



Five ways to good mental wellbeing & Christianity

Navigating the COVID-19 pandemic has accentuated what we all knew: that our mental health is important and is impacted as our physical, social and spiritual patterns are disrupted. For Christians, these five steps encouraged by the NHS integrate well with our everyday practice and pattern of our faith.

One Connect with God and other people



Human beings are born relational. From before our birth, our relationships with our family, the friends we choose, and with God are foundational, helping to form and strengthen us.

St John writes: “See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and that is what we are.”

— [1 JOHN 3:1](#)

Jesus said: “As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love.”

— [JOHN 15:9](#)

God loves and cares for each of us as His children. In the Lord’s Prayer, Jesus teaches us to call God “**Our Father...**”. Being with others who appreciate and love us as God loves us helps build our sense of belonging and value, as we more fully become the person God created us to be.

“Just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ... Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.”

— [1 CORINTHIANS 12:12-27](#)

St Paul uses this metaphor of us as individuals being parts of a body, the **Body of Christ**; eyes and ears and hands and feet, each with our vital interdependent contributions.

Connecting with people in **Church of England**, **Roman Catholic** and other **Christian church** communities, in person or online, can improve our mental wellbeing. Try gathering socially, as well as for worship with other Christians, sharing the bread and wine of **Holy Communion** around the Lord’s Table, **praying together**, learning together with courses like **Alpha**, serving your community through **food banks** and helping those with **financial issues**.

The shape of the cross, with arms reaching out horizontally to others, and up and down between God and me, embodies our connecting with God and connecting with others.

Two

Be physically active



“Do you not know that in a race the runners all compete, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win it. Athletes exercise self-control in all things; they do it to receive a perishable garland, but we an imperishable one. So I do not run aimlessly.”

— [1 CORINTHIANS 9:24-26](#)

St Paul uses exercising and sporting imagery about our Christian life journey. Our physical wellbeing contributes much to our mental and our spiritual wellbeing, and is partly why walking on pilgrimage can be valuable.

- **Our bodies are amazing** – scripture reminds us we are created in the image of God, [Genesis 1:26-28](#). As Christians, we are to love God and each other as we love ourselves. We are to do this with every part of us: heart, soul, mind, and strength: [Mark 12:30-31](#).
- **Our bodies are precious** – they are described as being a temple of the Holy Spirit within us in [1 Corinthians 6:19](#). Honouring and valuing our bodies and our physical health is important so that we can glorify God with our whole selves. Physical activity helps raise our self-esteem, reduces depression and anxiety, and lowers our risk of long-term health conditions, such as heart disease, Type 2 diabetes and some cancers.

Jesus heals people and cares for their physical needs and, in [Matthew 25:35-36](#), he tells us to love and care for the physical needs of all. Jesus also cared for those living with what we might now identify as mental ill health – remember the example of the man found ‘clothed and in his right mind’ after being with Jesus, in [Mark 5:1-20](#)? Healing is about becoming healthy, whether that is in body, mind or spirit. Try using some of the 10-minute physical workouts on the [NHS website](#) to contribute to your mental and spiritual wellbeing.

“Let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith.”

— [HEBREWS 12:1-2](#)

Three Learn something new every day



“Teach me your way, O Lord, that I may walk in your truth; give me an undivided heart.”

— [PSALM 86:11](#)

We often hear ‘you learn something new every day’ and we shouldn’t be surprised by that, as we are naturally inquisitive creatures. Indeed, life-long learning has so much more to offer, especially to those who struggled through school.

Many people had to learn new things during the COVID-19 pandemic and develop skills they never knew they needed – from baking bread to mastering video calls with family, friends and colleagues. In doing so, it is likely they have gained self-confidence and a sense of purpose. Learning something we enjoy can improve our mental wellbeing and counteract depression.

“They found the boy Jesus in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers.”

