

Self-Care for Ministers

Healthy Leaders in Kingdom Service

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***“Who is worst shod than the
shoemaker’s wife?”***

John Heywood (1536) *Proverbes. Part i. Chap. xi.*

***“Him that makes shoes go
barefoot himself.”***

Robert Burton (1621) *Anatomy of Melancholy*

*The Anatomy of Melancholy, What it is:
With all the Kinds, Causes, Symptomes,
Prognostikes, and Several Cures of it.
In Three Maine Partitions with their Several
Sections, Members, and Subsections.
Philosophically, Medicinally, Historically,
Opened and Cut Up*

Two-Fold Purpose

A call to healthier lifestyle by improving our self-care;

To provide caregiving insights and resources that are helpful to us in encouraging others towards better self-care.

Mark 6:31

*“And he said to them,
“Come away by yourselves to a desolate place
and rest a while.*

*For many were coming and going,
and they had no leisure even to eat.”*

The Elijah Dilemma

Elijah said, “I have had enough, Lord, let me die.”

(1 Kings 19:4)

Elijah was a human being, even as we are...

(James 5:17)

Ministry: a Call of Compassion

- *Our calling is empathetic. We identify with the psychological, social, and physical needs of others and have a desire to walk with them in meeting the need.*
- *We are “caregivers”.*
- *Caregivers experience “compassion satisfaction”.*
- *Caregivers experience “compassion fatigue”.*

Ministry Stress

Stress can be defined as any type of change that causes physical, emotional, or psychological strain. Stress is your body's response to anything that requires attention or action. Everyone experiences stress to some degree. However,

- Long-term stress may contribute to or worsen a range of health problems including digestive disorders, headaches, sleep disorders, and other symptoms.*
- Too much stress and/or the inability to deal with stress in a healthy way damages us physically, emotionally, and spiritually, leading to break down or worse.*

The way we respond to stress makes a big difference to our overall well-being.

Some “Stress-factors”

Becoming aware of stress factors can be key to helping us make adjustments to our lifestyle.

