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CHOSEN IN CHRIST
CALLED TO INFLUENCE

Setting Ministry Limits



Women in ministry tend to
over-respond to needs.

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Setting Ministry Limits

Women in ministry tend to over-respond to needs.

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Introduction

Workaholic Faith

By *JoHannah Reardon*



When I became a Christian, I knew I'd found my life purpose. I wanted to serve God with my last ounce of strength. I read Christian biographies voraciously and latched onto any report of modern-day Christians who were giving their all to Christ and his kingdom. I often felt that my life was too easy—that I never suffered for Christ as some people did, which to my way of thinking made me an inferior Christian. What this translated into for my life was that I said yes to everything anyone asked me to do and constantly looked for challenging people and situations to be involved with.



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What this eventually led to (it took about 20 years—I'm tough) was burnout. I over-extended myself in almost every area of my life. In my false idea that only doing the hard things would please God, I worked part-time for a Christian organization, volunteered for three different organizations, and mothered three children. I wanted to do all of this perfectly, better than anyone had ever done any of them before. I also looked for practical needs all the time that I could meet. During this time, I remember telling the women in my small group that I always worry that I'm not doing enough to serve God. They looked at me shocked and said, "You worry about not doing enough?" I could tell by their expressions that I'd just put them all under the pile, but I stuck to my conviction (that I truly felt) that I wasn't doing enough.

To illustrate this, I remember getting a prayer letter during this time period from a couple who worked in the inner city. They said that they'd taught their children to hit the ground if they heard gunshots. When I read that I cried and cried, because I thought, *Now they're really serving the Lord. If I was serving God, I'd be doing something like that.*

What happened is that I completely crashed and ended up quitting my job and many of my volunteer activities (I kept my children). I didn't want to do anything except play mindless computer games all day long. For a long time, I was mad at God and mad at Christians for placing so many expectations on me. Finally after having meaningless days and sinking into apathetic depression, I faced the fact that I was to blame. Instead of listening to God and doing only what he had gifted me to do, I charged ahead following every need that came across my path. I had developed some kind of weird philosophy of life that said I had to fix everything I saw that seemed wrong, and that I was only serving God if I was suffering.



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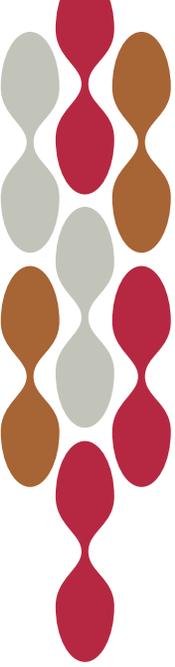
I thought I was listening to God, but instead I was listening to some kind of inner slave driver who was relentless. I also wanted my life to count for something important, and only by being completely self-sacrificing could I see that happening.

It took me several years to figure this out. I was angry at God, but I didn't know it. I thought I was just tired. But I started being honest with him by saying, "God, I'm exhausted. I don't know what you want from me. I feel that all my adult life I've wanted to serve you and have responded to every need you've placed in front of me, but you didn't give me the strength to do it. You wanted more from me than I was capable of giving. Why did you abandon me? Why didn't you give me the stamina I needed?"

He didn't answer me immediately. I had to struggle with this for awhile, which is what I see David doing in the Psalms. I didn't really get an answer until I slowed down long enough to really commune with God so that he could reveal the flaw in my thinking, and so that I would be willing to let my driving need to change the world stay in God's hands. This meant losing the bid for "the greatest Christian in the world" award and being content to do just what God made me to do and wants me to do.

None of us would ever say aloud that we are playing the "I'm a better Christian than you are" game, but I think I've been playing it my entire Christian life and have only recently recognized it. I wanted to win! So I put my all into it and played it better than anyone. Somehow the Christian life became, "I will have the most crowns in heaven no matter what!" so that doing became a lot more important than being.

I know I'm not alone in this. Since I've been sharing my flawed journey, I've heard from many others who have



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resonated with my sentiments. That's why this download is so close to my heart and why I believe it is a useful tool for all women who are involved in ministry.

Blessings,

JoHannah Reardon

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Christianity Today International

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Capable, Called . . . and Exhausted

It's okay to lower our expectations. Really.

By Cheryl M. Scheir

Forget "Aim High" and "Be All You Can Be." This Army of One has a new motto: Aim Lower. For women today, whether at work or at home, the bar is set at a record high—and I'm determined to limbo under it.

