



Self-Care: Living and Being Well

Taking Care of Yourself to Enjoy Life

In our fast-paced society, we have many demands upon our time and energy; work, family, friends, and community activities. While these are all important and give us a sense of accomplishment and connection, we also need to look at how these activities are impacting our health and well-being.

*Self-care means finding a way of **being** that nurtures your emotional and spiritual self and changing your lifestyle habits so that they enhance your physical self. This approach to living leads to a sense of well-being and contentment within your inner self and your outer environment.*

Within this brochure, basic self-care strategies relating to supportive networks, healthy eating, body movement, spiritual connections, and restoration/re-creation are presented to assist you in looking at lifestyle changes you may want to make.

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Take your everyday, ordinary life By your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking around life Bplace it before God as an offering...fix your attention on God. You=ll be changed from the inside out. @ (Romans 12:1, 2b The Message)

Supportive Networks

Approximately 80% of us are trying to make a lifestyle change, but only 20% are successful. Why? The key seems to be support from family, friends, and co-workers. (J. Allen, Healthy Habits, Healthy Friends, 2008)

We seem to have the perception that asking for help in the midst of difficulties and life-changes means that we are not self-sufficient and strong. Therefore, too many of us try to deal with the stuff of life alone.

The reality is that in order to survive life's difficulties, lifestyle change, and the stresses of day-to-day activities, a network of people is needed to offer encouragement, emotional support, and strategies for coping.

“Gently encourage the stragglers and reach out for the exhausted, pulling them to their feet. Be patient with each person, attentive to individual needs”

(1 Thess. 5:14)

It is essential to have a support network when you are making a lifestyle change. It is the most significant tool for ensuring success.

As you build your supportive network for lifestyle change look for people with these qualities:

- ♥ someone you can trust,
- ♥ will be honest with you,
- ♥ hold you accountable but not be judgmental,
- ♥ offers encouragement,
- ♥ helps you formulate and revise your plans to improve your health and well-being.

Healthy Eating



Eating is a complex matter in our society. It is influenced by family and ethnic traditions, as well as by religious customs and personal preferences. Convenience, cost, habit, social pressure, and advertising all play a part in influencing our nutritional choices. Food has many meanings within our lives, including symbolic ones. It is rarely just the fuel needed to sustain ourselves.

As you look at changing your eating habits, keep in mind these guidelines;

- ▲ Review your portion size
- ▲ Set a reasonable calorie limit: 1500-1800 calories
- ▲ Decrease refined sugars and starches
- ▲ Increase complex carbohydrates and fiber
- ▲ Increase both the amount and variety of vegetables and fruits
- ▲ Increase your water intake, you need 6-8 8 oz glasses per day.
- ▲ Allow yourself a comfort food in limited quantities and on a limited basis.
- ▲ Alter your eating habits of where, when and how much you eat
- ▲ Think about if you have a physical hunger or an emotional one
- ▲ Use a pocket-size notebook or electronic app to track what and how much you are eating
- ▲ Eat a fruit, veggie, or small amount of protein as a snack between meal

- ▲ As you fill your plate use the following picture:
 - 1/2 = vegetables/fruit/greens
 - 1/4 = complex starch (fist size)
 - 1/4 = 3-4 oz of protein (palm size)

Remember food is a gift from God meant to be used wisely and appropriately.

Body Movement



God designed our bodies to be active.

Our sedentary lifestyle prevents our bodies from being used as God meant them to be. There are three basic types of physical activity.

❖ **Aerobic:** Activities that increase your breathing and heart rate, improves your stamina, endurance and cardio-vascular health.

Examples include: walking, running, bicycling, dancing, and swimming.

Health Benefits: reduces risk of high blood pressure, heart disease and diabetes. Increases energy, promotes weight loss and restful sleep, and decreases depression.

❖ **Stretching:** Activities that strengthen the posture muscles (legs, back, and abdomen) increase the flexibility of your joints and range of motion, and assists in maintaining your balance.

Examples include: dancing, court sports, martial arts, yoga, Tai-chi, Pilates.

