

WATFORD TOWN SDA CHURCH

Women's Ministries

Final – December 2016



"You can never learn that Christ is all you need, until Christ is all you have."

"Love is larger than the walls which shut it in"

"Don't bother to give God instructions, just report for duty."

- Corrie Ten Boom

Dear Sisters in Christ,

Good Day from your Women's Ministries Team - Pamela, Gillian and Carrisa.

So this is our final newsletter/digest as a new team comes into office from tomorrow - and we your outgoing team of 2015/16 say good-bye.

We trust that we have served some of your needs over the last two years, I must admit we have been quiet over the last quarter, and I apologise, as this was mainly due to health issues.

I am sure that the new team coming in will have plenty of ideas and events to support your daily Christian walk and that you will support the activities they plan over the next coming period.

I trust that your faith will continue to be strengthen in 2017, that your personal relationship with God will develop and deepen, and that your capacity for sharing this Good News will increase in the coming months and years, as God allows.

Be of good courage and strive to support one another, with compassion, gentleness, kindness, understanding and grace that we find in the sight of God and share amongst one another.

So Farewell 2016, Happy New Year, all the very best for 2017 - as God wills, from

Pam, Gillian & Carrisa



DO EVERYTHING
WITH LOVE IN YOUR HEART
THAT NO MATTER WHAT YOU'RE
DOING IT FEELS AMAZING.



DAILY INSPIRATIONAL QUOTES

FACEBOOK.COM/D.I.QUOTES

Note to self...

We celebrate the birth of hope today. We celebrate God's great love for us this day. Jesus' birth reminds us that miracles happen and that we can depend on God's Word & promises. I have a hope filled future because of Jesus.

@Note to self-Daily Reminders For The Broken Hearted by Debbie Kay

Note to self...

Today I will pray for those who have hurt me, release them to God and not focus on what they have done to harm me. I will focus instead on the Lord and all He is doing to help me and heal me.

@Note to self-Daily Reminders For The Broken Hearted

2017 CHECKLIST

- # SMILE MORE.
- # WAKE UP EARLY.
- # DO MEANINGFUL WORK.
- # SHOW MORE GRATITUDE.
- # LET GO OF NEGATIVE HABITS.
- # UNFOLLOW NEGATIVE PEOPLE.
- # CREATE BEAUTIFUL MEMORIES.
- # APPRECIATE THE LITTLE THINGS.



DAILY INSPIRATIONAL QUOTES

FACEBOOK.COM/D.I.QUOTES



IF YOU HAVE
THE POWER TO MAKE
SOMEONE HAPPY,
DO IT. THE WORLD NEEDS
MORE OF THAT.



DAILY INSPIRATIONAL QUOTES

FACEBOOK.COM/D.I.QUOTES

Note to self...

The battles I face are not mine, but the Lord's and He does not lose. I need only be still, wait on Him and trust Him. He will lead and direct my paths and tell me the things to do. He goes before me!

@Note to self-Daily Reminders For The Broken Hearted by Debbie Kay



You'll Feel Better Without Clutter

Browsing Pinterest, I find myself absentmindedly pinning photos of neat, minimalist rooms, filled with just enough, and no more. Orderly shelves, neat cabinets, bare countertops, organised closets . . . something about this speaks to me. The harmony, peace, and tranquillity that it represents resonate deep inside of me. I want that.

Then, startled from my reverie by a hair-raising screech from my toddler, I look around. Dishes are piled in the dish drainer, the refrigerator is covered with drawings and magnets, bookshelves are stuffed to the brim, and baskets of toys are overflowing. And I don't even want to know what the dog just brought in and dropped on the carpet. My house is not dirty (well, except for what the dog just brought in), but with three kids, two adults, and six animals, there are signs of life everywhere.

Sure, I know this stuff all represents a life I love, but . . . does there have to be so *much* stuff?

I know I'm not alone in this. But what is the answer? Do we just muddle through the clutter the best we can, or subject our family to military-style inspections to keep the house shipshape? Do we rent a storage unit, or buy more organizing tools?