— [LUKE 2:46-47](#)

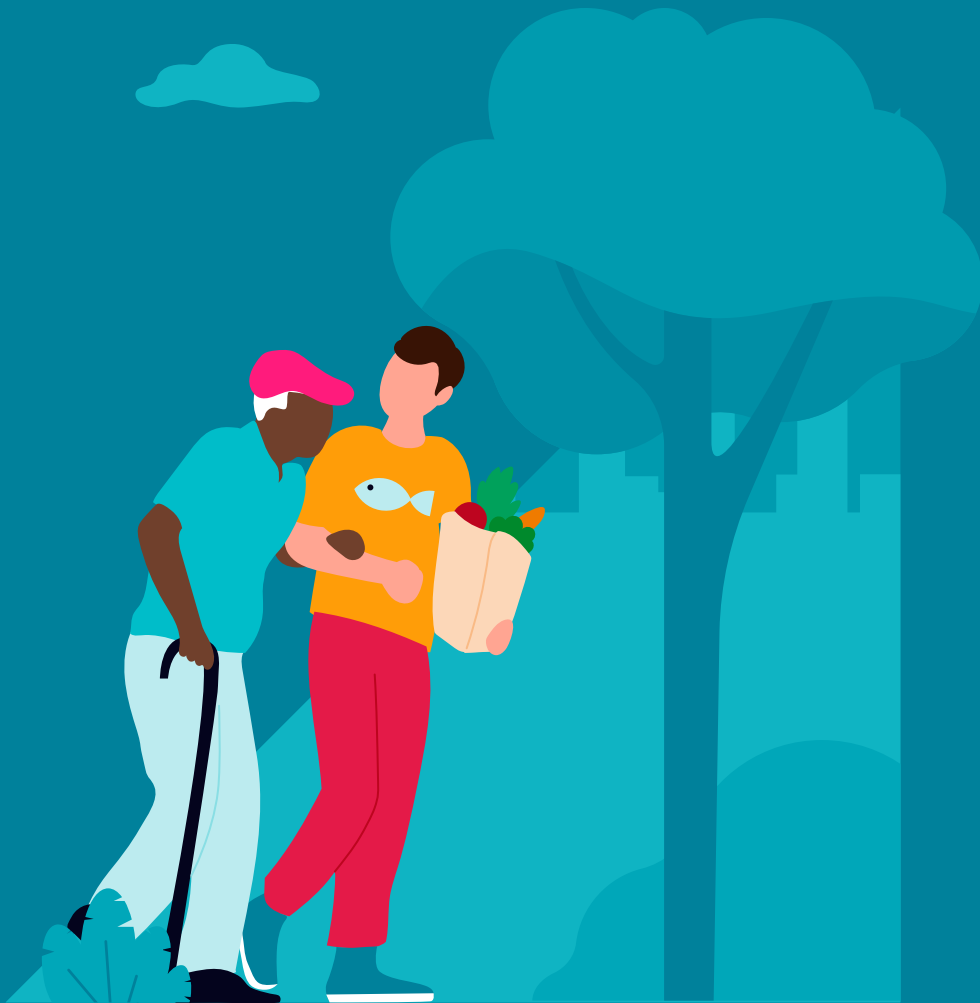
You might like to learn something new by:

- Signing up for an online course (e.g. through [FutureLearn](#))
- Joining a Bible study group through your [local church](#)
- Reading some books (and perhaps setting up a virtual book club with your friends)
- Finding a new hobby or rediscovering an old one
- Doing a crossword or Sudoku regularly
- Learning to cook or bake something new
- Learning about the Christian faith through [The Pilgrim Way](#) or [Alpha Course](#)
- Working on a DIY project – there are lots of free video tutorials online
- Using [YouTube](#) or TikTok to learn a dance routine or art and craft techniques

In the Gospels, Jesus is frequently called Rabbi and Teacher. The disciples learned from him through his stories and parables – and most famously, they asked him to teach them to pray: **Our Father...** ([Luke 11:1](#)). Using this, or other prayers, puts you directly in touch with Jesus the Teacher.

