Achieving Balance in Ministry

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“Prayer is the central and essential act for maintaining the essential shape of the ministry to which they were ordained.”

p. 26 - Eugene Peterson
A Beginning Prayer

In the busyness of this day
grant me a stillness of seeing, O God.
In the conflicting voices of my heart
grant me a calmness of hearing.
Let my seeing and hearing
my words and my actions
be rooted in a silent certainty of your presence.
Let my passions for life
and the longings for justice that stir within me
be grounded in the experience of your stillness.
Let my life be rooted in the ground of your peace, O God,
Let me be rooted in the depths of your peace.

Celtic Benediction, Newell, p. 77
The Problem of Balance
What is there about ministry which makes it so difficult to develop balance?
PASTOR
JIM SMITH
I TOLD YOU
THE JOB
DESCRIPTION
WAS
UNREASONABLE.

Pastor Smith Has the Last Word
Ministry is Enmeshing and Demanding!

- Enmeshment
- Fosters poor boundaries at several points including between one’s role and one’s identity
- Absorptiveness
- Ministry can take all the energy we have to pour out
Ministry is Demanding Because of Multiple Roles

“The pastoral role moved from simple shepherding to being CEO, CFO, resident lawyer, visionary, program manager, God’s perfect counselor on all matters, fidelity fixer, facilities superintendent, perpetual committee member, human resources director, successful fundraiser, par excellent communicator, career advisor, marketing supervisor, politician, spiritual example, masterful preacher, artful teacher, community leader, welfare administrator, contractor, organizational appeaser and too often people-pleaser. Ah, and oh yes, perfect spouse, and perfect parent with perfect children in the perfect home.”

Author Unknown
The Repercussions of Demanding Ministry

- 90% work more than 46 hours per week
- 80% - ministry affected their families negatively
- 33% - Ministry a family hazard
- 50% - unable to meet job needs
- 75% - significant stress-related crisis at least once in ministry
The Repercussions of Demanding Ministry

- 90% inadequately trained to cope with ministry demands
- 40% - serious conflict with parishioner at least once a month
- 70% - lower self-esteem now
- 70% - no close friends
- 37% - inappropriate sexual conduct

1991 Survey of Pastors, Fuller Institute on Church Growth, in Pastors At risk, p 22
STRESS: When demands exceed resources
The Problem of Burnout

"I’ve heard reports about ministerial burnout, but this is the first time I’ve actually seen one."
The Burnout Cycle

- A compulsion to prove oneself
- Working harder
- Neglecting their needs
- Displacement of conflicts
- Revision of values
- Denial of emerging problems
The Burnout Cycle

- Withdrawal
- Obvious behavioral change
- Depersonalization
- Inner emptiness
- Depression
- Burnout syndrome

The Clergy Burnout Cycle

Clergy Burnout, Roy Oswald

- Rededication to try harder
- Call from God High ideals
- Too many to serve
  - Sea of human need
- Phy. exhaustion, self-abuse, Strain on family

- Guilt, shame: resenting those called to serve
- Resentment at those served, sarcasm
- Helplessness, Trapped feelings, despair

The cycle: Rededication to try harder leads to Call from God High ideals, which leads to Too many to serve Sea of human need, leading to Phy. exhaustion, self-abuse, Strain on family. This cycle is perpetuated by Guilt, shame: resenting those called to serve, Resentment at those served, sarcasm, and Helplessness, Trapped feelings, despair.
Inadequate Models: The Moses Model  
Exodus 18:13ff

- Operates from an unrealistic understanding of person-hood
- Lacks balance
- Leads to anger and depression
- Exposes the self to spiritual dangers
- Presents other dangers to the self
- Leads to religious addiction - total work orientation
The Moses Model: Characteristics

- Personal
- Family
- Congregational
Spiritual Dangers of the Moses Model

- Loss of intimate contact with God
- The problem of the empty cup
- Being eloquent about the spiritual life without living it
- The divided life - split between head and heart
- Becoming a castaway
“Many pastors become casualties by running away from themselves and from God and into their work.”

Shawchuck and Heuser, p. 28
Achieving Balance: Principles for Creative Ministry
“It refers to a sense of balance in the life, an ability to be at peace through the activities of the day, an ability to rest and take time to enjoy beauty, an ability to pace ourselves.”

Richard Foster, Celebration of Discipline, p. 27
A Rationale: Soul Hosts

“Soul hosts prepare for their gift of hospitality by cultivating a place of quiet within themselves. This is the place where they will receive others. If I have no such place within myself, I am unable to offer myself in a gift of hospitality. But when I have begun to be a person with a quiet still center, I can invite others to come and rest there.”

David Benner, Sacred Companions.
The Creation Narrative as a Model for the Practice of Ministry
Principles from Creation

What are the critical principles evident in the text?
Two Images of God from Creation

- God as Host
- God as Creator/worker
The Genesis Creation Narrative: Principles for Creative Activity

- The power of speech
- Boundary-making that bring order
- Finding balance and rhythm in the creative process
- Rest as an essential part of creative activity
- The importance of being human
- Created for intimacy with God
“A very large amount of human suffering and frustration is caused by the fact that men and women are not content to be the sort of beings that God made them but try to persuade themselves that they are really beings of some different kind.”