Now, don't get the wrong idea. I think we're highly qualified to perform a dazzling array of tasks. But some of us have packed our schedules, overtaxed our talents, and gotten off track.



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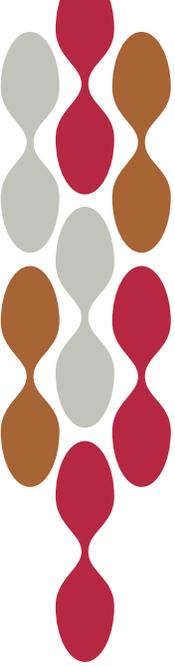
We work out, pick up, drop off, volunteer, decorate, renovate, Twitter, cook, clean, organize, reorganize, and hold down jobs. The mothers among us enroll our kids in art classes, sports teams, and language lessons. If it can be done, we do it—and I, for one, am exhausted.

While some women subscribe to worldly models of overachievement, others conform to a wrong-headed version of the Christian superwoman; she's the biblical Martha in overdrive. Sensitive to every need, she's able to whip up gourmet meals with a single phone call. Always available, she swoops in to save any church member or ministry in distress. Infinitely talented, she's always willing to lend a helping hand.

I was one of these women. My typical Sunday: church choir commitments for three worship services, starting at 7:45 A.M. and ending around noon. Small group Bible study (at my house, of course) from 4 to 6. Factor in parenting a two-year-old and a four-year-old, straightening up the house, preparing beverages, shuttling kids to and from off-site babysitting—and you get the idea. Some "day of rest."

My overdoing certainly wasn't limited to Sunday. I regularly baked homemade goodies for school, church, and family events. I filled my schedule with up to six evening meetings a week. I served on countless committees and ran more than my share of fundraisers. And more often than I'd like to admit, I managed to find myself up past 11 p.m. frantically scrubbing the bathtub in case the next night's dinner guests should peek behind the shower curtain.

Although I was doing it all, the Proverbs 31 woman I was not. Proverbs 31:28 says, "Her children arise and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her." But my children would lift their heads from their pillows and ask, "Do we have to go to church again?" And my husband would stand in the kitchen doorway and drowsily ask, "Are you ever coming up to bed?"



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My interpretation of Proverbs 31 was mistaken. In that chapter we have the example of an industrious, intelligent, well-rounded, God-centered woman. She works with her hands, makes real estate deals, gives to those in need, sells her handmade wares, and manages her household. She's so capable that she's intimidating! As a wise older woman once told me, though, the Proverbs 31 woman does it all—but she doesn't do it all in one day. She's the model of genuine poise and grace, not a frantic maniac. She strives for excellence, but to the advantage of her family, not at its expense.

Paul says it perfectly in his prelude to 1 Corinthians 13. Starting at 12:28, he describes the gifts that God has given to believers: to be apostles, some teachers, some healers, some helpers, some administrators. But then he speaks to the overachiever in us all as he writes, "Eagerly desire the greater gifts. And now I will show you the most excellent way" (12:31).

Paul goes on to describe love as the key ingredient in the believer's use of her gifts. Without it, he says, even her best efforts amount to little more than a clanging symbol. Our work as women of the kingdom—making disciples, serving the community of believers, and using whatever gifts God has given us—amounts to nothing without love as our primary motivation.

Some of us make our efforts out of the generosity of our loving spirits. But for others, these efforts may come out of a temptation to overachieve in order to impress or control others, a competitive spirit, a legalistic sense of duty, a perfectionist mindset, or a self-aggrandizing pride in our own talents and abilities.

It hasn't been easy for me to kick my high-achievement habit. But I've held on to Paul's words: "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will" (Romans 12:2).



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When I embraced the worldly models of performance and achievement, my true colors were hidden in a veil of generosity. But what lay underneath was really selfishness. Now, laying aside those worldly models, I can identify my real motives, evaluate the worth of what I'm doing, and determine whether and when to say no.

Want to Aim Lower?

1. Focus on a few. A friend once praised her mother's tireless efforts to visit the sick, deliver meals, and offer rides to those in need. But in the same breath she told me, "Mom was busy doing all those things for other people, but she was never around for us."

