

SELF-CARE PRACTICES

In writing to us a Brazilian missionary shared the following thought:

There are moments in our lives when we need to stop because we often invest our lives so much in the ministry that we forget to care for ourselves.

As Christian workers, we are committed to caring for others. But we cannot forget that we are also responsible to take care of ourselves. It doesn't mean that we should become self-centered but that we should be good stewards of what God had given us lest we succumb to burnout and waning effectiveness.

Following are some different areas (and sometimes they do overlap) and also some practical suggestions for each area. Since the list isn't exhaustive nor does one size fit all, each one can add to the lists, choose what speaks to them and thus customize it for their own lives. In fact, we already know these things but we simply need to remind ourselves of them from time to time. The important thing is that we don't neglect to care for ourselves in each area. As we better care for ourselves, we are far better equipped to care for others.

Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.
1 Corinthians 6:19-20

PHYSICAL

Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, "Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest." Mark 6:31

Get enough sleep
Eat nutritiously
Exercise – walk, swim, sports
Avoid using alcohol, medication as crutches
Avoid excessive caffeine & sugar
Allergies can cause depression & fatigue
See a doctor for a check-up or illness

SPIRITUAL

Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life. Prov. 4:23

Time in the Word
Prayer
Sing
Confess your fears and feelings to God
Listen to music
Reject bitterness & unforgiveness
Praise God for large and small
Be thankful
Remember only God is perfect
Know and use your gift(s)
Keep short accounts with God and others
Learn to say no
Develop a theology of suffering
Journal your feelings, thoughts, prayers
See "Sabbath Rest"

FAMILY

Eph 5:33-6:4
*... love his wife ... wife respect her husband
Children, obey your parents...Honor your father and mother...Fathers ... bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.*

Spend time with family members
Eat meals together as a family
Have some family recreation
Show genuine interest in each one
Correspond with family
Use the telephone, etc to stay in touch
Read Scripture/devotionals, pray together
Date your spouse
Spend one-on-one time with children
Have a family night

COMMUNITY

And the eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you"; or again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." 1 Cor. 12:21

Worship with others
Spend time with friends
Ask for help when needed
Seek to help others
Resolve relationship problems
Live in peace with others if possible
Share your heart with a close friend
Give to someone in need
Serve with someone
Have someone debrief you
Have good relationships with your leaders
Be a peacemaker, not a peace keeper

SABBATH REST

Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. Matt. 11:29

Regular worship alone and with others
Take a day off regularly
Build in times of rest
Rest body, mind and spirit
Get away for awhile
Take regular vacations
Practice silence and solitude

RECREATION

Whatever you do, do all to the glory of God
1 Cor 10:31

Observe recreation regularly
Do things you enjoy
Do things that relax you
Find a hobby – unrelated to work
Play games
Refuse guilt when recreating

Mental

Be transformed by the renewing of your mind
Romans 12:2

Read to learn something new
Study a topic of interest
Take a course of study
Do puzzles & challenging games
Learn a new skill
Be creative in some area

EMOTIONS

A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a broken spirit saps a person's strength.
Prov. 17:22

Laugh more often
Grieve if necessary
Share your heart with a close friend
Don't take everything personally
Don't dwell on what might happen
Don't dwell on what might have been
Deal with the past if necessary
Learn your personal limitations

REsources

Embracing Soul Care Stephen Smith
Emotionally Healthy Spirituality Peter Scazzero
For God's Sake, Rest James Anderson
Handling Stress Effectively Lee Hotchkiss
How To Win Over Worry John E. Haggai
Invitation to Solitude & Silence Ruth H. Barton
The Rest of God Mark Buchanan
Too Soon to Quit Lareau Linquist
Why, God, Why Lareau Linquist
www.barnabas.org - links to
Encouragement Online Magazine
Encouragement letters
Information on events and retreats

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This is what the Sovereign LORD, the Holy One of Israel, says: "In repentance and rest is your salvation, in quietness and trust is your strength..."
Isaiah 30:15

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