

I wonder how you slept last night? I didn't sleep too well. These are anxious times and some of us are finding it hard not to worry. People are saying that this is like the second world war, which might be true, but I'm not sure it helps!

During the war, there were refugee camps with children who had been orphaned, and the staff there found a trick to help the children to be calm and to sleep. They gave them bread to put under their pillows! Once the children knew there would be something to eat tomorrow, they were able to calm down.

I got this story from "Sleeping with Bread" by Dennis Lunn - its a great book and you get it on line.

Being worried, or fearful, or panicky, is not just something in our minds - that's why just telling someone to "not worry" doesn't work. Its also in our bodies. So we might need to do several things to help us to worry less, and some of them are physical. Like breathing. Next time you get a bit jittery, uptight, and feel overwhelmed - try breathing out as much as you can, and then taking a big breath back in. When I was taught to do this, it was breath out for 4, breath in for 3. I was reading something recently and they talked about 7 / 11 breathing - out for 11, in for 7. I think the kids today count quicker than we used to - everyone's so speedy with the youth!!

As well as breathing, we can try and keep some other routines - going to bed and getting up at the same time is good, like eating regular meals. Its temping to say - oh let's stay up as long as we like or lie in, or eat whatever for comfort - but actually what we're missing is normality. Anything we can do to be a bit normal is helpful.

And maybe we can find something to put under our pillow - literally or figuratively - to help us sleep. Probably not bread these days - maybe toilet roll?! Or a picture of a loved one or our family - something to give us hope and make us strong - this is why we're getting through this, this is who will be there tomorrow. I have a small cross i wear, and when I'm anxious I can hold it. We have holding crosses like this in church and I'd bring them to you if I could. If you're feeling anxious, find something to hold onto that gives you life.