The power struggle between you and your stuff

The problem isn't merely the amount of stuff in our homes, or our lack of organisational skills (although both may be a factor), but in the meaning and power we let our "stuff" have. Often without realising it, we give possessions a disproportionate amount of our time and energy—leaving us with schedules (and lives) that don't match our values. For instance, in the pursuit of a bigger house, nicer car, and all the latest gadgets, we may end up working longer hours or becoming selfish instead of spending time on things we would say really matter, such as our family or health.

In other words, as the saying goes, sometimes "we buy things we don't need, with money we don't have, to impress people we don't like."

It's an exhausting pursuit to get—and then organise and maintain—a lot of possessions, and that may very well be why minimalism is a growing movement. According to Joshua Fields Millburn and Ryan Nicodemus of theminimalists.com, "Minimalism is a tool to rid yourself of life's excess in favour of focusing on what's important—so you can find happiness, fulfilment, and freedom."

How clutter affects emotions

Human beings crave order and peace. Think about opening a closet. Would you feel better if stuff comes flying out because it's packed in so tightly, or if everything is neat and ordered in its place? Which gives you more peace?

Having too much stuff—or stuff that is disorganised—can affect you mentally and physically. In a study in *Life at Home in the Twenty-First Century*, a group of anthropologists, social scientists, and archaeologists found a link between an overabundance of household objects and the homeowners' health. These crowded houses—termed "stressful home environments"—proved that clutter not only *looks* bad, it makes us *feel* bad as well.

Just as external chaos can lead to internal chaos, so can external peace lead to internal peace. According to Karen Reyes, a professional organiser from Kearneysville, West Virginia, "We feel better when our 'castle' is orderly, creating

less stress. Anything that we are able to do to alleviate clutter brings a little more peace to our lives. Emotional baggage sometimes comes along with unorganised lives. It's quite liberating to lose both."

Once the process of reducing the excess gets started, you might be surprised at how it overflows into other areas of life. For example, a study by the Association for Psychological Science found that simply working at an orderly desk could promote generosity and healthy eating.

Decluttering looks different for everyone. Some are content in just purging duplicates and inessentials, while others cut to the bare minimum. Whatever your goals, keep these simplifying principles in mind:

1. Approach it as a lifestyle, not a choice

You didn't accumulate all that stuff overnight, so you won't be able to get rid of it overnight either. It's a process, a way of housekeeping, not just a weekend event. So be patient with yourself as you learn new habits of shopping, donating, and organising.

2. Think of it as making room for more important things

You are making room for what you need and love by getting rid of what you don't. "Having less stuff to think, worry, or even obsess about frees people up to focus on more important things in life, such as family, friends, religion, and hobbies," says professional organiser Karen Reyes.

3. Put every item through the three-question test

Before buying something new, or while deciding what to keep of your current possessions, ask yourself:

- Do I need it?
- Do I love it?
- Do I have a place for it?

If not, bid it "a fond but firm farewell," and don't look back, says Marie Kondo, author of *The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up: The Japanese Art of Decluttering and Organizing*.

4. Remember, more isn't better; better is better

It's the long-standing debate: quality versus quantity. When it comes to simplifying, the answer is to go with *quality*. Rather than buying multiples of lesser quality, invest in one or two high-quality items that are reasonable for your budget and time of life. More isn't better; better is better.

5. Make list of what you want out of life

Do you want to travel more? Have more family time? Spend less time on housework? What possessions will (and won't) help you toward that end? Keep those goals in mind as you organise and clean. When deciding what to keep and what to get rid of, make three piles: keep, donate (or sell), and trash. Follow through with each pile quickly. Otherwise, you may end up pulling things out of the give-away pile and bringing them back into your closet or kitchen.

Written by: Vicki Redden



Bright Stars

Joni Eareckson Tada

“Do everything without complaining and arguing, so that no one can criticize you. Live clean, innocent lives as children of God, shining like bright lights in a world full of crooked and perverse people.”

Philippians 2:14-15

[View in context](#)

In today’s Scripture, Paul commands believers to “do everything without grumbling or arguing.” Seriously, Paul? Everything? Paul was writing to group of believers who were facing enormous hardships—and the temptation to murmur must have been great. But writing from jail himself, he wanted them to catch a bigger picture. He wanted the Christ followers to showcase the power of God to those lost in darkness. Nothing makes a scornful, cynical world sit up and take notice of God more than when it observes believers actually rejoicing in their hardships, without a hint of complaint. When we behave in this way, we shine like stars in the sky. Think of how complaints or grumbling may have diminished your witness to those around you. You will shine like a star in a dark world today as you put behind you any murmurings, disparaging comments, or negative communication.

