

KNOW WHEN TO HIT THE SNOOZE BUTTON

25 Suggestions for Taking Care of Yourself in Ministry
From the Staff of the Parish Resource Center in Lancaster, PA

Read through our list of suggestions, given in no particular order. Choose one or two or more that you could add to your self-care plan, so that you might attend to your physical, emotional and spiritual health, freeing you to thrive in your ministry.

1. Remind yourself frequently that you are doing God's work and in the end, God is responsible, not you.
2. Know when to pray at 3 a.m. and when to hit the snooze button.
3. Prepare adequately – you'll feel more comfortable and more competent if you've the proper time to prepare for a task.
4. Find ways to make personal connections with the children in your congregation.
5. Remember that *you* are the only one who writes in your datebook.
6. Attend or lead at least one adult growth event each quarter – sit in on a Sunday School class, Bible Study, or Small Group, not as the leader, but as a participant.
7. Maintain a good balance between people who drain/dissipate your energy and those who energize you.
8. Have a friend outside the parish you can call on day or night.
9. Cultivate a sense of humor.
10. Choose a spiritual director, and meet with her or him once each month for personal reflection, guidance and encouragement.
11. Take personal retreats on a regular basis, for several days or even just for 24 hours.
12. Set boundaries – you don't have to do it all. It's important for other church leaders to respect and help maintain these boundaries.
13. Be considerate and provide time for your spouse. He or she is an independent personality. Do not make assumptions that involve your spouse.
14. "Take time to sharpen the saw." (Stephen Covey) Take a break and get away – get a change of scenery.
15. At times when you are exhausted physically, emotionally, or spiritually, call for healing prayer from persons whom you highly respect.
16. Explore how God is working in the lives of parishioners. Then, take a look at yourself. How is God working in your life? Spend time journaling your answers, or share with a trusted friend.
17. Develop relationships that are personal and not professionally-related. Really know yourself as a person and not just a pastor.
18. Listen to your body – cultivate one new, good health habit. Do not justify harmful habits to the demands of ministry.

19. Time is a gift. Strive to get the *right* things done, not necessarily the *most* things done.
20. Walk to work. If you can't walk from home, park ½ mile away from your building and walk the last leg.
21. Engage in regular reading of Scripture and – with pencil in hand – underline key words or phrases that stand out for you. Re-read the verses slowly, choosing one of the words or phrases as God's gift to you for that day. Claim this promise as your very own throughout the day.
22. Bake cookies with your children or grandchildren.
23. Cultivate a spirit of gratitude throughout the year, irrespective as to what you might be facing.
24. Visit the PRC often and with your lay leaders in tow!
25. Above all, pray without ceasing. God is using you to do His work.

May God bless you in your ministry! Let us know if there is a way that the Parish Resource Center can assist you, as you take good care of yourself.

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