



DISCIPLESHIP

LIVING AND LEADING THROUGH CRISIS – WHAT IS GOD SAYING?

1 Chronicles 12:32...the sons of Isaachar knew the times and knew what Israel should do.

A recent article helpfully lays out the three stages of a crisis using the picture of blizzard, winter, and mini ice-age. For each of these stages here are key questions to help listen to God as individuals or communities in different areas of life.



SEASON	WALKING WITH GOD Spirituality Up	COMMUNITY Friends/Family/Church In	SEEKING THE KINGDOM Blessing and mission to the world, society, neighbours, networks. Out
<p>BLIZZARD.</p>  <p>Immediate adaptation to crisis.</p> <p>Key aims: to ensure wise choices about priorities of energy / safety / relationship structures / financial and employment implications are made.</p>	<p>How do I/we see God in this? What's our theological understanding of suffering?</p>	<p>How do we worship together? How much is online church "real church"? How does it become participatory and not client-producer in feel? How do we include those who are not on the internet? How / should we celebrate communion? How do we pay attention to the young and vulnerable?</p>	<p>How do we immediately connect with those who may be most vulnerable in this time? What needs to stop / continue in terms of outreach / engagement? What can I realistically do in terms of work/service at this time?</p>
<p>WINTER.</p>  <p>Lockdown period and gradual emerging.</p> <p>Key aims: to establish sustainable spiritual and life rhythms which enable processing of challenges, and opportunities for deepening to occur. To come back stronger. To focus on the present moment, while looking to future possibilities.</p>	<p>What rhythms of being with God will help me deepen in this time? What new devotional rhythms could we establish in this season that might stand us in good stead for the longer term? How do I/we express our fear and grief? How do I/we make space for the stages of grief - denial, bargaining, anger, depression, and acceptance? How do I embrace mortality? How do I find a way of walking with God in a completely changed home or work environment? What is God teaching me through this? Who can I be learning from historically? How am I being disciplined in this? How am I staying well? What are my expectations of myself? How is my identity changing as a result of different life situation? Where is my security?</p>	<p>How do I focus on who I am listening to with so much information? How do I relate to those I live with in a Christlike way? Who are my main encouragers / those I encourage during this time? How do I/we support those in my community who are suffering/impoverished/feeling lonely? Who is in danger of not being noticed? What is God teaching us through this about what being church is? Where are the reliable prophetic voices? As we begin to come out of lockdown, how will we meet in a time of transition, when some might not be able to gather? How do we plan for a year when we can only gather in groups of ten? How do we ensure the needs of children are prioritised? Who can we be learning from throughout history? Who is struggling with their mental health, and what signposting is needed?</p>	<p>How do I/we pray for those on the frontline? What should we be praying for the wider community / global world? How do we connect with those who are more open to God in this time? What are the creative opportunities to reach out to others now, "making the most of every opportunity?" How do we identify community needs and respond? How can we build a sense of solidarity/empathy with those who suffer, while we are in isolation? How do we keep informed about what is happening in the world without being overwhelmed? What is God saying to us in our town / country / across the world? How do we begin to anticipate the opportunities for mission / blessing / restructuring in the future? What should we avoid in the future? How do we do this at a good pace - emotionally / spiritually? What resource planning should we be making for the next 18 months? How do we guard against a survival mindset, and believe for an opportunity mindset?</p>
<p>MINI ICE AGE.</p>  <p>Post lockdown</p> <p>Key aims: To recognise how the landscape has changed. To discern what God has taught us in the lockdown, taking the lessons and fruit of it into the future. To anticipate structural and cultural changes which will enable us to thrive in a time of changed resources.</p>	<p>How do I continue to grow in my walk with God? How do I assess the changes that have occurred in my discipleship, incorporating them into the "new normal"?</p>	<p>What are the positive things we have gained through this as a family / church? What rhythms of life have been fruitful? How do we continue in them? How do we stop ourselves going back to the safety of the familiar? What do we need to avoid going back to? How do we continue to care for those who have been affected by this? Who should we thank / honour?</p>	<p>How do we adapt to a changed resource situation? Who is God calling us to work with in new ways? How do we organise so that we can respond to future crises? How do we avoid turning inward and dealing with our own challenges alone, and instead prioritise those who have been revealed as most vulnerable? How do we build on the shift in values that has occurred? How do we make the most of the opportunity we have to hold out the hope of Christ? How do we speak/act prophetically to our area / nation? What is the nature of the leadership we should offer to wider society? Who should we thank / honour? What's our approach to the "common good"? How do we keep on valuing the "local"?</p>