The world around us is bursting with needs. It's tempting to try to meet them all. Instead of serving the needs of everyone (and spreading yourself thin in the process), concentrate on a smaller number of people: your husband, children, Bible study group, and two or three friends. Assigning a priority to each person or group helps you make wise choices about whom to serve and when. Of course, make exceptions as special circumstances arise, but by limiting your focus you can serve more effectively.

2. Let others shine. This isn't just a good way of taking the pressure off yourself—it's actually a biblical concept! God has given gifts to all members of the body of Christ, and his Word exhorts us to make room for everyone. First Corinthians 12:21–22 reminds us, "The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I don't need you!' And the head cannot say to the feet, 'I don't need you!' On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable ..." No one person should be doing it all because God has distributed gifts that complement one



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another. And though someone else may not do things the way you would, you may find yourself impressed by how other people's strengths compensate for your weaknesses.

3. Slow down. Life is full of opportunities for intimate encounters with people who need encouragement, guidance, or just a good laugh. Let's not barrel past them because we've overstuffed our to-do lists.

Cheryl M. Scheir is a freelance author who lives with her family in Delaware. This article is adapted from one that first appeared on Kyria.com.

Reflect

- *Are you focusing on too many, which you need to narrow to a few? If so, who and what are those few?*
- *Do you need to let others shine? To whom might you pass some of your duties?*
- *Do you need to slow down? How can you do that?*

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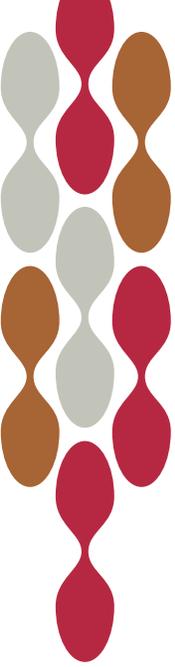
Setting Healthy Boundaries



Learning from Jesus how to be productive
without becoming frantic

By Kevin A. Miller

John 8:28–29 gives us a clue as to how to maintain healthy boundaries in ministry: "So Jesus said, 'When you have lifted up the Son of Man on the cross, then you will understand that I AM he. I do nothing on my own but say only what the Father taught me. And the one who sent me is with me—he has not deserted me. For I always do what pleases him.'" There are at least three boundaries we can detect from this passage.



Setting Ministry Limits

Setting Healthy Boundaries

Boundary 1: Listen to the Father, not the crowd. When I feel out of breath from doing too much, I ask myself, *How did I get into doing all this? How did it all end up on me?*

At first, I list the immediate reasons: The project took longer than I thought it would. I wasn't planning on two people quitting the committee.

But when I dig deeper, I usually find buried in my heart the real reason: I wanted people to like me. My desire to help was partly a desire to love and help someone, but it was also my insecurity saying, "Love me! Affirm me! If I volunteer, maybe I'll get that!"

Jesus never operated that way. If he had, he would have had thousands of bosses, because literally thousands of people wanted his help. But Jesus had only one boss—his Father. "I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me" (John 8:28).

Obedying his Father, Jesus sometimes helped people so much he didn't even have time to eat (Mark 3:20–21)! He obeyed and gave up dinner. But other times, Jesus' Father must have said, "Leave those people behind and come away with me," because Jesus abandoned the crowds and went off by himself, to pray and rest (see Matthew 14:22–23).

Boundary 2: Find your specific mission. God hasn't asked us to do everything, to go everywhere, to help everyone. Jesus had a specific, narrowly defined ministry. While Jesus was on earth, he could have traveled the Mediterranean world—Greece, Italy, Turkey and Spain. But Jesus stayed within one tiny chunk of the world, mostly within the regions of Judea and Galilee.

Why? That's where the Jewish people were, and they were his primary calling (Matthew 15:24). Jesus poured himself out for people, but within the limits of the calling God the Father had given him. He focused.



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Boundary 3: Accept your human needs and limitations. In Jesus' time, there were no cars or planes, so he had to walk many miles. Walking miles takes a long time. You can't do much ministry during that time. All you can do is look at the countryside and talk with friends and recharge. At night, there were no electric lights, so Jesus looked at the stars and then went to sleep. For Jesus simply to make it through one day, He had to have slow times, rest times, recharging times.

God designed us with human limitations. We need to eat, sleep, and rest. We get sick and have to slow down. We need time to work hard but also time to play. Yes, we may choose to sacrifice sleep in order to pray, or give up food in order to serve people, but those situations tend to be exceptions, not rules.

