

Commentary: Welcome to the office of the future: How to 'cast all your anxiety' on God

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The Jetsons were an animated television family in the early 1960s. Their space-age home was cleaned by Rosie the robot. They talked to each other via video and smartwatches and read the news on flat-screen televisions. Drone-like flying pods delivered their children to school. Voice-activated devices talked to them.

That was then; this is now.

As a result of the coronavirus pandemic, interior designers are busy planning the office of the future. [Here's a vision](#) of what office workers may come back to (whenever that is).

The doors into our office building will open automatically so we don't have to touch them. We will tell the elevator our floor so we don't have to touch its buttons. Elevator occupancy will be regulated to enable social distancing.

Our office will have dividers separating workspaces spaced further apart. Break rooms and kitchens will have fewer chairs and signs documenting the last time they were cleaned.

All of this reverses the trend following the last recession in which companies were trying to do more with less space. Many packed their employees into open office spaces, a practice known as "densification." This likely will be reversed now with more private spaces or personal offices for employees. Sensors will detect and warn of overcrowding;

employees will take turns using private offices and will work from home otherwise.

One company is developing a concept called “Six Feet Office” with visually displayed foot traffic routing to keep employees six feet apart. Higher quality air filtration systems, UV lighting to sanitize surfaces, and more ubiquitous hand-sanitizing stations are predicted. So are [infrared body temperature scanners](#) and virus and antibody testing kits for employees.

We will need more space for fewer employees

All of this, of course, assumes we will return to our offices.

[According to a new MIT report](#), 34 percent of Americans who previously commuted to work were working from home by the first week of April due to coronavirus. Prior to the pandemic, only 4 percent of the American workforce worked from home at least half the time.

Home offices are becoming more ubiquitous as a result. People are looking for ways to convert a closet or add a room to create more functional work-from-home space. They are buying desks, office supplies and computer technology more frequently than before.

Does this trend mean companies will lease less space? One way companies can lessen the financial impact of the pandemic is to reduce their rent obligations. However, while they may have fewer in-office employees, their social-distancing space may need to be larger, so that the two trends cancel each other out.

“Return, O my soul, to your rest”

As we look to the future with the pandemic, it's vital that we look to the past with our Lord.

Psalm 116 begins: “I love the Lord” (v. 1a). This is a present-tense affirmation and experience. But here is why the psalmist makes this declaration: “because he has heard my voice and my pleas for mercy” (v. 1b). He trusts God in the present because God has been trustworthy in the past.

The psalmist makes his point again: “Because he *has* inclined his ear to me, therefore I *will* call on him as long as I live” (v. 2, my emphasis). Once again, he bases his present faith in God on God's faithfulness in the past.

He then illustrates: “The snares of death encompassed me; the pangs of Sheol laid hold on me; I suffered distress and anguish. Then I called on the name of the Lord: ‘O Lord, I pray, deliver my soul!’” (vv. 3-4).

This experience taught him that “gracious is the Lord, and righteous; our God is merciful” (v. 5). He knows “the Lord preserves the simple” because “when I was brought low, he saved me” (v. 6). Now he can say, “Return, O my soul, to your rest; for the Lord has dealt bountifully with you” (v. 7).

How to “cast all your anxiety on him”

What pandemic-induced changes in your life today are especially difficult for you? Name them, then identify times in the past when God has been faithful to you when you faced related challenges.

If you're struggling financially, remember previous times when God met your needs. If you're worried about the future, remember days when such worries were met by God's grace. If you're concerned about your family or

health, remember when God provided for your family and health.

Now trust your present fears to your ever-present Father. He promises that “he will not leave you or forsake you” (Deuteronomy 31:6). Jesus assured us, “I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:20). You can “cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you” (1 Peter 5:7).

R.C. Sproul observed: “The issue of faith is not so much whether we believe in God, but whether we believe the God we believe in.”

Do you?

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