

CHOOSE LIFE by caring for your body as a gift, not a task or a burden. Neither beat it into submission in quest of unattainable perfection, nor allow lethargy or gluttony to dull its senses. God has blessed us with bodies to engage and appreciate life in all its abundance.

THE GLORY OF GOD IS
A HUMAN BEING
FULLY ALIVE.

Irenaeus



The Ministers Council
PO Box 851
Valley Forge, PA
19482-0851
1-800-ABC-3USA, 2333
610/768-2066
www.ministerscouncil.com
kate.harvey@abc-usa.org
sue.sechrist@abc-usa.org

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Healthy Habits In Ministry

Well-Being of the Body

The Ministers Council
American Baptist Churches USA



Beloved, I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be in good health, just as it is well with your soul.

(I John 2)

GET A KICK OUT OF LIFE!

We all know that the body is the temple of the Spirit, the earthen vessel in which God's treasure resides. When I was in seminary, my Old Testament professor Phyllis Tribble used to say that soul is a four-letter word, if by that we mean some disembodied essence of ourselves. We are *nephesh*, enspirited flesh and enfleshed spirit, inextricably intertwined.

Therefore, if we are living as if "the spirit" is all that matters, even if we are attending diligently to the things of the Spirit, we are shortchanging not only ourselves but God as well. The body deserves and demands care, if we are to live fully into the image of God in which we are created. Part of the routine of an effective ministerial leader will be good nutrition, adequate sleep, and physical exercise appropriate to our situation.

God made each of us differently, with varied gifts and capacities and, yes, bodies. For each unique one of us there are different ways to attend to physical well-being.

Some of us enjoy walking or running outside through the glories of God's world. Some of us love to swim. I happen to prefer working out in an aerobics studio, with the energy of group momentum and the pulsing rhythm of music. Perhaps it is no accident that I really like kickboxing, given the fact that at a tender age I was outfitted with boxing gloves (see photo). Whatever the chosen regimen, whether vigorous or more laid back, working out simultaneously reduces stress and releases endorphins. Similarly, healthy habits of diet and emotional care cooperate with God's will for our well-being. All the better to serve God, who has called us into work that requires all the strength and stamina we can muster.

Let's covenant together as ministerial leaders within the American Baptist Churches USA, as The Ministers Council Covenant and Code of Ethics affirms, to "maintain a disciplined ministry," seeking to "maintain good health habits."

Kate Harvey



ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY TO MAINTAIN GOOD HEALTH HABITS

Benson, Herbert, and Eileen M. Stuart. *The Wellness Book: A Comprehensive Guide to Maintaining Health and Treating Stress-Related Illnesses*. New York: Simon and Schuster Trade, 1993.

Health maintenance through mind-body techniques. Includes information on exercise, diet and stress management, with illustrations and case histories.

Brill, Peggy W. *The Core Program: 15 Minutes a Day That Can Change Your Life*. New York: Bantam Books, Inc., 2001.

Exercise program to develop deep muscle strength in women. Focuses on anatomical core, works for all ages and body types.

Colbert, Don. *What Would Jesus Eat?* Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 2002.

"If you truly want to follow Jesus in every area of your life, you cannot ignore your eating habits." Biblically based and nutritionally sound program includes recipes and practical advice.

Hands, Donald R., and Wayne L. Fehr. *Spiritual Wholeness for Clergy: A New Psychology of Intimacy with God, Self and Others*. Bethesda, MD: Alban Institute, Inc., 1993.

Written from clinical experience with clergy in crisis, presents dynamics of healing along with practical recommendations.

Jones, Kirk. *Rest in the Storm: Self-Care Strategies for Clergy and Other Caregivers*. Valley Forge: Judson Press, 2001.

Deals with healing the self-violence of a workaholic, by learning to pace life. Offers strategies discerned from the Gospel for renewal in the midst of stress.

Melander, Rochelle, and Harold Eppley. *The Spiritual Leader's Guide to Self-Care*. Bethesda, MD: Alban Institute, Inc., 2002.

Deals with seven themes of self-care, including care for spirit and body. Divided into fifty-two weekly sessions that suggest activities and resources.

Nelson, Miriam E. *Strong Women Stay Young*. New York: Bantam Books, 2000.

Strength training for denser bones, better balance, more strength and energy for women. Includes a chapter for men.

Ornish, Dean. *Dean Ornish's Program for Reversing Heart Disease: The Only System Scientifically Proven to Reverse Heart Disease Without Drugs or Surgery*. New York: Random House, 1996.

Diet, meditation, stress management, moderate exercise. Step-by-step guide for long-term change.

Oswald, Roy. *Clergy Self-Care: Finding a Balance for Effective Ministry*. Bethesda, MD: Alban Institute, Inc., 1986.

A basic tool for ministry is our own optimal wellness, different for each of us, demanding our attention to wholeness on

four levels: physical, emotional, spiritual, intellectual. Self-care strategies presented.

Paulsell, Stephanie. *Honoring the Body: Meditations on a Christian Practice*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Inc., 2002.

From the Practices of Faith series, encourages the honoring of our physical beings as essential to spiritual lives. Study guide available to facilitate group conversation.

Rediger, G. Lloyd. *Fit to Be a Pastor: A Call to Physical, Mental, and Spiritual Fitness*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2000.

Exploration of physical, mental and spiritual fitness by the author of *Clergy Killers*. Includes fitness worksheet, plus body-mind-spirit fitness regimen outline.

Russell, Rex. *What the Bible Says About Healthy Living: Three Biblical Principles That Will Change Your Diet and Improve Your Health*. Ventura, CA: Gospel Light/Regal Books, 1997.

Combines biblical and medical knowledge to recommend nutritional pattern for godly living. Specific details.

Ryan, Barbara Shlemon. *Healing Prayer: Spiritual Pathways to Health and Wellness*. Ann Arbor, MI: Servant Publications, 2001.

How-to book for individual and group prayer for healing. Scripturally based.

Sweet, Leonard. *The Jesus Prescription for a Healthy Life*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996.

Two principle characteristics of Jesus' work were a food ministry and a health and healing ministry. Presents specific practices for wellness.

Vaillant, George E. *Aging Well: Surprising Guideposts to a Happier Life from the Landmark Harvard Study of Adult Development*. London: Little, Brown and Company, 2002.

Factors correlated with living well as we age, based on long-term sociological study. Focuses on life aspects in our control.

Willett, Walter C., P.J. Skerrett, and Edward L. Giovannucci. *Eat, Drink, and Be Healthy: The Harvard Medical School Guide to Healthy Eating*. New York: Simon and Schuster Trade, 2001.

Practical nutritional guide, for balance of food consumed and energy expended. Includes recipes.

WEB SITES

Beliefnet.com—Click on Health and Healing for various categories.

FirstPlace.com—Christian focus on changing eating and exercise habits for life.

HealthA-Z.com—Family health.

HowStuffWorks.com—Click on Body & Health for wealth of information.

iVillagehealth.com—Range of women's concerns.

WebMDHealth.com—Dean Ornish program for healthy hearts.

JUST DO IT!