But be willing to risk. Although I try to set healthy boundaries for my life, God sometimes calls me to risk. That doesn't undermine anything I've already said. It's simply a reminder that the Christian life is an adventure. To live it, we are going to have to depend on an adventurous, powerful God. He is the only true source of strength.

*Kevin Miller is a pastor at Church of the Resurrection in Wheaton, Illinois. This article was first published on **BuildingChurchLeaders.com**.*



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Setting Healthy Boundaries

Reflect

- *Which of the three boundaries is easiest for you? Most difficult?*
- *How can healthy boundaries actually help you to take risks outside those boundaries?*
- *What do you believe is your calling? How are your activities fitting into that calling?*

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Treat or Refer?



Practical advice for ministering to emotionally and spiritually wounded small group members

By Rex L. Stancil

I have spent the last 14 years serving as a chaplain or in some form of pastoral ministry in the local church. During that time, I have taught and trained literally hundreds of group leaders on the subject of Christian care and counseling. My advice is usually to love people until it hurts, perhaps love them some more, and make sure they are getting help somewhere in addition to the small group. Throughout my training and education, I was taught one rule: refer, refer, refer. I am not a licensed counselor, and I should not try to be one. I let the experts handle the hard stuff.



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Advice for Pastors

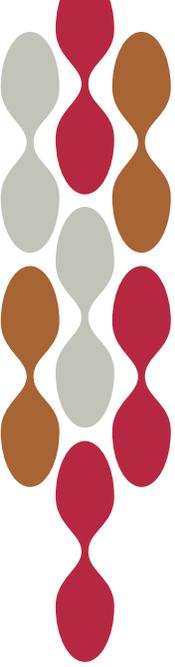
If you are a pastor in a church, then you know your time can get eaten away doing nothing but counseling. And there may be necessary seasons of that. However, I do not advise entering into a long-term counseling situation with parishioners (keeping in mind that mentoring and discipling are different than counseling).

Instead, I tend to stick with a three-session rule. If someone comes to me and we determine that some amount of counseling will be helpful—or if someone continues to schedule meetings with me and we end up discussing the same issue(s) over and over—I will only meet with that individual three times before I assist him or her into a more structured setting, such as a support and recovery group or meeting with a licensed counselor. Wherever I live, I keep the names of a few counselors and resources that I have pre-screened, and to which I feel comfortable referring.

Advice for Group or Ministry Leaders

Issues like death, divorce, addiction, sexual sin, depression, job loss, and so on can all be dealt with at some level within a small group or ministry team. However, the weightier issues of life—those that will take longer periods to heal and those that are more deeply rooted in a person's past—will ultimately need a pastor, coach, and/or counselor to get involved.

If you are a group leader, I advise you to be careful about counseling your group members. "Doing life together," "living in community," or whatever phraseology you use to describe small-group life is not the same as professional counseling. But that doesn't mean you need to cut a wounded person out of your life, or out of the life of the group. A listening ear is good medicine for every soul, and the greatest thing you can do for



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your wounded group members is to love them, be with them, and go with them—literally and figuratively—through the counseling and healing process.

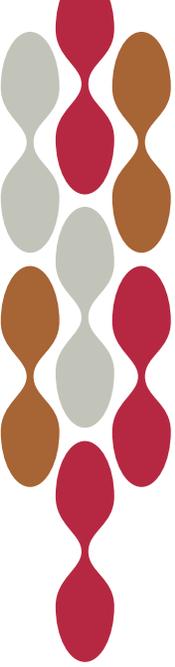
Indeed, anyone struggling with issues, regardless of the problem, needs a loving community that will accept them as they are and love them through the process of healing. Validation, prayer, and accountability are essential for growth and healing. When everything in life is turned upside down, people need an anchor to keep them stable. A caring and compassionate group of friends can provide that anchor.

I also advise group leaders not to attempt any kind of medical diagnoses with their group members. Never tell them they need medications or medical treatments. Remember: refer, refer, refer. A group leader's job is to provide a safe environment for all group members.

Practical Applications

At times, one person's needs may sidetrack an entire meeting. However, this should be rare, not regular. You as the leader must establish healthy boundaries for your entire group within which they can have their needs met. If you allow the pastoral care needs of one or two persons to sidetrack the meetings, then you have neglected the rest of the group.