Health benefits: prevents falls, injuries, and joint pain and allows for better range of motion and quality of life.

❖ **Strength:** Activities that build muscle tissue and strengthen bones. Examples include: working with weights, hiking, calisthenics, and manual labor.

Health Benefits: raises metabolism, helps control weight and blood sugar.

The biggest obstacle to regular physical activity is making it part of your lifestyle. Integrate physical activity into your day through several small choices and actions.

- * Wear a pedometer. It gives you a concrete measurement of how much activity you are actually doing as well as increasing your awareness. Aim for 5,000-10,000 steps/day.
- * Start small; go for 10 minute walks twice daily. After a week increase it to 15 minutes. Then increase the number of sessions.
- * Dress for the weather to help keep you on track doing outside activities.
- * Avoid the closest bathroom, use one further away.
- * Make a habit of parking towards the back of lot, use the stairs when going down floors in a building.
- * Write your work-out appointment in pen on your calendar. Be intentional about keeping it.

- * Make sure you enjoy the physical activity that you choose.
- * Use the buddy system; it's difficult to let someone else down.
- * Team your work-out time with your prayer or meditation time, both body and soul will benefit.



Spiritual Connections

The general concept of spiritual life is that this relates to the innermost core of your self. Most often your spiritual life provides a sense of meaning, principles for living, and gives you a point of connection with the Divine.

Within our Christian heritage, activities called Spiritual Disciplines give us methods to intentionally place ourselves before God, so that God can work at transforming us into the image of Christ for a hurting and broken world.

Individual Disciplines include:

- ✦ Formational scripture reading
- ✦ Journaling
- ✦ Prayer
- ✦ Solitude
- ✦ Simplicity
- ✦ Fasting

Communal Disciplines include:

- ✦ Worship
- ✦ Study
- ✦ Guidance
- ✦ Service
- ✦ Hospitality
- ✦ Confession

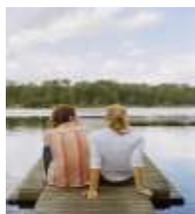
Solitary, meditative-type Disciplines feed introverts. Extroverts relate

more to those activities done within groups of people.

Your dominant mode of how you relate to the world affects how you relate to the Divine as well. Some people prefer auditory activities like music or discussion groups. Others relate best by working with their hands through service projects. A third mode is through the visual activities of reading, art and pictures.

The most important factor is to become aware of what connects you to God and then to intentionally practice that activity. Intention is the key to cultivating our relationship with God.

Renewal and Restoration



A common refrain heard in today's society is 'I am so busy'. What we have forgotten in our 'busy-ness' is God's instruction to observe the rhythm of Sabbath rest.

"Get away with me and you'll recover your life" (Matt. 11:29 The Message)

From Wayne Muller in his book Sabbath,

"The practice of Sabbath is designed specifically to restore us, a gift of time in which we allow the cares and concerns of our work to fall away."

Practicing Sabbath doesn't mean surrendering to a list of "can'ts" or restrictive activities.

Sabbath is meant to create time and space for rest, relaxation, prayer, song, and fellowship. We need time from our work to restore our souls, relationships, and minds so that we

feel a renewal of mental clarity and a restoration of physical energy that allows us to continue our work effectively and joyfully.

Sabbath practices are often connected with Jewish traditions. In reality, you can develop your own activities of Sabbath. The essential element is that this time is set apart for renewal and relaxation.

Intentionality is a key component. Sabbath doesn't have to be a whole day; it could be a specific meal or just a section of the day. What is important is that the Sabbath activity allows you time to slow down, gives you space from the 'busy activities' and permission to connect with your inner self, significant people, and God. Think of Sabbath as "pampering your soul"

Resources

Healthy Habits, Helpful Friends by Judd Allen (2008)

Seeking Your Healthy Balance by Donald & Nancy Tubesing (1991)

Soul Feast by Marjorie Thompson (2005)

Sabbath; Restoring the Sacred Rhythm of Rest by Wayne Muller (1999)

MyPyramid.gov: US Department of Agriculture (2005)

American College of Sports Medicine: acsm.org