

*152nd Session of the Pittsburgh-West Virginia Annual Conference
Committee on Living Well Living Balanced
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To: Bishop Frank Madison Reid, III, Presiding Prelate of the 3rd Episcopal District
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Members of the Pittsburgh-West Virginia Annual Conference

From: The Committee on Living Well Living Balanced
Pittsburgh-West Virginia Annual Conference

Maintaining a balanced life is becoming increasingly more important for your personal health and well-being in a fast-paced, modern world. We live in a world full of different beliefs and opinions, so one person's answer to one question could be completely different to the next person. It's important to understand some of the key components involved in maintaining a balanced lifestyle. There is no right or wrong answer, despite what you may read. Everyone's bodies and minds respond in different ways; the most important thing is that you are getting the right balance.

If we are to live a life of Living Well Living Balanced we must consider everything involved in our daily lives; our families, our friends, work, health, our bodies, our relationships throughout. We all become so involved in day to day activities that sometimes things become so difficult or complicated that you cannot do anything. We neglect family, friends, and even the relaxation that helps to rejuvenate ourselves. Making time for yourself is necessary so that you can keep up with all your responsibilities. When you are living with balance in your life, you are living with peace and harmony every day. Balance comes in physical forms, emotional forms, and a spiritual form. Being in balance may mean something different to each individual.

Healthy Living is one way to Live Well Live Balanced. Each of us has to make a choice as to what fits to reach our goal in staying healthy. We must research and evaluate our health plan on a daily basis. Most people think they need to try different diets, however eating health is not a diet. It's a life altering change. We need to evaluate our health plan. Start slow by eliminating the process foods, junk foods and replace them with more wholesome and healthy choices. The most important thing is to always drink water to keep your body hydrated.

Living well and balanced ("self-care") also includes taking care of the earthly temples God has given us. Exercise (working out) is one way to care for ourselves. The benefits are not just for our physical health, but for our mental, and emotional health as well. According to Arlene Semeco, MS, RD, "Exercise is defined as any movement that makes your muscles work and requires your body to burn calories. Being active has been shown to have many health benefits, both physically and mentally. It may even help you live longer." She lists some of the ways in which regular exercise benefits our bodies and brains. The benefits include improving our moods and decreasing the feelings of depression, stress and anxiety-thus making one feel happier; assisting in weight loss, building and maintaining strong bones and muscles, an increase in energy levels, and a reduction of the risk of chronic disease.

Exercise can help skin health, improve brain health and memory; help with relaxation and sleep quality, and it can reduce pain. We live hectic lives that put stress, wear and tear on our minds

and bodies, which causes us to not eat properly or get enough rest. This increases our chances of being susceptible illness and disease. By exercising at least twice a week for at least thirty minutes, we can improve our overall health. It does not always have to be cardio or weights, but simply walking twice a day for fifteen minutes, getting steps in at work, dancing nonstop for fifteen to thirty minutes, doing certain chores around the house can also constitute as a mini work out. There are several ways to stretch and work out our temples so that we can be healthier and increase our lives. However, if we work out our temples, but eat poorly, it is all in vain. Eating healthier does not mean simply going vegan or vegetarian, but portion control, cutting back on greasy fatty foods and carbohydrates. Water is the drink of life and can also help flush out toxins and help the body to heal itself.

Live Well Living Balanced as Christians is referenced in Colossians 3:12-14, it says, "Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience...you must forgive others...Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds us all together in perfect harmony." All of these are character traits that God wants us to possess. This is how we live the Christian life well.

Remember, at the end of this life, we want to hear those beautiful words, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant." But until that time comes, we need to recognize that the world needs a Savior, and Jesus is counting on us to live in such a way that others will want what we have, which is a life in Christ Jesus. So, it starts with the way we carry ourselves among them.

It's crucial that you find the balance that you enjoy. It is far too easy to think that you are doing everything wrong, and it is even easier to scroll through Instagram or Facebook and compare yourself to others that seem to live the perfect healthy lifestyle. The key point here is not to be hard on yourselves, everyone has their own journey to take. Being healthy doesn't happen overnight, but each little change we make is a step in the right direction. If we get lost and take the wrong path, it isn't a disaster, we just need to carry on, it's part of the journey. Keep it simple, and be kind to yourself.

The Committee on Living Well Living Balanced make the following Recommendations:

- **Develop a Bible Study to discuss the "Fruits of the Spirit", Galatians 5.**
- Clergy and laity exercise at least twice a week for fifteen minutes, join a gym or exercise class, drink more water, find time to relax and destress, eat healthier and live a live more balanced.
- Clergy and laity make routine health checks.
- Clergy and laity adults live a more balanced lifestyle incorporating this into the lives of our family especially our youth. Youth take on the characteristics of the adults in their lives.

Respectfully submitted,

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