

Pastor, How Healthy are You?

When I was in my twenties, I *never* thought about it. When I was in my thirties, I *rarely* thought about it. When I hit forty, I *started* thinking about it. Now well into the second half of my life, I *often* think about it.

“It” is the question of health. Will I be healthy enough to reach the finish line in whatever course God has planned for me? The Lord knows what He wants to do with my life, but I have some responsibility in the matter, too. I can do things that will *help* me go the distance or I can do things that will *hinder* me from going the distance.

The same is true about you, pastor. Granted, stuff happens over which you have no control, and those things are in the Lord’s hands. But what about the matters over which you do have some control? Shouldn’t you manage those things in a way that will help you get to the finish line?

You might be thinking, “Why is he nagging me about this?” Here’s why: *Because I believe you are the key human agent in the mission that God is carrying out through His church.* Not the sole human agent, of course, but the key one. You are called to lead God’s people to carry out the Great Commandment and the Great Commission in a hostile world. You are called to be the shepherd that leads, feeds, and protects the flock under the lordship of the Great Shepherd. I want to see you finish what God has called you to do and not have a premature exit from the race.

In order to do that, you will need a *wellness plan* for your life and ministry. Do you have one? A good wellness plan consists of four areas.

1. *Spiritual.* These are the disciplines that nurture your personal relationship with God. They often get sacrificed in the busyness of ministry. Are you nurturing your soul through prayer, meditation on Scripture, worshipping the Lord, and times of personal retreat? One way you can make a premature exit from the race is by neglecting your soul. *A pastor with an unhealthy soul is in a poor position to fulfill his calling.*

2. *Physical.* These are the disciplines that nurture your body. They, too, often get sacrificed in the busyness of ministry. Are you caring for your body through good eating and drinking habits, exercise, medical checkups, and managing weight and other indicators of physical health? One way you can make a premature exit from the race is by neglecting your body. *A pastor with self-induced physical problems is in a poor position to reach the finish line.*

3. *Relational.* These are the disciplines that nurture your connections with key people in your life. Again, these are often sacrificed on the altar of church work. Are you tending to the “wife of your youth,” your children, close family members and friends? One way you can make a

premature exit from the race is by neglecting the key relationships in your life. *A pastor who isn't relationally healthy is in a poor position to survive the rigors of reaching the finish line.*

4. *Intellectual.* These are the disciplines that nurture your mind, wisdom, and creativity. After the time of formal education, these saw-sharpening practices often get neglected in favor of more "urgent" matters. Are you tending to the needs of your mind through good reading, discussions with peers and mentors, timely seminars and other learning experiences? One way you can make a premature exit from the race is by neglecting the expansion of your mind. *A pastor who isn't intellectually healthy is in a poor position to deal with the challenges that present themselves on the way to the finish line.*

So, pastor, how is your overall health? Do you need some help with a wellness plan? You have partners in this race, so don't race alone!