Four

Give to others



“Love your neighbour as yourself.”

— [MARK 12:31](#)

Generosity is at the heart of Christian faith, as we respond to our generous God who loves each of us, and gives us all that we have. Faith is put into action as we give.

Jesus calls us to love our neighbour, for their good – and ours too! He encourages us to share what we have, serve others – however small our gift – a few loaves and fishes, or the smallest coin ([Luke 21:1-4](#)).

Our mental wellbeing and self-esteem can be improved through giving to others by:

- Remembering God’s great love for us and the generosity that He has shown us
- Sharing the gifts and opportunities God has given us
- Growing closer to God and to other people around us

Enjoy giving to others by offering your:

- **Time and energy:** ([1 Tim 6:18-19](#)). Perhaps wash the dishes or fetch groceries for a neighbour; volunteer at a food bank (such as **Trussell Trust**), lunch club or night shelter (see **Robes Projects**). Local churches running such projects would welcome your help.
- **Friendship:** ([Gal 6:2](#)). Spend time asking someone how they are, listening to and praying for them. Consider a scheme like **Linking Lives**, which connects people to local seniors.
- **Talents and abilities:** ([1 Cor 12:4-7](#)). Use God’s gifts: bake a cake, share professional advice, teach someone a skill. Serve your local young people through mentorship, dance and sport (see **KICK**).
- **Finances:** ([2 Cor 9:6-7](#)). Money is a fundamental way we can share what we have. Christians are encouraged to support their local church and other charities and to give to local and international causes. If you are worried about debt, **Christians Against Poverty** can help.
- **Care:** ([Phil 2:3-5](#)). In everyday moments, choose to be generous, kind and considerate. Think how you can share generosity with those who are vulnerable in society or facing injustice and also care for our planet and natural resources.

Five Pay attention to the present moment



“The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters; he restores my soul. He leads me in right paths for his name’s sake.”

— [PSALM 23:1-3](#)

That most famous of Psalms, 23, knows that our souls need restoring, and paying attention to ourselves is vital to our wellbeing. Pausing, meditating, praying – all help our body and mind to reset, our pulse to slow, our nerves to settle. The God who created us knows how we tick.

“For it was you who formed my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother’s womb... I am fearfully and wonderfully made.”

— [PSALM 139:13-14](#)

You could try:

- Lighting a candle and reading a psalm or saying a prayer for yourself or a friend
- Doing something you enjoy – call a friend, watch or listen to a favourite programme, go for a walk or prepare a tasty meal
- Talking about how you feel – to a friend, a doctor or a priest. Don’t forget that the [Samaritans](#) are always available

“Do not fear ... I have called you by name, you are mine.”

— [ISAIAH 43:1](#)

Our confidence grows as our relationship with God deepens and we experience his love for us. Courses such as the [Wellbeing Journey](#) and listening to [mental health support advice](#) or accessing resources on the [Good Thinking](#) website all help bolster our resilience.

“Be still, and know that I am God!”

— [PSALM 46:10](#)

About Us

Good Thinking is supported by the NHS and London borough councils. We provide free, 24/7, digital support to Londoners seeking mental health advice and help regardless of where they are on their journey. We offer round the clock support and self-care options that are easy to access, and simple to navigate.

Our Mission

We support individuals to look after their mental wellbeing in a way that works best for them. We encourage everyone to be proactive about their mental health and we provide tools and guidance to support this. If these suggestions or the resources on Good Thinking are not helpful for you, try talking to your GP about what else may be more helpful for you.

For more information, visit www.good-thinking.uk



This text has been adapted by, Alastair Cutting, Mia Holborn, Keli Bolton, Juliet Evans, Gabby Parikh, Clare Lucas and others. Please click on the logos above to be taken directly to the corresponding websites.