

“Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication let your requests be made known to God.”

Philippians 4:6

Replace Anxiety with Prayer

If there’s one thing I learned during seven years as a pastor among the Timorese people, it’s that prayer is a simple, effective way to cope with anxiety. They take their cue from St. Paul. In his letter to the Philippians, Paul admonishes, *“Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication let your requests be made known to God.”* (Phil. 4:6)



TOM AND MONICA LIDDLE

In any and all circumstances, the Timorese replace anxiety with prayer. That’s because the Timorese are people of faith. But it’s also because they have lived as vulnerable people for generations. They have been subjected to colonialism, military occupation, war, and conflict, realities the average person cannot control or manage. But he or she can pray.

One thing the coronavirus is teaching us is that we have far less control than we thought we did. Despite our scientific and technical prowess and in spite of our economic power, our capacity to cope, control, and manage is stunningly limited. This is a new feeling for many Americans and one that makes people very anxious. Thus, we can learn from the Timorese: replace anxiety with prayer.

We cannot base our lives on what we can control, because so much is beyond our control. In prayer, we can articulate our fears and make our requests known to God. As we give over our anxiety about tomorrow to God, we receive back the life that God gives us today: *“And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”* (Phil. 4:7)

Tom and Monica Liddle serve with the Protestant Church of East Timor (IPTL). Mission Co-worker appointments are made possible by gifts to Disciples Mission Fund, Our Church’s Wider Mission, and your special gifts.

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