When such monopolization happens, the easiest way to correct it is to set up something after the meeting—the next morning, the next day, or the next week. Meet with the person outside of the regularly scheduled time. If it sounds like something serious, give your pastor or small-group coach a call and give them a snapshot of the situation without breaking confidentiality. If your pastor or coach thinks more involvement is necessary, then go back to the group member and ask permission to talk about him or her to your coach or pastor. Be sure to let the group member make that choice.



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When people are in crisis, they need assistance in many areas, but often times they will not ask for it. Your response (and that of the rest of the group) should be to actively and caringly try to help that person. If appropriate and needed, provide for their basic needs—meals, rides, chores around their house, and so on.

It's also important to provide accountability to that person. Call them several times a day if necessary. Help them find a counselor if the situation warrants, and offer to attend the first meeting with them. Ask them if they are keeping their appointments. Ask them if they are following up on making the necessary changes in their lives. Invite them over for dinner. Be their best friend for a *short time*, if necessary.

During crisis mode, people need more attention, more direction, and more reminders to do the things they need to accomplish. After a few days, maybe as long as a few weeks, things should normalize and the crisis may become manageable. At that point, you and your group can back off somewhat.

There's no doubt about it: loving people is hard sometimes. Yet we are called to sacrifice for one another. Doing life together may mean giving up some of your free time to be with someone who is in need—to show them that you care beyond just your words. Your presence and willingness to listen are tangible ways you can love your neighbor as yourself.

However, as a final reminder, be sure not to try and "fix" any members of your group. If they have issues with their past, and those issues are preventing them from being healthy in the present, then my advice is to refer, refer, refer.

*Rex Stancil is an associate minister at Earlham Church of Christ in Earlham, Iowa. This article first appeared on **SmallGroups.com**.*



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Treat or Refer?

Reflect

- *Have you ever felt you've gotten in over your head in a counseling situation with someone in your ministry? If so, what happened?*
- *If you are reluctant to refer someone to a professional, why is that?*
- *What makes you want to rescue people in tough situations? What is your motivation?*

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How to Tend to Others Without Burning Out

Finding balance as we give our
lives away

By Emily Wierenga

A woman's love is endless, but her energy is not. It's easy to want to care for others while forgetting that we ourselves have needs. There are days when I crumble into my husband's arms and weep, and he kisses my hair and reminds me I am only human, something every woman needs to be reminded of. Otherwise, we tend toward a messiah-complex—the belief that we can save the world if we try hard enough.



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How to Tend to Others Without Burning Out

This crumbling has taught me humility. It's taught me to pray. And it's taught me the secret to staying strong when others are weak.

Find a Way to Release Stress

When I have felt overwhelmed by others' needs, all I could do was pray for a miracle. And so to relieve the overwhelming stress, I painted, because I'm an artist, and creativity relieves me of my stress.

Painting, for me, is prayer in action, a way of releasing worries onto the shoulders of a God who loves me. I also practiced Christ-focused meditation and confided in trusted mentors—women who had been there before, who could help me set boundaries and provide much-needed perspective. Often too close to the situation, I need others to help me see how God is acting in the wider scheme of things.

I also learned to cope with my guitar. But most important—and hardest for us women—I learned to ask for help. I am independent and like to believe that I'm invincible. But that kind of thinking stems from pride, which precedes the Fall. Once I learned to humble myself, I was overwhelmed by the number of people who'd been waiting for an invitation to be involved.

In the same way that it takes a village to raise a child, it takes a community to support those who have needs. As Paul writes in Ephesians 4:16, "He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love."

Physical Consequences

A sensitive person, I starved myself as a child to numb the pain I felt. When it came to caring for others, I knew it would



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be easy to slip back into a habit of self-abuse. Aware of this tendency to hurt myself on behalf of others, I wrote out a menu and established an exercise routine. This not only gave me the nutrition I needed, but the chance to release any pent-up emotions by running or using the elliptical.

As women, we have the tendency to take on one another's burdens. We punish ourselves by staying up all hours of the night worrying, or by overeating or under-eating as though we're not worth the effort of nutrition. But as believers, our responsibility is to release those burdens to Jesus. "Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest," he says in Matthew 11:28. A well-rested, healthy person exhibits strong faith in Christ, for rest is a gift from Jesus we have only to accept.

