

It's that time of year to throw open the windows and let the fresh air in! So while you're giving your home a spring clean, why not have a spiritual spring clean also. ANNETTE SPURR reports...



## SPRING CLEANING FOR YOUR SOUL

Finally! It's getting warmer, the grass is greener, flowers are blooming and there's a fresh, new feeling in the air. It's Spring! It's that time of year when your house gets a good clean out; sorting through the paraphernalia that's have accumulated over Winter and turving out the things that are just taking up space or worse, damaging your upholstery! Now's the perfect time for a clean out of the spiritual kind, too. Shake off all the

things that are weighing heavily on your mind and in your heart and move forward with renewed energy and vitality into the plans and purposes God has for your life. Here are 7 tips to get you started...

### Forgive someone

One of the hardest things to do but so rewarding. Forgiveness actually has little or nothing to do with the person who's hurt you. It's like releasing

someone from prison and realising the prisoner was actually yourself all along. Whether the person who hurt you is sorry or not, releasing yourself from the bondage of anger and bitterness has powerful physical and mental healing benefits. Unforgiveness is poison to your body and soul, silently destroying you from the inside out. Forgiveness is a spiritual detox, removing harmful toxins of offence, anger and resentment that are

preventing you from being all you can be in Christ (Mark 11:12).

### Start a gratitude journal

Each night, write down all the things you're grateful for. It's a great way to be reminded of the blessings in your life, whether things are going well, or you've had a terrible day. A study conducted by the greater Good Science Centre, showed that people who did this simple act each day displayed increased alertness, better sleep, improved social interactions, improved health and even reduced blood pressure. "Fill your minds and meditating on things true, noble, reputable, authentic, compelling, gracious—the best, not the worst; the beautiful, not the ugly; things to praise, not things to curse. Put into practice what you learned from me, what you heard and saw and realized. Do that, and God, who makes everything work together, will work you into his most excellent harmonies." Philippians 4:8 MSG.

### Do a Friendship Cleanse

You become like the people you spend time with. So, who are you giving your time to? Have you surrounded yourself with people who add value to your life? Do they help you achieve your dreams and cheer you on? Are there people in your life who bring you down and talk about you behind your back? It's time for a friendship cleanse. You don't necessarily need to send out 'Dear John' letters but be aware of who's getting your time at the moment and how you feel when you're around them. Is your time better spent elsewhere?

### Get Active

Getting off the couch is the hardest part of exercise. Once you get started, your

body and your mind will thank you and even start to crave it! It's not about squeezing into a bikini this Summer. It's about being the absolute best you can be. There's oodles of scientific evidence to support the mental and physical health benefits of exercise and making good eating decisions. Sending out feel-good endorphins, increasing vitality, exercise is an integral part of any spiritual spring clean.

### Plan a getaway

There's something so uplifting about planning a holiday... researching locations, selecting accommodation, organising activities. Give yourself something to look forward to, whether it's with family, friends, or by yourself. Getting away from it all is good for your soul. Difficult circumstances in your life can appear so much more manageable with the perspective and insight that a little time and distance brings. You're not running away, just taking a 'time out.'

### Take one last long, hot bath

Soon, it'll be too warm for this simple pleasure so do it ASAP! Make sure the house is quiet first – ie kids are in bed and hubby is set up in front of the tv. Run a hot bath – I like it so hot, you have to ease into it slowly and gently. Make sure there are bubbles involved. Light candles and turn out the lights. Grab a good book and a cool drink. And... relax. This sanctuary is ideal for clearing your mind. Take your time –

at least an hour. Put the book down for a while, lie back and lose yourself in weightlessness and serenity. Pray. Listen for God's voice and meditate on His words.

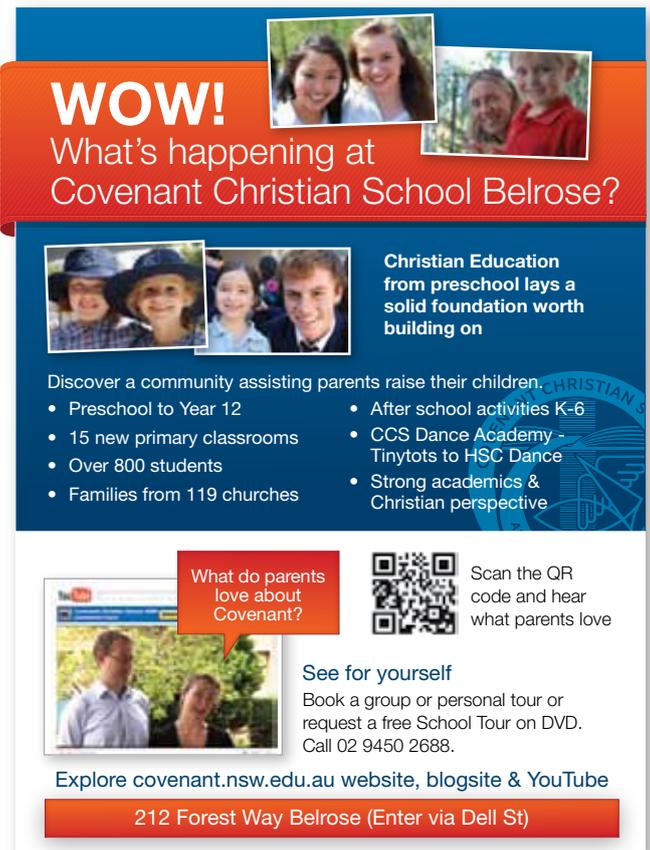
### Me Time

In the busyness of life, time alone is often the first thing that disappears. Make sure you take time out to invest in whatever makes you happy... Watch a movie, go for a walk, read a book, visit an inspiring friend or relative, write a letter, go shopping – not grocery shopping – fun shopping! 'Me Time' is good for your morale and gives your mind a break from the things that are weighing you down, even making them seem less daunting.

Make this Spring a season of new beginnings in your life. There's a new creation inside of you just waiting to blossom! CW

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Annette has worked in media and advertising for 14 years. She lives in Brisbane and owns Blue Box Media, a boutique advertising agency, with her husband, Phil. Annette is also Editor of [mumdaily.com.au](http://mumdaily.com.au) – a website dedicated to encouraging mums on their life and faith journey. Phil and Annette have two boys, Tyson & Jack.



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