

Living as a healthy whole disciple of Christ

We have been designed by God in His image to be whole people with spiritual, mental, emotional and physical needs. The reality is that a healthy body is impacted by a healthy soul and mind and each of those impact the other. We know that all of who we are is important to God because we see the Scriptures calling us to consider our bodies, thoughts, emotions, wills, actions and meditations. We also know that all of who we are flows out of relationship with God into our relationships with others.

As we go through life our relationship with God changes some and we know it helps to adjust our spiritual disciplines just as it is necessary to adjust our physical or mental activity as our body and mind changes with life seasons. Sometimes our mind, body, or soul experiences internal or external suffering. These are trying times for our relationship with God and others as our suffering often impacts how we see God, others and ourselves. We need help to suffer well without over-spiritualizing, causing contempt or anything else including increasing depression. Other times when we are not suffering we can live our lives getting to know Him better so we may truly delight in Him, and more often than not live healthfully as a whole disciple winning others to relationship with Him.

Do you want to be a healthy whole disciple? “Dear Friend, I am praying that all is well with you and that your body is as healthy as your soul is” [3 John 2 NLT].

As you go through this season in your life, consider how you may live as a healthy whole disciple and remember Our Father loves you and rejoices over you now.

1. Soul Health/Spiritual nourishment. “Our souls are healthy to the extent we maintain connection and receptivity to God.”-Mindy Caliguire, Willow Creek. “The soul is the engine room of our lives.”-Brian Houston, Hillsong Church. Continue to help your soul throughout the seasons of life:
 - Teach your soul to be quiet. Ps 62:5
 - Educate your soul and preach the truth to yourself. Prov 19:2 You can have lots of degrees or doctorates, but ultimately it is what your soul knows that directs your life.
 - Fill your soul with hope. Heb 6:19
 - Teach your soul to boast and declare God’s love. Ps 34:2
 - Teach your soul to be accountable. Accept responsibility and accountability for your choices and invite the Lord to lead you. Ps 119:10; 139:23
 - Teach your soul to lament, grieve or mourn with confidence. Ps 42; 130
2. Healthy eating with nutritional supplements. What you eat determines how you feel and sometimes think, so choose your food wisely and consider being tested for food allergies. Eliminate nicotine, caffeine and decrease simple carbohydrates. Vitamin or supplements may be recommended as led by your doctor.
3. Life Rhythm or Rule. A rhythm or rule for life is a simple statement of the regular rhythms we choose in order to partner with God for transformation, they are a brief and realistic scaffold of practices that support your hearts desire to grow in loving God and others. It honors your limits and your God-given longings. The guiding desire might sound like: “Live a sane and holy rhythm that reflects a deep love for God and respect for how he has made me.” Allow yourself to find your rhythm or rule that frees and opens you to the will and presence of Christ. (2 sources: Spiritual Disciplines Handbook by Calhoun, p35; and www.emotionallyhealthy.org)

4. Proper hydration. Water is your body's lubricant so make sure you get enough for you and avoid an abundance of substances that cause dehydration like caffeine and alcohol.
5. Restorative sleep. Guard your sleep and plan well to prepare your body for rest; that may mean setting aside time before bed to slow down. Often 7-8 hours of sleep is optimal, but some of us need less or more at certain ages or seasons/times. Sleep is critical for clear thinking, energy, relational connection to others and ability to focus in times with God.
6. Physical movement. Our bodies are made to move, so plan daily exercise and ask your doctor to help you determine healthy options for this season. A general rule is exercise for 20-30 minutes 5-7 times a week. Do you like to walk, dance, run, skip rope....?
7. Social community fun. We are made to be in relationship. Laughter and joy with others have immediate physical, mental and spiritual effects. Telling others about Christ is part of who we are as disciples of Jesus Christ so share your story with others. Also mourning with others, comforting others and allowing them to comfort us leads to blessing. Share life health-fully with trusted others and give of yourself healthfully being aware of your current limits.

At First Evangelical Free Church the Care Ministry considers "Living as a Healthy Whole Disciple" to be simplified by our tag lines of Community, Worship and Mission: Join a community or small group, worship as part of a congregation, and serve your larger community on mission bringing others to know the Lord.

In the FEFC Care and Counseling Ministries we have people who would like to offer care to you and also people willing to offer training to equip you to provide care to others. Give us a call or send us an email if we may join you in your current season. 891-1600 or care@fefc.org

What's your next step after reading through Living as a Healthy Whole Disciple?

Medical Tip: This is general information. Before making any health changes, consult your physician.