Reflect:

Read Philippians 2:14–15. Who have you known in your life whose speech and treatment of others shines brightly, pointing to Christ? What do you most want to emulate about his or her example?

Pray:

Think about ways recently complained or argued; confess those behaviours to God and ask him to help you change your behaviour.

Joni Eareckson Tada is a best-selling author, sought-after speaker, and the founder and CEO of Joni and Friends International Disability Centre.

Taken from A Spectacle of Glory by Joni Eareckson Tada.

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Prayer Is Relational

"Pray like this: Our Father in heaven, may your name be kept holy. May your Kingdom come soon. May your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us today the food we need, and forgive us our sins, as we have forgiven those who sin against us. And don't let us yield to temptation, but rescue us from the evil one."

Matthew 6:9-13 (NLT)

[View in context](#)

Prayer Is Relational

Our relationships naturally express themselves in communication. When my ringing phone lights up with the picture of my mother or my close friend, I'll happily answer even if I'm hauling groceries to the house in the rain. (But, on the other hand, when it flashes an unfamiliar number, I rarely feel compelled to respond.) The mutual love I share with certain people makes me eager to talk with them.

Our most important relationship, of course, is the one we have with God, and prayer is the precious communication that expresses our love. In the prayer that Jesus taught his disciples to pray, he deliberately told them to begin with "Our Father"—just two small words that remind us our God is no distant deity but a loving and relational father. We approach God as his eager and confident children, expecting that he will listen and respond by giving us what is good.

Having God as father also reminds us of the relationship we have with all of his other children. Not only do we say "Father" but we say "Our Father." We don't come to God alone but we come connected to all who also belong to him. Like children at the dinner table, we share in a family conversation with our heavenly parent.

And we pray for God's other children as we pray for ourselves: Not just my daily bread, but our daily bread. Not just my need for forgiveness, but our need for forgiveness. Not just my rescue from sin, but rescue from sin for all of us.

Let us pray.

-Megan Hill

Reflect:

Read Matthew 6:9-13. Notice each use of corporate language ("we," "our," "us"). How do these phrases remind us that prayer is a relational activity?

Pray:

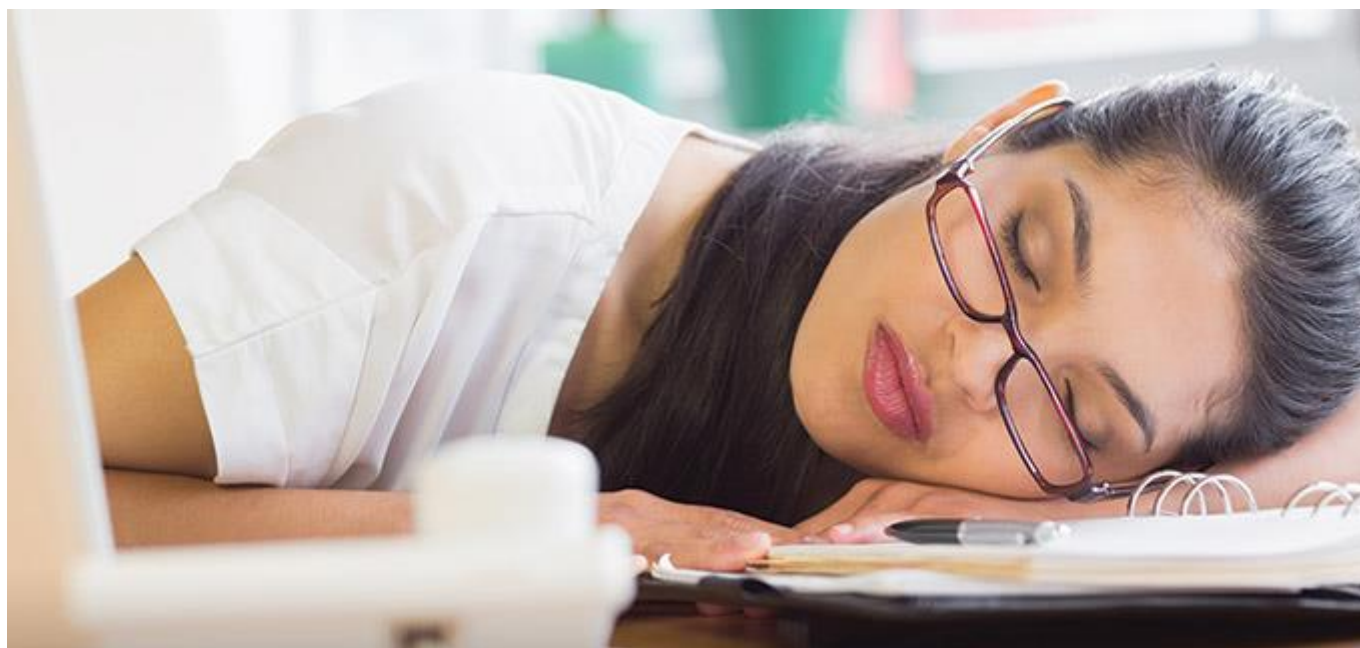
As you pray today, turn your personal requests into corporate requests. When you ask God to make you like Christ and meet your needs, also pray those things for all of God's people.