No matter the stress of the day, each evening I would draw myself a bath or brew some tea and read a good book. Having battled insomnia in the past, I knew the importance of a good night's sleep. By caring for ourselves—eating three meals a day, exercising, and getting a decent amount of rest—we declare Christ able to care for our problems. And his burden is easy, he says; his yoke is light.

Guard Your Soul

Caring for others takes no greater toll than on the soul. It's an invisible toll that expresses itself mentally and physically. And it's a toll that requires divine intervention. There were numerous nights I'd cry out to God, asking him, "Why won't you intervene for this person?" I wanted to reconnect with a God who felt far away.

Trust requires honest communication. In order to trust God, we need to be honest with him, knowing that this "High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses, for he faced all of the same testings we do, yet he did not sin" (Hebrews 4:15).



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How to Tend to Others Without Burning Out

We have to believe that God is bigger than others' needs and our sadness, and that he understands. He watched his own son die, unjustly, causing him unimaginable grief. When we see others' worlds crack in two, we need to let him comfort us instead of taking on the burdens ourselves.

Emily Wierenga is a freelance author and mom who cared for her mother for three years during her mother's battle with brain cancer. Now she helps care for her mother-in-law who suffers with breast cancer. This article is adapted from one that first appeared on Kyria.com.

Reflect

- *What do you enjoy that would help you to relieve stress?*
- *What physical consequences are you noticing in your life?*
- *Read **Matthew II:28–30**. Reflect on what this passage means and think about whether you are allowing Jesus to make your burden light.*

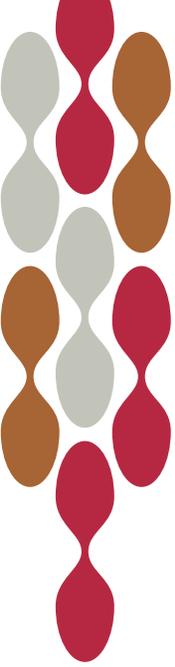


Are You Dangerously Tired?

Use this evaluation to find out if you are overextending in ministry.

By Ruth Haley Barton

- I am particularly irritable and hypersensitive** about things that normally wouldn't bother me (a child's mistake, being cut off in traffic, a coworker's irritating habit).
- I am restless.** During waking hours I'm aware of a vague sense that something isn't quite right or an even stronger feeling of wanting to bolt from my life. When it's time to rest, I find myself unable to settle down and sit quietly or fall asleep.
- I compulsively overwork.** I check e-mail late into the evening, am unable to unplug completely to go on vacation, struggle to enter into solitude or spend uninterrupted time with family.



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Are You Dangerously Tired?

- ❑ **I am emotionally numb.** I'm unable to really feel anything emotionally—good or bad—for fear of being overwhelmed.
- ❑ **I indulge in escapist behaviors** instead of healthy activities (compulsive eating, drinking, or other substance abuse, spending, television, pornography, surfing the Internet instead of going for a walk or bike ride, connecting meaningfully with friends and family, enjoying a hobby or interest like playing an instrument, cooking, painting, drawing, writing poetry, playing sports, working with our hands, reading a good book).
- ❑ **I feel disconnected from my identity and calling.** I am at the mercy of other people's expectations and my own inner compulsions because I lack an internal plumb line against which to measure these demands.
- ❑ **I am not able to attend to my needs** (exercise, eating right, sleeping enough, going to the doctor, having that needed surgery, getting the car washed, picking up the dry cleaning, or simply staying organized).
- ❑ **I hoard energy.** I always feel threatened, as though exposing myself to additional people or situations would drain the last of my energy.
- ❑ **I've slipped in my spiritual practices** (solitude and silence, prayer, personal reflection on Scripture, journaling, self-examination).

Adapted from Strengthening the Soul of Your Leadership *and* Invitation to Solitude and Silence *by* Ruth Haley Barton. *This first appeared on* **Kyria.com**.

