

## **Getting Job is beneficial for the weakest**

George Georgiou

It's not been smooth sailing for many over the last year or two.

Although lockdown is unprecedented in our lifetime, we've been building up to this like a marathon runner's preparations.

In the 90's I lead a church at NMU. It was a time of unprecedented political change in our nation and when HIV was the unknown epidemic of the decade. I remember sitting in seminars warning us that one third of the student population would pass away in 10 years. There was no cure. There is no cure still.

People worried about toilet seats and churches about communion.

Doomsday "preppers" planned, End-Timers held huge gatherings and HIV and AIDS was an acronym for this or that, some said. Eventually we knew more, we knew better.

To this day there are lasting changes on how we do church, gone is the communion chalice and the bread pieces, now on-scale communion is served in pre-packaged form. Some were disappointed.

And we moved on.

We have already seen some positive changes now too.

We've rediscovered the value of being with family and friends anywhere, even if it's in our own back yard.

We've learned that a wedding is about a family standing before God, not a competition for 'the gram' - our church still has 21 weddings to officiate this year!

We have found that faith communities are about connections not conferences. We're moving on.

We've also shaped our personal identity, sharpened our ability to make decisions based on our own unique picture.

Full disclosure here: I unexpectedly lost my father to COVID earlier this year. Unexpectedly because he was healthy, other family members recovered and we were all on 'sheep' medicine.

Except for waking up tired, he showed no symptoms and it was a job just to get him to hospital where scans revealed immense lung damage.

We're all having to make complicated decisions on our future; to vaccinate or not, to gather or not, to work from home with relocating options or to hold on for a bit of normal, to assign blame to some other party or to accept things as a fait accompli.

My personal view is best expressed in this Bible verse: "For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win the more." (1 Corinthians 9 vs 19 – 23). Here the author explains that, although he was free to do whatever he wanted, he was also free to obligate himself to others.

Much like marriage, free to date anyone, loving enough to obligate oneself to someone. “To the weak, I became as weak” he goes on to say.

This means to me that, although I am free to take my own risks and express my faith as I choose to, I instead obligate myself to do what would be most beneficial for the weakest.

In response, I received my second dose two weeks back and I recommended it to others too.

The beauty of the church is that there is space for each person and community to discern how best to interpret Bible verses.

That seemed wisest option for my situation. It’s my way of moving on.

Church at the university blossomed, thousands attended, we got better, braver and bolder. You will too.

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