Megan Hill is the author of *Praying Together: The Priority and Privilege of Prayer in Our Homes, Communities, and Churches*.

You can follow her on Twitter at [@mevanshill](#).

These devotions draw upon themes in *Praying Together* by Megan Hill, ©2016, published by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. www.crossway.org.

Why Am I So Tired?



Terri always needed a lot of sleep. In fact, her friends made fun of how early she went to bed. But her stressful life made those early bedtimes a necessity.

A mother of two—a 10-year-old and a 16-year-old—the 48-year-old was newly married to a retired military man. Her dysfunctional workplace was usually a stressor, but since a workplace incident had landed her on disability and given her a schedule of just half days at the office, she found it easier to cope with the office's low morale and personality conflicts.

Then her husband had a terrible accident: Away for the weekend with his pals, he fell over a 20-foot cliff while on a four-wheeler. He was helicoptered to a hospital two counties away, and Terri hastily arranged for her mother to look after the boys while she was at her husband's bedside.

Weeks went by. Terri's husband was transferred to a nearby hospital and then finally released—with a number of prescriptions and a full schedule of therapy, doctor's appointments, and upcoming surgeries.

All of a sudden, Terri's early bedtime didn't cut it anymore. Because her husband's injuries prevented him from driving, she was now the only chauffeur who could get the boys to school, sporting events, and their other activities. She also had to manage her husband's schedule of pre- and post-op check-ups and therapy, all the while making it to work on time and keeping up with her own appointments. Her husband's restless sleep made it tough for her to get her usual nine hours. And now her friends started to hear a constant refrain: "I'm so tired."

It may be a phrase that you've found yourself saying, or that you've heard from your own friends or family. That's because the condition is far from unusual—and there are various causes of chronic tiredness. Here are a few of the most common reasons you may feel tired all the time:

1. Nutrient deficiency

A deficiency in certain vitamins or minerals could be behind your tiredness. An iron deficiency, for instance, can leave you feeling sluggish and weak, because less oxygen is traveling to your muscles and cells. Low levels of vitamin D or B12 can also make you feel tired and weak.

What to do: See your health-care provider for a thorough check-up, explaining that you're looking for the cause of your chronic tiredness.

2. An overly dramatic approach to life

If you're a mountain-out-of-a-molehill person, that could be the reason for your tiredness. An exaggerated emotional response to events can squander your energy unnecessarily. Similarly, when you experience an emotional blow, it can drain your energy and impact your sleep patterns.

What to do: Observe the way you react to incidents that occur throughout the day. If negative thoughts pop up automatically, or you find yourself catastrophising, pause and take a deep breath. Consider how unlikely it is that the worst-case scenario will really happen. Take a break from the situation by going for a walk or doing breathing exercises.

3. Lack of exercise

Trying to squeeze in a workout at the beginning or end of a packed day may feel like it's going to rob you of sleep instead of help you sleep. But a consistent exercise schedule will not only strengthen your body, it will strengthen your sleep schedule. A University of Georgia study found that sedentary adults who undertook a light exercise program of 20 minutes a day, three days a week, reported feeling greater energy and less fatigue after six weeks. Also, a twilight walk outside "helps program the brain for sleep," says Jeanne Melvin, an occupational therapist who specialises in sleep medicine.

