

self-care

when the going gets tough...

Jane Colling encourages us to focus on Christ in difficult time

On qualifying as a nurse, the initial congratulations and feeling of achievement was great. At last, I had a vocation, a niche and a purpose, something to offer. I quickly learned, however, that this was just the beginning of my learning, and there were exciting and challenging times ahead.

I'd like to share three things that have been helpful to me during my nursing journey. Keep

balanced, keep connected, and keep going. I share them with you in the hope that they will inspire you to include things in your 'nursing toolkit' that will serve you well and enable you to develop a work-life balance with Christ at the centre.

keep balanced
When our patients do well, we have a sense of achievement and job satisfaction. But, when they suffer, we experience sadness, compassion, and a host of emotions that

make us human. A skill in nursing is to know when to let go, when to commit the person over to God and say, 'my job is done'. Working within a team, we are making our contribution, whilst being ready to ask others for their expertise at the right time. We learn to delegate care to our peers when we go off-shift, and ultimately recognise that God is responsible for the patient, and we must place them in his hands. Developing this balance, we will be better able to be fully present when we are at work, but release our responsibilities when the job is done. Work-life balance is the familiar phrase. Perhaps as Christians, we can call it finding balance in God, to be the best that we can be, whilst recognising we are only part of the picture.

keep connected

On the frontline of your workplace? John 15:1-11 reminds us to 'remain in Jesus'. We can do this simply by spending time with him, in his Word, in prayer, and in fellowship with others who know him and seek to grow in him. It is good to spend time doing activities that bring us closer to him. We need to be watered, fed, and planted in the right soil. Give thought on a regular basis to where you are planted, your church, your family and social sphere. How are you making sure that God waters you with the refreshing water of his presence and Holy

Spirit? It's not just for the benefit of others that we need to be planted in the right place and regularly watered, but also that we ourselves may know what it is to live in the freedom and joy of God's children *'that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete'*. (John 15:11)

keep going

As The Message version of 1 Corinthians 12:12-18 says, *'We each used to independently call our own shots, but then we entered into a large and integrated life and he has the final say in everything...Each of us is now part of his resurrection body, refreshed and sustained at one fountain – his Spirit – where we all come to drink...As it is, we see that God has carefully placed each part of the body right where he wanted it.'*

We are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works prepared for us beforehand (Ephesians 2:10). It's far too easy to allow ourselves to feel insignificant when we are new to a team, when we are a small part of what feels like a very big picture. As we grow in Christ, we realise that our security lies in our identity in Christ. First and foremost, we go to work to serve him, and we find our niche and purpose in him. Affirmation from colleagues and patients is appreciated and

necessary, but when we don't receive this we are still a valuable team member, because we know ultimately it is Christ we are serving.

So how do we keep positive, strong, and functioning well in what is fundamentally a broken and struggling system? We keep our eyes on Jesus who is concerned with perfecting us within our workplaces. Nothing shocks him and he continues to pour out his mercy and justice through us. We are light, truth, and life, if we remain in him (John 15:3-5), he will shine through us and he will make sure our life bears fruit for him.

The psalms are full of instructive and encouraging ways to keep going when things are tough. Ways like hiding God's Word in our hearts, repeating truth phrases as a source of strength, and keeping your eyes fixed on Jesus. Stop worrying too much about the things that are temporary, and ask God to give you his perspective when things feel difficult, negative, or overwhelming. 🌱

May God bless you and keep you as you live and speak for Jesus in your new roles!

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