



Stress or De-stress

This is an application of Psalm 23, written particularly for the economically stressful times of 2009, but has universal application. It is easy to put on.

The NIV translation has been used, with the alternative wording for verse 4.

The drama is accompanied by a PowerPoint presentation for the narrated section. Two narrators are required, but equally this could be expanded to four – an opportunity to use some folk on a trial basis. Preferably equal nos. of male and female voices (but not essential)

SETTING

Two friends out for a hill walk, stopping for lunch at the top or vantage point

Props should provide something for the two to step up onto and a large box or bench suitably covered to offer a rock for the two to sit on.

ACTION

The two friends come out from among the congregation carrying rucksacks and wearing other items of outdoor gear. They should arrive by a side aisle so they don't have their backs to the main congregation at any point. They step up onto the platform, look around briefly while they catch their breath.

Hiker 1 (*this can begin on their trek along the aisle – but timing needs to be watched*)

What a fabulous day!

Hiker 2

Yeah, it's not often we get ones like this at this time of year

Hiker 1

Look, there's the cairn at the top

Hiker 2 (*They arrive at top and after looking around then pointing away diagonally off stage*)

There's Bray Head in the distance and the two Sugar loafs (*here substitute any local hills or mountains*) nextit's so clear today.

Hiker 1

It must be time for lunch.....let's sit here and enjoy the view while we eat.

Hiker 2

Yeah, sounds about right to me.....here's a good rock to sit on

They open rucksacks, pull out lunch and flask; one pours tea while the other opens a pack of sandwiches and each serves the other. They can engage in small talk over

setting out lunch. They both begin to eat and drink (careful not to have full mouths when they need to speak!!)

Hiker 2

So, how ARE things going with you these days?

Hiker 1

OK, I guess

Hiker 2

I know things have been very difficult in your work – are you sure you're OK

Hiker 1 *(slowly and reluctantly at first)*

Well, not really; this recession has me really under pressure and worried. I'm just about keeping my head above water – but I'm afraid it will all blow up one of these days.

Hiker 2

Sounds really tough

Hiker 1

Well, since the downturn at work we had to take less pay.... and there is uncertainty..... I'm worried about my mortgage; I'm a couple of months in arrears....and less immediate.....but down the road, my pension. I suppose it's what you call stressand it's having an effect on home life tooand then my mother is seriously ill.

Hiker 2

And does God fit into this anywhere for you?

Hiker 1

God! *(spoken with surprise)*...I never thought too much about Him; I'm tempted to blame him, but I suppose that's not fair either. Anyway, do you think he has any interest in my affairs?

Hiker 2

Tell you what, I have a reassuring piece on my iPod which you might like to hear

Hiker 1

Sure, why not.

Hiker 2 *(rooting in his ruck sack).*

I have it here somewhere....if I could only find it! *(e produces the iPod and headphones, which Hiker 1 puts on – as they are doing this, Hiker 2 continues*

It's an insight into Psalm 23from the bible

Hiker 1 begins listening; they continue to have lunch while the Narrators and PowerPoint presentation take over.

Here the narrators enter (from either side, like drifting in) and read the statement from Psalm 23 and the comment alternately – PowerPoint presentation and narrators need to synchronize well, but eh pace needs to be set by the narrators – with a well judged

pause after the comment. (If anyone should require a copy of the PowerPoint presentation, please email us)

Narrator 1

The LORD is my shepherd,

Narrator 2

That's relationship!

The narrators continue in this fashion – with good expression particularly on the application statement.

I shall not be in want.

That's supply!

He makes me lie down in green pastures

That's rest!

He leads me beside quiet waters,

That's refreshment!

He restores my soul.

That's Healing!

He guides me in paths of righteousness

That's guidance!

For his name's sake.

That's purpose!

Even though I walk through the darkest valley,

That's testing!

I will fear no evil,

That's protection!

For you are with me;

That's faithfulness!

Your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

That's discipline!

You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies.

That's hope!

You anoint my head with oil;

That's consecration!

My cup overflows.

That's abundance!

Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life,

That's blessing!

And I will dwell in the house of the LORD

That's security!

Forever

That's eternity!

After it finishes, Hiker 1 drops the earphones to his neck and turns to Hiker 2

Hiker 1

That all sounds greatbut where does that have any meaning in today's world?
Can I expect God to change my circumstances?

Hiker 2

Well, no, we can't expect him to wave a magic wand and it all goes away.

Hiker 1

Then what's the point?

Hiker 2

He can give a whole new perspective on life, a new set of valuesthat makes it so much easier to handle the problems we faceand he often does change circumstances in different sorts of ways that we never expectbut you have to turn to him.

Hiker 1

So you're saying he can change stress into de-stress? *(be careful this does not come across as distress)*

Hiker 2

Yes, and you've got to choose.

Both hikers turn to the congregation and together, they say

Stress..... or de-stress,.... you choose! (needs to be up on screen – particularly to avoid confusion with distress)

Before any opportunity for audience applause, immediately play a song version of Psalm 23 (one with easy to hear words) – to create an atmosphere of reflection – make sure your licence covers this.

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