

A Healthy Pastor
Dr. Dean Taylor
Faith Baptist Bible College and Theological Seminary

Is there a biblical basis for being concerned with pastoral health? Here is one place in the Bible that indicates it is a legitimate concern.

3 John 1-4 (NKJV) *The Elder, To the beloved Gaius, whom I love in truth: Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers. For I rejoiced greatly when brethren came and testified of the truth that is in you, just as you walk in the truth. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.*

1. Defining Pastoral Health

Pastoral health is _____ of your _____ and _____ of your _____ in order to _____ fulfill your calling to shepherd the flock of God.

A healthy pastor is _____ and has a _____.

1 Tim 4:12-16 (NKJV) Taking care of your personal life precedes and is essential to having an effective ministry.

Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity.[PERSONAL] Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. [PUBLIC] Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership. Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, [PERSONAL] that your progress may be evident to all [PUBLIC]. Take heed to yourself [PERSONAL] and to the doctrine [PUBLIC] . Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself [PERSONAL] and those who hear you [PUBLIC] .

2. Basic Practices that Cultivate Pastoral Health

A. _____ with God

- Meaningful and fresh
- Consistent
- On guard against temptation

B. _____ with your Wife

- Unhindered communication
- Hearts together in ministry
- Enjoying life

Shepherdology Podcast Episode #6 – Cultivating and Recovering Companionship in a Ministry Marriage

C. Close _____ with Each Child

- Focused time
- Extended conversations
- Spiritually nurturing influence

D. _____ Physical Habits

Practice self-discipline 1 Cor 9:25-27 25 And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. 26 Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. 27 But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.

Maintain the right perspective 2 Cor 4:16-18 16 Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. 17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, 18 while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

E. Disciplined _____ Habits

- Guard your thoughts
Mental health - Philippians 4:6-7 *Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*
- Read and listen to enriching and stimulating resources

- Control screen time

F. Control of Your _____

- Know your mission
- Know primary responsibilities of a pastor
- Have a schedule
- Communicate (carefully) to your people

Resources: *Do More Better* by Tim Challies; *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* by Steven Covey; *Unique Planner* by Phil Cooke; Tomato-Timer.com

G. A Team Approach to Ministry

- Identify and develop
- Equip and share responsibility

H. Time Off

- Weekly day off
- Periodic personal retreat
Mark 1:35 records of Jesus Christ that, “. . . in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed.” He did this after expending physical and spiritual energy in preaching and in ministering to the needs of individual people. Jesus regularly retreated for the express purpose of prayer (Mark 6:46; Matthew 14:23; Luke 6:12; Luke 22:39-42).
- Annual extended vacation
Jesus encouraged His disciples to “‘Come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while.’ For there were many coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat” (Mark 6:31).
- Annual conference

I. Outside pursuits

- Hobbies
- Sports
- Groups
- Walks and hikes – get outdoors!

Charles Spurgeon in *Lectures To My Students*: “Sedentary habits have a tendency to create despondency in some constitutions . . . To sit long in one posture, poring over a book, or driving a quill, is in itself a taxing of nature; but add to this a badly ventilated chamber, a body which has long been without muscular exercise, and a heart burdened with many cares, and we have all the elements for preparing a seething cauldron of despair, especially in the dim months of fog.”

He encourages walks in nature, which I love and always find refreshing. He says, “The ferns and the rabbits, the streams and the trouts, the fir trees and the squirrels, the primroses and the violets, the farm-yard, the new-mown hay, and the fragrant hops – these are the best medicine for hypochondriacs, the surest tonics for the declining, the best refreshments for the weary.”

J. Mutually Encouraging Friendships

3. Threats to a Pastor’s Health

A. Innate human _____ that are intensified by great spiritual _____

B. Misplaced _____

Pastors naturally connect their identity with the church. Your identity is a man – a frail human being who is like grass that withers and fades (Psalm 103); a Christian, in union with Jesus Christ (Gal. 2:20; Romans 6-8); a member of the body of Christ, joined to and vital to the body (1 Cor 12); a husband, a father, a neighbor, a community member. You have to separate your sense of identity from the church and your well-being from the condition of the church.

C. Church _____

D. People’s _____

E. _____ and hurt

F. Conflict

G. Major _____

4. Protecting and Recovering Pastoral Health

A. Honestly _____

B. Proactively enlist _____

C. Take _____

D. Remember your _____ and _____

There are circumstances you can't change.

There are people you can't change.

There are conflicts you can't resolve.

You can't turn a church around, grow a church, or fix all church problems yourself.

E. Determine your _____ role, responsibilities, and priorities and _____ them.

What should I be doing here, now? What has God called me here to do? How do my gifts fit the stage of maturity and growth this church is in?

F. Have constructive _____ with your church leaders about your plan for being physically well and thriving spiritually.

G. Determine when it is time to step _____.

Prayerfully evaluate and decide

Lovingly communicate

Trust God for yourself and the church.

Resource: *Before You Move* by John R. Cionca

Conclusion

A healthy pastor is physically well and thriving in his soul.

Are you physically well? What needs to change? With whom do you need to have a conversation?

Are you thriving in your soul? What needs to change? How will you cultivate your inner man?

I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers.