

Holiday Blues / Stress

*“One day Jesus told his disciples a story to show that they should always pray and never give up.”
Luke 18:1 NLT*

Are you overbooked for this month? Do you look at your schedule and start to panic? How can you possibly do everything? There are meetings, birthdays, gifts, decorating, parties and too many other things, not including work, family and church.

It's time to trim your list instead of the tree. Consider fewer gifts, fewer decorations and not so many parties. Find quiet time to spend with devotional materials and in prayer. The only way to get to the heart of Christmas is with Jesus. All of the other things are fine, but they aren't necessary.

Practice some stress busting techniques. Here are some ideas:

Leave. If the noise level is too much or the crowds are closing in, just leave. You don't have to stay in the toy store with all of the screaming youngsters, and you don't have to converse with the know-it-all at the party. You can walk away.

Close the eyes. Take a break from the lights and activities. Closing the eyes is a great way to get re-centered.

Try some solitude. In the middle of so much activity it helps to have time alone. Use the quiet time to set priorities, to pray, or to count your blessings.

Go outside. Fresh air and sunshine can make a difference in how you feel. Being in God's creation and going for a walk can help find extra energy.

Locate some water. Listen to it, watch it, drink it or sit in it. Water refreshes in so many ways. He knows what we need; maybe that is why God put so much on earth.

Breathe! Remember to exhale occasionally. When the shoulders are up to the ears, it's time to take some deep breaths. Fill the lungs completely from the bottom to the top. Pause for a couple of seconds. Exhale letting all of the air out of the lungs from the top to the bottom. Repeat three or four times. Your shoulders have relaxed with the rest of the body. Stress causes shallow breathing.

Deep breathing releases it.

Listen to music. Choose whatever type makes you happy. Sing along. It's amazing how good this can make us feel.

Give yourself the gift of peace in the midst of a world in chaos. Have a great holiday and share your peace with those around you.

(Source: www.mayoclinic.com)

References / Resources:

www.counseling.eku.edu/self_help/holiday_stress.php - Eastern Kentucky University's Counseling Center – tips for dealing with stress

www.nmha.org/go/get-info/ - Mental Health America – search 'holiday depression' for information to assist consumers

www.helpguide.org – sponsored by Wise & Healthy Aging – information on families, mental health, seniors, and healthy lifestyles reviewed by therapists and physicians