

## *Come to me*

Overtiredness, anxiety and stress are all too prevalent in our society today. Family pressure, work pressure, school pressure, money worries and concerns for the future all have an impact on us and it appears that everywhere we look there are more things that threaten to increase our anxiety and stress. The latest news about climate change and the threatened extinction of millions and animal and plant species are only adding to our collective sense of uncertainty and even despair. Real political uncertainty - nationally and internationally - isn't helping us much either is it?

What to do?

I think the first thing is to look after ourselves. Are you making enough time just for you? Do you carve out time to relax, unwind and have a bit of fun? Personally there are some things I always do when I need to relax. If I go out with my camera and take photographs of our beautiful world and soon become totally absorbed in what I am doing and soon feel restored. Listening to some of my favourite music has the same effect. My wife Linda and I have a similar taste in television programmes and if we want to unwind together we put on an old episode of "Father Brown", "New Tricks" or "The Miss Fisher Mysteries". Failing that, we drive to the coast and go for a refreshing walk and an uninterrupted natter. I think it is vital for us to be able to leave the world and it's worries behind sometimes and do something that re-creates us.

Have you ever looked outside at your garden and noticed the overgrown lawn, the weed strewn flower-beds and the overgrown shrubs and found yourself thinking "I don't know where to start!". There are two alternative responses. You can close the curtains, stay indoors and try to ignore it. Or you can make a small start. Mow part of the lawn, pull out a few weeds or prune just one shrub. Making just a small difference can make us feel a whole lot better. We can feel powerless in the face of the threat of environmental catastrophe, but all of us can make a small difference. In our household we are trying to consume less single-use plastic and we are eating much less meat than we used to. We recycle far more things than we used to and put much less into our black bin as well. Also, we are trying to buy food that has been produced more locally. Small changes I know. But every little thing makes a real difference and we feel better for doing them.

So many things we face though are simply unsolvable. Problems are too complicated, too big and seem to have no solution. In the face of issues of this nature I remind myself that I am part of God's world and that ultimately everything is his responsibility. I often find myself praying "I don't know what to do about this, over to you Lord". Jesus teaches us this very same thing: *"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."* Matthew 11:28-30

Overtired? Anxious? Stressed? Call out to God in prayer.

James