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Additional Resources



Articles, books, and Bible studies to help you further

Articles

Lonely Leadership—*Community's not just a good idea—it's essential!*

By Esther Feng, available on GiftedForLeadership.com

Dare to Lead from Healing—*We don't have to be perfect. In fact, imperfection may help our ministries.*

By Mary DeMuth, available on GiftedForLeadership.com

"Lord, Save Me From Myself"—*Dealing with the drive to succeed.*

By Sherryl Stone, available on GiftedForLeadership.com

Squeezed for Time?—*Why hoping for a 26-hour day isn't the answer*

By Eileen Silva Kindig, available on Kyria.com



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Additional Resources

Confessions of a Finite Follower—*Learning what "normal" activity is.*

By Halee Gray Scott, available on GiftedForLeadership.com

Books

Boundaries by Henry Cloud, John Townsend (Zondervan, 1992). Having clear boundaries is essential to a healthy, balanced lifestyle. A boundary is a personal property line that marks those things for which we are responsible. In other words, boundaries define who we are and who we are not. Boundaries impact all areas of our lives: Physical boundaries help us determine who may touch us, mental boundaries give us the freedom to have our own thoughts, emotional boundaries help us to deal with our own emotions and spiritual boundaries help us to distinguish God's will from our own.

Smart Women Know When to Say No by Kevin Leman (Revell, 2010). If you're a woman who spends most of her time pleasing others and at the end of the day is drained of happiness, then this book will show you how to assert yourself while keeping your pleasant personality.

Strengthening the Soul of Your Leadership by Ruth Haley Barton (IVP, 2008). Using the biblical model of Moses, Ruth Haley Barton guides leaders to a place where the spiritual and ministerial meet. Her intent is to help leaders lead from a place of spiritual transformation, but to first find that place for themselves.

Bible Studies and Online Resources

Women's Ministry Downloads—Check out the many tools to help you in your women's ministry. Available from Kyria.com.

Looking for Rest—This Bible study asks: Whose idea was it in the first place that we should rest? What does slowing down look like? What challenges will we face? This study is available from ChristianBibleStudies.com.

Soul Care for Women Leaders—This six-session Bible study course focuses on biblical characters and spiritual disciplines that will restore your weary soul. The purpose of this course is to learn to embrace the dark nights of the soul, and the clarity and closeness they can bring. Available from ChristianBibleStudies.com.

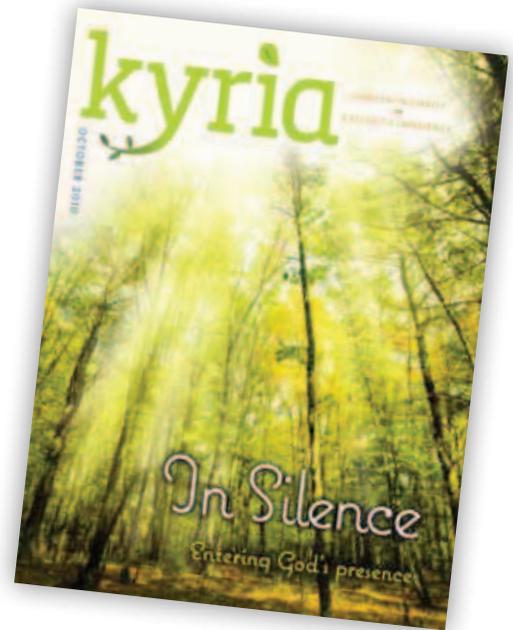
The Role and Care of the Heart—If you want to prioritize the care of your heart, then this download will help you. In it, you'll find articles that will help you evaluate your heart's condition and equip you with ways to strengthen and care for it on a daily basis. You'll find biblical insights and advice to spur you on in guarding your heart in the ways a leader must. May you experience more and more of the life God has for you as you obediently guard what he's entrusted to you. Available from Kyria.com.

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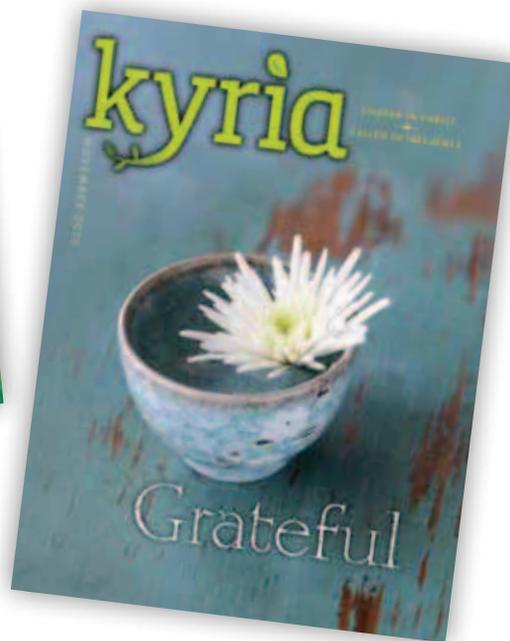
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