rest** after the threat has been dealt with.
- There can be problems however if the threat and uncertainty go on for a long time, or if they trigger other threats or trauma in our lives. In other words, if we don't get any rest. If the threat is prolonged;
 - Our attention gets hijacked and we can't think clearly about anything, and
 - That extra energy can't be put to good use, we get restless and irritable.
- Now it looks like Covid-19 may be around for a while and uncertainty will continue at least for now. So **it's important for all of us to learn to rest.**
- You will be better rested, think more clearly and have a stronger immune system to fight the virus if you **sleep well**. Three things you can do to sleep better are;
 - Make a regular time to go to bed each night and stick to it.
 - Before bed avoid stimulating caffeinated and sugary drinks, and TV or video excitement.
 - When you get to bed lie quietly, tell your mind it's time to sleep, and breathe slowly and regularly.
- And let me remind you, that **followers of Jesus rest in him**. The one who stilled the storm can also bring peace to our troubled hearts, and quieten our disturbed minds. Here are three things you can do to rest in Jesus in these troubled times;
 - Remind yourself that **Jesus is with you** in these times of trouble – remember Psalm 23 "The Lord is my shepherd ... though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me",
 - Talk to God, pray, **remind God that you are trusting him**. Remind yourself that you are trusting him. Now it is often hard to pray when you are feeling anxious – so some people find it useful to pray out loud or to write down your prayers to reduce distraction.
 - **Tell someone else** that you are trusting God in this situation. Not in a boastful, "I've got this under control" kind of way, but in a humble, thankful way let others know your faith is in Jesus. Who knows, maybe they will be encouraged, maybe they will pray for you, maybe they will trust Jesus too.
- There's lots more to say but that's my 4 minute starting point.
- **Don't be afraid to reach out for help!** God has more helpers than most of us know.

God bless you in this uncertain season.

Richard