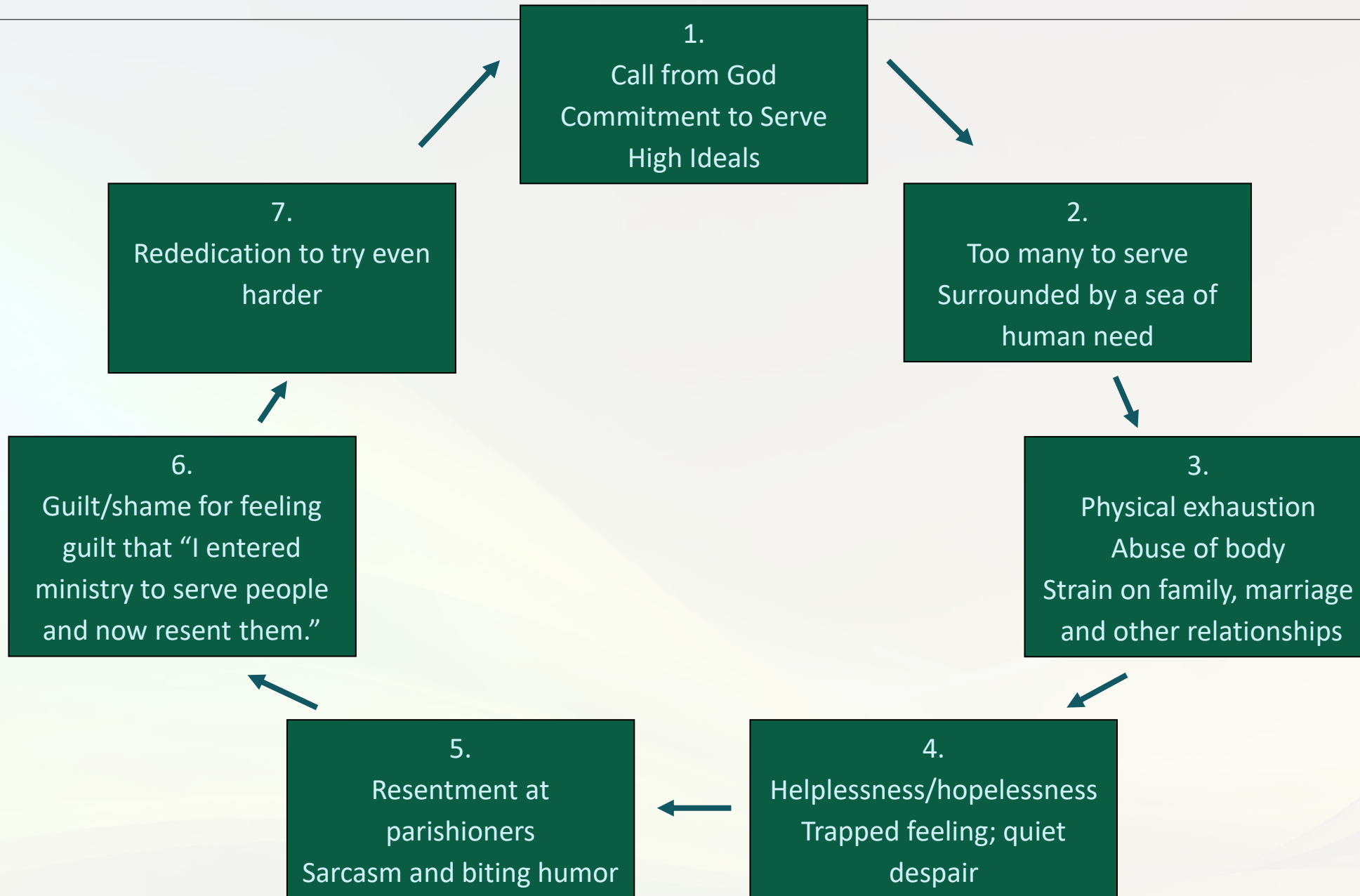
- *Never ending days, being always available.*
- *Working with people (relational calling).*
- *Creative requirements to meet the expectations of others.*
- *Responding to the deep-seated needs of others.*
- *The loneliness of ministry.*
- *Living with a public persona (mask wearing).*
- *Multi-location, multi-tasks, multi-projects.*
- *Ministry transitions.*
- *Gifting mismatch.*

Ministry Burnout

The term “burnout” refers to emotional and physical exhaustion resulting from long-term, repeated exposure to both external and internal stressors.

Signs of burnout can include:

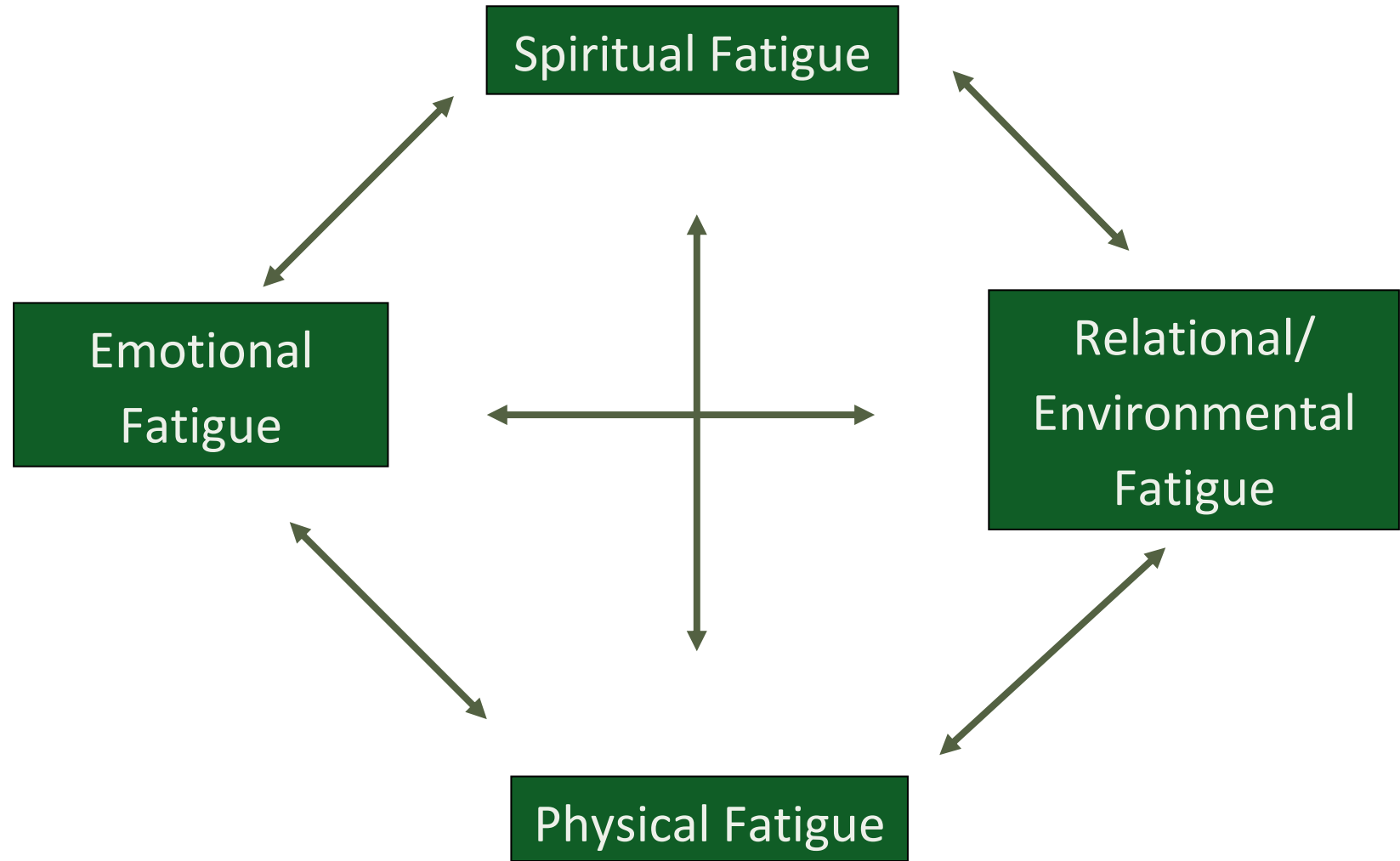
- *Chronic fatigue*
- *Insomnia*
- *Intestinal upset*
- *Forgetfulness*
- *A sense of uselessness*
- *Increased cynicism*
- *Addictive behaviors*



**High Level
Burnout**

**Medium Level
Burnout**

Low Level Burnout



Burnout Recovery

To curb the unhealthy patterns of burnout in life and ministry most effectively, we must examine its origins at the heart level to determine why we are compelled to maintain a crash course toward burnout.

Fortunately, burnout and its consequences are both avoidable and reversible as we give attention to our hearts and take deliberate responsive steps.

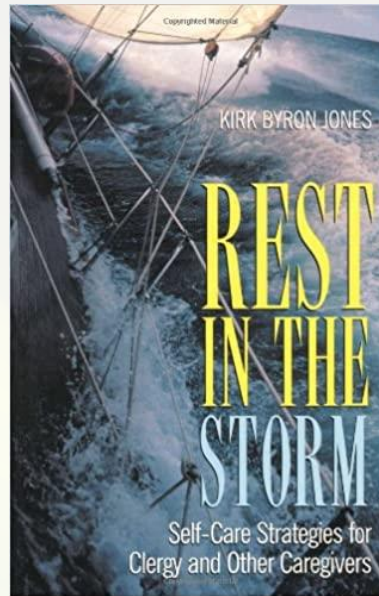
- *Find a trustworthy colleague or counselor* and talk about what you are experiencing.
- *Set healthy boundaries with accountability.*
- *Embrace my humanity.* An embrace of my humanity reminds me that there is a limit to my personal energy and strength.
- *Afford ourselves space and grace.*
- *Recognize that God is pleased with me regardless of my performance.*

