

A person's hands held together as they rest their arms on a balcony.

Umit Bulut

*Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

### **Philippians 4:4-7**

“Don't worry!” Easy to say, and hard to do. If only we had a “worry switch”, so that we could simply turn off our worries! I wonder if that would help, though? If I am worried about my friend who is ill, I worry because I am concerned. What kind of person would I be if I didn't worry, if I wasn't concerned?

Paul's teaching to the Philippian Christians was probably based on what he had heard of Jesus's teaching (Matthew 5:25-34), so it came on good authority. Paul wrote from bitter experience, and knew how hard it can be to find peace. He wrote of the anxiety that he felt in his daily concern for the churches for which he was responsible (2 Corinthians 11:28). Like Jesus, who knew distress and agitation in Gethsemane, Paul did not sail through life on a perpetual wave of joy and peace. Despite this, many Christians reading this passage have felt condemned.

St Paul can appear to be telling them that they do not have enough faith. In fact, anxiety and worry are good indicators of what we care about. In this sense, they are very much like prayer. The essential difference is that Jesus and Paul turned their worries into prayer by bringing them into the presence of God and enfolded them in *His* peace. The problems begin when we think we can find our own peace, outside of this context. It is impossible to get through life without worrying, unless we care for nothing and no-one. It is what we worry about, and what we do with our anxiety, that matters in God's kingdom.

### **A “Have a Go” habit: Meditation**

- Choose a meditation phrase for this week from a Psalm of your choice...something good and true e.g. [Psalm 18:1](#) “The Lord is my rock, my fortress, and my deliverer...”. Write it down and keep it with you...as the background on your phone maybe.
- Make it your constant “go to” thought whenever you catch yourself worrying...Chew it over, breathe it in, walk it out.



## Looking for support?

Explore services and organisations that can offer help and support

A man stands a fork in a path in the middle of the woods.

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## Next reflection

Read the next reflection in the series

The *#FaithAndMentalHealth* reflections were written by Rev Prof Chris Cook. Ruth Rice developed the "Have a go" habits.

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