Mascall, p. 32
The Jesus Model for Ministry

- Jesus replicates in his ministry the principles evident in creation
- Realism
- Humans need solitude and rest to replenish
- Emphasizes balance
Doing & Being in Mark’s Gospel

The Gospel of Action

- Emphasis on continual action - Immediately

The Gospel of Rest

- Eleven references to Jesus withdrawing

1:12; 3:7; 6:31, 46; 7:24, 31; 9:2; 10:1; 14:34.
The Jesus Model: Insights from Mark 1

- Empowered by the Holy Spirit
- Grounded on personal intimacy with God
- Found on intentional spiritual formation
  - Prayer
  - Fasting
  - The Lord’s supper
  - Scripture reading
  - Spiritual Conversation
  - Worship
The Jesus Model: Insights from Mark 1

- Fortified by faithfulness and integrity
- Requires time of personal solitude
- Allows time for family focus
- Cultivates circles of discipleship
The Jesus Model

- **Personal Characteristics**
- Flows from an intimate knowledge of God.
- Expressed as "witness."
- Begins with self-ministry and personal preparation.
- Recognizes legitimate self-care
The Jesus Model

Family Characteristics

- Recognizes legitimate obligations to one’s family.
- Catering to Peter’s mother-in-law
- Jesus’ final act of ministry on the cross was to arrange for the care of his mother.
The Jesus Model

- Congregational Characteristics
  - Hinges on God's activity through persons.
  - God is always the source.
  - Demands reliance on God.
  - Engages others:
    - Calling, modeling, instruction and sending
    - Caters to the whole person
  - Seeks to endure
Seven Keys to Get Ministry in Balance
Reframe Ministry!

- To put a concept in a different light
- “To change the conceptual and or emotional setting or viewpoint in relation to which a situation is experienced and to place it in another frame which fits the ‘facts’ of the same concrete situation equally well or even better and thereby change its entire meaning.”

  Change, Watzlawick et. Al, 1974
A Reframed Model for Ministry

A Model for Balanced Ministry

Intimacy with God through the Spirit

Ministry Beyond One’s Congregation
Congregation Groups
Family
Self
30 And the apostles gathered themselves together unto Jesus, and told him all things, both what they had done, and what they had taught.

31 And he said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while: for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat.

32 And they departed into a desert place by ship privately.
Jesus on Self-care
Mark 6:30-32, 6:45

The Context
- After the mission of the twelve

The Message
- The need for a time apart
- The need for solitude
- The need for rest
- The need for supportive relationships
- Ministry as engagement and disengagement
- God’s care for others and for those who minister
“Spirituality is the means by which we develop an awareness of the presence of the loving Lord in our lives, and the processes by which we keep that awareness alive and vital to the end that we become formed in the spirit of Christ.”

P. 119 - Shawchuck and Heuser
Live well to minister well!

Mental

Emotional

Occupational

Spiritual
  God

Relational

Social
  Self
  Family
  Others

Physical
Find a place for social support!

- **Listening**
  - Sharing of successes and failures

- **Technical Appreciation**
  - For work done and acknowledgement of same
  - Provided by person perceived as
    » Expert in field & honest and trustworthy

- **Technical Challenge**
  - Contact with competent colleagues to stay fresh
Find a place for social support!

- Emotional Support From 4 to 5 Persons
- Emotional Challenge
  - Challenging biased thinking etc.
- Sharing Social Reality
  - Help in interpreting social reality so as not to question one’s perceptions
Find Time for the Important People!

Doing work stuff again? Yeah, I'm pretty swamped.

Is it hard having to bring work home a lot? Sometimes.

There's nothing more important than work, though.

You know what? Who cares if this junk doesn't get done right this minute? Let's go shopping for that pair of pants you need. And we'll stop at Cookie Corner for a couple of chocolate chip monsters and then maybe well...

Mother's come preprogrammed. You just need to learn which button to push.
Get a Life!

Doonesbury

BY

G. B. TRUDEAU

MAY I HAVE YOUR ATTENTION, PLEASE?

LATELY I’VE BEEN NOTICING THAT MORE AND MORE OF YOU HAVE BEEN SPENDING THE NIGHT HERE CRASHING DEADLINES.

GOOD LORD

IT’S MIDNIGHT, AND EVERY LIGHT IN THE BUILDING IS STILL ON!

NO PRODUCT LAUNCH IS WORTH THAT KIND OF SACRIFICE. HIGHLY STRESSED, CHRONICALLY FATIGUED EMPLOYEES CAN’T GIVE THEIR BEST, AND I NEED YOUR BEST!

FROM NOW ON, I’M HAVING THE POWER SHUT OFF IN THIS BUILDING AT 8:00 PM! I WANT YOU TO GO HOME. LEAD LIVES, REST. WE CAN’T BUILD A FUTURE BY TRASHING THE PRESENT.

HE’S GONE MAD. THE COMPANY WILL CRASH! WE’LL BE THE NEXT APPLE! WE BETTER TAKE THIS TO THE BOARD.
The Pastoral Stress Reduction Retreat solemnly concludes with the burning of beepers, car phones, and “numbers where I can be reached.”
An Ending Prayer for Balance

For the night followed by the day
for the idle winter ground
followed by the energy of spring
for the infolding of the earth
followed by bursts of unfolding
thanks be to you, O God.
For rest and wakefulness
stillness and creativity
reflection and action
thanks be to you.

Let me know in my own body and soul
the rhythms of creativity that you have established
Let me know in my family and friendships the disciplines of withdrawal and the call to engagement.
Let me know for my world the cycles of renewal
given by you for healing and health, the patterns of the season given you for the birth of new life

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