Fundamental Obstacles to SELF-CARE

One day Jesus said to his disciples, “Let us go over to the other side of the lake.” So they got into a boat and set out. As they sailed, he fell asleep. A squall came down on the lake, so that the boat was being swamped, and they were in great danger. The disciples went and woke him, saying, “Master, Master, we’re going to drown!” He got up and rebuked the wind and the raging waters; the storm subsided, and all was calm. “Where is your faith?” he asked his disciples. In fear and amazement they asked one another, “Who is this? He commands even the winds and the water, and they obey him.” (Luke 8:22-25)

Fundamental Obstacles to SELF-CARE

Drawn from



Mt. 8:23-27; Mk. 4:35-41; Lk. 8:22-35

Fundamental Obstacles to SELF-CARE

- **Invulnerability**

“Burnout happens with “other” people, not me.

- **Indispensability**

“What will they do without me?”

- **Failure to Embrace Our Humanity**

Lack of understanding about one’s limitations and potential for pride.

Crucial Elements of SELF-CARE

IDENTITY

Our identity in Christ is the foundation of a healthy soul.

REPENTANCE

We must repent and receive forgiveness from God to be free.

BREAKING FAMILY SIN PATTERNS

Family sin patterns have an unusual pull on our lives.

FORGIVING OTHERS

Forgiving those who have sinned against us release us from bitter roots in the garden of our soul.

Crucial Elements of SELF-CARE

HEALING HURTS

Unprocessed wounds leave us with festering sores.

OVERCOMING FEARS

One of the number one commands of Scripture is to “fear not,” so we must overcome fear to be spiritually healthy.

BREAKING DEMONIC STRONGHOLDS

We have a real spiritual enemy who can generate strongholds in our lives.

Matthew 11:28-30

(The Message)

“Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you’ll recover your life. I’ll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won’t lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you’ll learn to live freely and lightly.”

Practical SELF-CARE Suggestions

**Practice Daily Spiritual Disciplines motivated by
developing deeper intimacy with Christ**

- Biblical Meditation – Psa. 1:2
- Prayer (Talking and Listening to God) – Lk. 6:12
- Fasting – Acts 13 & 14
- Solitude & Contemplation – Mk. 6:31; Mt. 14:23
- Journaling – 2 Cor. 4&6
- Spiritual Readings – 2 Pet. 3:15-16
- Worship – Eph. 5:19

Practical SELF-CARE Suggestions

Establish Personal Care Habits

- Develop good sleep habits and patterns.
- Develop good nutrition and eating habits.
- Exercise.
- Don't postpone or avoid appointments for your own care with doctors, dentists, counselors.
- Do something fun at least once a week; include friends if possible.
- Plan regular vacations.
- Practice a personal sabbath.
- Consider an extended sabbatical leave with a self-care focus.
- Seek support outside of the work environment.

3 John 1:2 (NLT)

*Dear friend,
I hope all is well with you
and that you are as healthy in body
as you are strong in spirit.*

Personal Prayer

Good morning, Lord.

Today, I choose to surrender my whole heart to your sovereignty and rule.

Holy Spirit, I ask that you:

Enkindle within me a heart of worship and gratitude,

Enable me to know Christ, who indwells me, more intimately,

Enlighten my heart and mind to understand more fully your Word,

Empower me to walk in faithful obedience to your precepts,

Energize in me greater love, patience and compassion for others as I grow in the grace of God becoming more like Christ.

Amen.

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