What to do: Take a good look at your schedule to determine when you can fit in at least three workouts a week. Then add those "appointments" to your calendar—and keep them!

4. Allergies

If you've ever had a cold, you know that your symptoms can make it tough to get a good night's sleep. If you have seasonal allergies, that challenge can extend over months. Common symptoms, such as snoring and restlessness, can be related to allergies—and many people don't realise that pollen or other allergens are triggering these sleep disturbances.

What to do: Could you have allergies? A trip to your health-care provider can tell you for sure.

5. Alcohol

Alcohol is a double-edged sword when it comes to tiredness. A drink or two can make you feel relaxed and sleepy, and can even help you to fall asleep easier. But as your body metabolises the alcohol, it can cause fragmented sleep—and result in you feeling tired the next day.

What to do: Skip the alcoholic beverage, and try a sleep-enhancing non-alcoholic drink at night instead. Chamomile tea is a classic sleep aid (bonus: it also helps sooth an upset stomach). Coconut water is also a sleep enhancer. While people often think of it as a rehydrating, energizing drink, it's also a good bedtime beverage, because it is high in magnesium and can promote relaxation. (And, who knows, it might even help you dream of a tropical island!)

6. The constant glow of a screen

You check your phone first thing in the morning, head to the office to sit in front of a computer, lounge in front of your HDTV in the evening, and then read a few "pages" on your Kindle before you go to sleep. "That constant use of digital screens is the biggest cause of insomnia and poor sleep that I'm seeing," says Melvin.

What to do: The glow of the screen can suppress melatonin, which helps regulate the sleep-wake cycle, so try to avoid technology for at least an hour before bed.

7. Caffeine

A lot of coffee drinkers think their favourite morning beverage is fighting fatigue, when really it is contributing to it. “In my patients, one of the big issues causing fatigue in the afternoon—around 3:00—is coffee in the morning,” says Melvin. “Coffee stimulates your adrenal glands. You get an adrenal high, and then you get an adrenal crash.” Coffee not only wrecks daytime energy, but it also disturbs night-time relaxation.

What to do: For steady energy levels all day, try kicking the coffee habit.

8. Depression

Depression is not merely “feeling down.” It is a major illness that can impact you emotionally and physically: it lowers your energy levels, makes it tough to maintain a healthy sleep schedule, and robs your brain of serotonin, a chemical that helps regulate your internal body clock.

What to do: If you suspect you have depression, talk to your doctor.

9. Eating habits

What you eat can drain—or boost—your energy levels. If you’re a junk food junkie, you’re probably experiencing a cycle of blood sugar spikes and sugar drops throughout the course of the day, leading to a sense of fatigue. The healthier your food is, the healthier your energy level will be. So start the day with a healthy breakfast and skip the sugary, refined foods throughout the day.

What to do: Plan ahead so you can be sure of healthful meals at regular times.

10. Chronic stress

Stress can cause insomnia, and it’s not hard to see why. When you’re anxious about something, it’s tough to fall asleep and stay asleep. Chronic stress can lead to adrenal fatigue, a condition which impacts your ability to secrete appropriate amounts of cortisol. That can lead to decreased energy during the day and difficulty achieving restful sleep at night.

What to do: Consistently practice good stress-reducing habits, such as breathing exercises, going for walks, praying, and ending the day with positive, inspirational reading. Also evaluate if there are things you can do to eliminate stress or manage it better.

11. Non-restorative sleep

Some people just don’t go to bed early enough to get a full night’s sleep. It’s no surprise that they wake up tired. But what about the people who are in bed for eight hours or more, but still wake up exhausted? This is a person suffering from non-restorative sleep—“the person who goes to bed, falls asleep easily, sleeps through the night, and wakes up tired,” as Melvin describes it.

Three-quarters of the sleep cycle is spent in non-REM (rapid eye movement) stages of sleep. Stages 3 and 4 of non-REM sleep, the final two stages, are the most restorative. It is during these stages that energy is replenished. Someone who suffers from non-restorative sleep spends most of their sleep cycle in stage 2, never getting to the high-quality rest.

