

Decision Making

So many new decisions have had to be made over this last year, some of them over and over again. We've needed to make some really quickly about some very important things. Sometimes the responsibility for that has been completely taken out of our hands and restrictions have dictated how things will be. We may have experienced relief as the need to make decisions is taken from us for a while.

If we are used to methodical and considered decision making, by the time we've made a decision, the landscape has changed. If we are used to using our gut, how do we know if we can trust it in such confusing times?

We can procrastinate in decision-making – not getting round to really thinking things through and choosing a way forward. It requires brainpower, the ability to see things ahead, courage, the right people in the room. When we're tired, we don't go there if we don't have to. It can be easier to keep talking rather than make a decision that requires action and could be wrong. We might have a reason not to meet as often as Kirk Sessions in covid times – why make decisions if you don't have to?!

And personal decision-making can take a hit. It can become easier to work on what should be a day off, as we can't decide how to spend time well in these strange days. The decisions involved with something like a family Christmas can be left to someone else because it just feels like too much effort. We sit down in front of the tv, stare at the supermarket shelf, and just want someone else to decide for us.

Some thoughts

- Indecision is still a decision. By not making a proactive decision, we allow 'what is' and 'what is coming' to be decided without meaning to. We don't ever find ourselves doing the things which do us good by accident – I end up in the chip shop by accident, watching the next thing iplayer queues up by accident.

'In any moment of decision, the best thing you can do is the right thing, the next best thing is the wrong thing, and the worst thing you can do is nothing.' Theodore Roosevelt

- Know our values. These are the steady elements of who we are, the things of value to us, to our family, our leadership, or our church. Some will be stated, some might be assumed. We might be very clear in our mission as church, or the things which are important for our home life. Clarity in these things will help make some of our decisions for us. Allow mission and vision to act as a compass for us in strange times.
- Capacity for change. We need to pay attention to this, in ourselves and our church. None of us can cope with change in all areas of life all of the time – unless we have some serious attachment issues! In change and uncertainty, there will be grief, loss, and anxiety at various times. We need to spot those signs in ourselves or others and not look for more change, unless necessary. The thing people can find hardest in change is loss – have we taken care to grieve over the things which have been lost this year before taking hold of the opportunity? Even when change is good, it is not easy.
- Decision fatigue & paralysis. This last year has been unrelenting. We may not want to make any more decisions if we can help it, especially if we are tired or unsure of what is right.
 - Experiment – decide for 2 or 3 months at a time – reduce the pressure on big decisions
 - Take care to address the attitude to failure – personal or church. ‘Fail often to succeed sooner’ requires a different way of thinking. It certainly takes the pressure off some decisions when you’re ok with making a mistake.
 - Forecast – “if this happens, then this... is what we will do; if that happens, then that... is what we will do.”
- Who is at the decision-making table?

There is an opportunity here to reframe who sits alongside you and who speaks in. There may be wisdom not usually round the table who can be invited in for this season. Don't presume the usual people and ways have to be sustained exactly the same.

Careful – Zoom fatigue might mean we are missing some of our people who usually bring energy. It's not only those without digital connection who might not be in the room.

- Listen to God – in all of the ways he speaks. Pray, read, meditate, others.

Pray “Lord, tell me what to do.” Create quiet – in the car, in a meeting, in life.

Focus on a question and don't move until it is answered.