

IS CORONA VIRUS A PUNISHMENT BY GOD?

1. Some people are afraid that Corona virus is a punishment from God for our sins. Take courage, this corona virus disease is not a punishment from God. It is not a curse. The God of Jesus Christ is a God of love, not a God of vengeance.

2. In the Old Testament the people of Israel interpreted the evils as God's punishment for their sins. That was because, at that time, they didn't yet believe in life after death. They thought then that a just God must reward the good and punish the wicked in this life.

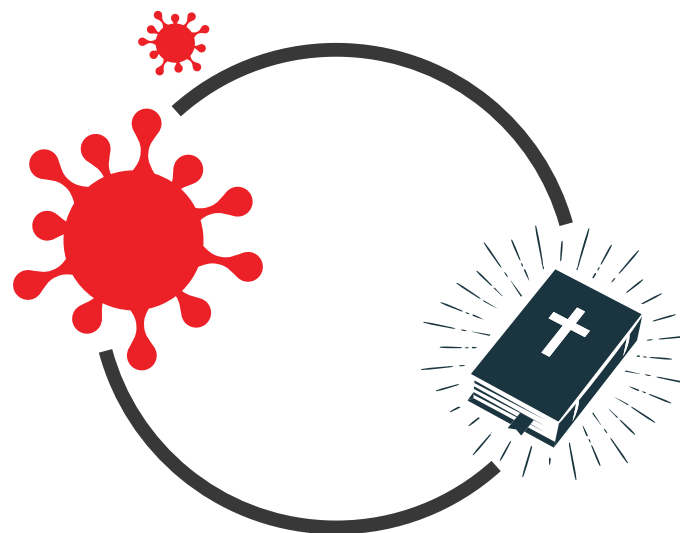
3. But in the parable of the Prodigal Son Jesus showed us how merciful God is. The younger son wasted half his father's wealth. But his father was waiting every day for him to return. When the son did return his father was overjoyed. Instead of punishing him he put on a great feast.

4. In John 9:2 Jesus' disciples asked him if the man born blind was being punished for his own sins or for his parents' sins. Jesus said, "Neither was it for his own sins nor for his parents' sins. He was born blind so that God's power might be shown in him." Jesus went on to heal the blind man.

5. In Luke 13:1-5, Jesus said that if Jews were killed by the Romans or if they had an accident and died it didn't mean that God was punishing them because they were great sinners. However these tragedies are signs or reminders that we should learn from. Our sins can lead us to separation from God, a much worse misfortune.

6. No! Corona virus is not a punishment from God. However, it might help us to be more humble. We are not in control of our world or of ourselves. The virus reminds us to live for the God who offers us not just a short life here on earth but a share in the risen life of Christ for all eternity.

AN SCC SHARING ABOUT THE EXPERIENCE OF THE COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS



Archdiocese of Suva
May 2020

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Explanation

We are used to following the LUMKO 7 Step method of gospel sharing. But there is another LUMKO method of sharing called LOOK – LISTEN – LOVE.

The first step is to look at our experience. At present, we all share the experience of coping with the COVID-19 restrictions. So let us share our experience of this. Sharing in a group helps us to understand things better and to find peace. It also helps everyone in the group to recognise our responsibilities and new ways of coping.

The second step is to listen to God. After 3 minutes silence we try to look at our experiences from God's point of view. See the situation as God sees it, but without searching for bible quotations.

Better to look at the experience in the spirit of the entire biblical message. Some

words of the bible may come to mind and we can use them. But don't try to find a quick answer by quoting a few bible texts. If there are opposing views about how

God sees the problem then we need more prayer and consultation.

Step 3 is to discuss what God might want the group to do about the situation.

Choose an action which is practical and realistic enough to be done by the group members. Allow everyone to make suggestions.

Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the main suggestions, remembering God's view. Decide on one action. Make clear who is going to act, what they will do and when they will do it.

SCC Meeting

Step 1. The SCC leader reads out the explanation above first. S/he then reads the instructions below.

Step 2. Who will invite the Risen Christ to be with us during this meeting?

Step 3. I invite anyone, who wishes, to share what they found especially difficult about the restrictions imposed because of COVID-19 and why that was difficult.

Step 4. Would anyone else like to share your experience of the restrictions?

Step 5. [Continue until everyone, who wishes, has shared. Don't force anyone to speak. Don't allow anyone to cut in on someone who is speaking. Encourage everyone to listen carefully.]

Step 6. We will now keep silence for 3 minutes and ask ourselves, "What does God think and feel about this situation."

Step 7. (After 3 minutes) Please share with us now what you think God feels about this situation. What is God's point of view regarding COVID-19 and the restrictions here in Fiji?

Step 8. [Continue to invite people to share what they think that God feels about the situation.]

Step 9. What does God want us to do in this situation? Who will do what and when?

Step 10. Let us make our prayers and petitions to God. Then we will sing a hymn together to end our meeting.