

MWI MARCH 2020 ARTICLE FOR THE METHODIST NEWSLETTER

Stress is a word which is often used today. The dictionary defines stress as “physical, mental, or emotional strain or tension.” Some stress is necessary and even good – such as the physical strain we put on our muscles in order to make them stronger. But when we talk about “stress” we are usually referring to excessive or negative mental or emotional strain or tension. While “stress” is not specifically mentioned in the Bible, scripture does speak to things such as anxiety, worry, and trouble-things we often associate with stress and gives us clear answers on how we should deal with them.

Most of us will probably suffer from stress at some stage in our lives. Stress is a common human experience, particularly in a world where the demands seem to be unending. We can be overcome with helping our families, friends, work and, dare I say, being involved in church activities can all become overwhelming and cause us to feel stressed. We get tired and worn out. I have lost count of the number of times people have said to me “be careful you don’t take on too much and get stressed”. I appreciate this statement has come from very well meaning Christian friends, who care for me, though at times confuse me because I feel I have offered myself for God’s service for two years in a leadership role in MWI so why would I not accept the invitations that come my way? As I pondered over this statement, I have come to realise that God wouldn’t call me to work for Him and let myself be burnt out in the first few months. I believe He expects me to be wise and be prayerful over the invitations that I accept.

As committed Christians we can take great encouragement in God’s word when we feel troubled by stress. John 14 v 1 “Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me.” If we profess Christ as our Lord and Saviour, we are not depending on our own strength to get us through these stressful situations. Proverbs 3 v 5 – 6 tells us to “trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him and he will direct your path.” We are all aware of the verse in Philippians 4 v 6-7 “Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your request be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” We can have the confidence that God will see us through. Situations may not change miraculously but God is with us through the stress.

Stress of all kinds is a natural part of life, there are plenty of examples in the bible of folk going through difficult and stressful situations. How we deal with it is up to us! Jesus Christ offers us His support if we seek him through prayer and believing in His promises. He has promised to never leave us or forsake us. We don’t need to go through stress alone. It is only by His grace, mercy, and love that the stress in our lives can be managed. **GOD MATTERS** about each one of us and desires that we have a relationship with Him that sustains us when life may get tough.

Joan Strong

All-Ireland MWI President

March Engagements:

8th MWI Service Mountpottinger Methodist Church – 11.00 am

15th MWI Service Primacy Methodist Church – 11.45 am

21st World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women – Study Day - Wesley House, Leeson Park, Dublin – 12 noon

22nd MWI Service Pettigoe Methodist Church – 10.30 am

22nd MWI Service Irvinestown Methodist Church – 12.00 noon

29th MWI Service Glengormley Methodist Church – 10.00 am

29th Mothers' Union Service – St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin 3.15 pm

31st General Committee of MCI – Dublin – 10.30 am