Other sleep-disrupting conditions include insomnia and sleep apnoea. People with insomnia may be in bed all night, but they sleep three or four hours and then cannot return to sleep. With sleep apnoea, a person is temporarily unable to breathe while asleep (often due to the collapse of tissue at the back of the throat). The body becomes oxygen-deprived, and the individual may be awakened as a result. This can happen several times a night, causing the person to wake up still feeling tired.

What to do: Schedule a sleep study at a sleep centre that can monitor you through the night and diagnose your sleep challenge.

Written by: Elisabeth Deffner

A New Year's Prayer

Lord, You make all things new
You bring hope alive in our hearts
And cause our Spirits to be born again.

Thank you for this new year
For all the potential it holds.
Come and kindle in us
A mighty flame
So that in our time, many will see the wonders of
God
And live forever to praise Your glorious name.

Amen

(A modern prayer for the New Year from www.lords-prayer-words.com)



Just Say Yes: The New Year's Resolution That Will Change Your Life

Every year I make New Year's resolutions—and usually they're the same ones as the year before: eat fewer sweets, stop snapping at the kids, and quit nibbling my cuticles.

But last year was different. Instead of vowing to quit my bad habits, I approached my resolutions in a positive way. A three-word mantra helped me ease the tension with my teenagers, feel closer to my husband, and exercise more consistently. I felt better—and better about myself—than I had in a long time.

And it's all because of these three little words: just say yes.

Why not give this philosophy a try this new year? Instead of starting January 1 with a road trip to the state of self-denial, just say yes to a whole new approach to life.

Say Yes to God

Take a look at the twists and turns of your life this past year. Did you lose a job or a once-treasured friendship? Have you been bombarded with colds or other health problems?

You may have already realised you need to make some changes—but how do you know which ones to make? It's hard to hear what God is trying to tell you if you don't have a strong relationship with Him; and a strong relationship requires regular communication.

So say yes to daily time in prayer. Say yes to gathering with a faith community each week. And when you're facing a fork in the road, don't just phone a friend for input—get in touch with God. Pray about your decision, and just say yes to God's suggestion.

Say Yes to Loved Ones

It's a juggling act trying to balance the needs of all the people we care about. Married people sometimes struggle to maintain friendships they enjoyed before; young adults may allow family bonds to stretch thin as they start exploring the world. Letting relationships fade can make us feel guilty. It also contracts our lives, making them darker and less joyful.

So just say yes to patching things up with people you've hurt—and to forgiving those who have hurt you. Say yes to enjoying time with a friend. Say yes when your kids ask to play a board game or watch a movie with you. Say yes when your spouse suggests going for a walk or a drive.

Say Yes to Yourself

I used to ask myself, "How can I find time to do the things I want to do, when there are so many things I have to do?" But after a while I realised: today is my day. God gave it to me to use and enjoy. I can't let my work responsibilities slide, but neither should I make each day a 24-hour marathon to complete my to-do list. So instead of stumbling into my home office at 6:00 a.m. each weekday, I take the dog for a brisk walk first. Instead of spending the whole weekend catching up on housework, I take a break to soak my feet and leaf through a magazine. Instead of telling the kids "Maybe later," I say, "Sure." And my work productivity hasn't suffered a bit.

Every day we're given is filled with countless choices. This year, instead of boxing yourself in with no after no, widen your horizons with a few more yeses. It's a one-step program that couldn't be more enjoyable to implement.



So we have come to the end of this particular collection, and we bid farewell.

Our prayer is that you will all be blessed as you move forward during this New Year's days, weeks and months. May you find all your desires in the Lord, for He is the supplier of all our needs.

The time will soon fly by - as it does every year, and before we know it we will be at the beginning of another new year - God willing, hopefully richer for the blessings that have been bestowed upon us, and as we share with those around us seeking the same, the knowledge of a personal Saviour who can supply all their needs.

It has been a pleasure to create programmes and events to uplift the ladies of Watford Town Church - we thank you for your contributions and suggestions, and we know you will support the new team coming in from 2017.

May God continue to bless and keep you, In Jesus Name, Amen

From Carrisa, Gillian & Pam