



Dealing with fear and anxiety

When I said, 'My foot is slipping,' your unfailing love, Lord, supported me.
When anxiety was great within me, your consolation brought me joy.'

Psalm 94:18–19 (NIV)

Reflection

We're living in a time rife with fear and anxiety. Many of us are at the receiving end of a constant flow of negative reports, whether via news outlets, our social media accounts, WhatsApp messages, or phone calls from family and friends. So much of what we're hearing at the moment has the potential to bring fear and anxiety. Some of us might be in fear for those who are particularly vulnerable, some of us are far apart from family members who are unwell, some of us are facing job insecurity.

Perhaps most difficult in all this, though, is the lack of control and uncertainty. None of us knows where this will lead and when it will end. None of us knows how much damage will be done, and what we'll be returning to when it's over.



We can be fairly sure of two things: this is a temporary state - this global pandemic won't last forever; and, secondly, the world will never be quite the same again.

 tearfund.org/covid19
 covid19-response-team@tearfund.org

It's important to emphasize that fear and anxiety are not sinful; they are natural and healthy human responses to tough situations. Even Jesus, our perfect example of what it means to be human, felt fear. In the garden of Gethsemane, he prayed to God:

'Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me; yet, not my will but yours be done.' Then an angel from heaven appeared to him and gave him strength. In his anguish he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down on the ground.'

Luke 22:42–44

Some commentators translate 'agony' here as fear – Jesus prayed to God in his fear. Even as he was strengthened, he felt fear, which led him to pray more earnestly.

Fear and anxiety can be motivators for action, but in these times, it's important that they lead us to healthy action; that is, to acknowledge and accept our fear and anxiety before God, so that He can lift our gaze, strengthen us and bring His peace. Whilst these are challenging times, our fear can be a positive force if we choose to respond in ways that connect us more deeply with God and the world around us.

Reflection questions

1. Spend some time inhabiting David's and Jesus' experiences through the passages quoted above. What are you feeling most afraid of at this time?
2. Do you feel able to bring your fears and anxieties before God? If not, why do you think this might be?
3. Talk to God about how you're feeling and try to make space for His voice in your situation.

Prayer

Father God, in the midst of crisis and uncertainty, please bring your peace. Give us the courage to pray these words:

*'I will trust you always though I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death
I will not fear, for you are ever with me, and you will never leave me to face my perils alone.'*

Thomas Merton

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