Self-Care

May 3, 2020

In a time where we all are wrestling with changing routines, figuring out new normal, and holding onto stress that we’ve never had to deal with before, something often gets lost in the mix: self-care. In a society that has increasingly emphasized “go, go, go”, when we’re forced to slow down, we feel like we aren’t doing enough. So, we find more ways to go. We overthink. We don’t offer ourselves much grace. We continue to push productivity. For many people, this time has made us feel even more busy and hectic.

But we cannot forget – our health is a priority! I don’t mean simply avoiding getting sick, but we must remember our mental, emotional, and overall physical health as well.

We need rest. We need to take care of ourselves. Not at the expense of other people – but there needs to be moments in your life where you fill up your cup. I heard it recently described this way: If your life is a car, self-care is the gasoline. If you don’t fill your life with self-care, you’ll come to a stop! Self-care is strategic, not selfish.

How can we do this on a daily basis? A simple tip is to check in together with your family. Find consistency with how you address your self-care. Every day, maybe in the mornings or evenings, check in with your mind, your heart, and your body.

1. Mind check-in – be aware of your thinking. Ask each other what your thoughts are. Many of our thoughts tend to lean towards the negative – encourage one another to instead think positively.
2. Heart check-in – be aware of your emotions. What are you feeling today? Emotions need to be acknowledged and welcomed, not pushed away. Especially now, where we all experience so many different feelings every single day, you have an awesome opportunity to open up to your family about how you are feeling almost every moment. Notice those feelings, share those feelings, and support each other in those feelings.
3. Body check-in – How are you feeling? Notice your breathing, tensions, and aches. Take care of your body by exercising and eating well. Your bodies can communicate a lot of things!

Do what you can to create specificity and qualify feelings. Ask each other, “on a scale of 1-10, how are you doing right now?” Another thing I heard recently was to have pictures of different weather somewhere visible in your home, and simply ask each other, “how’s the weather today?”

We all are going through mental, emotional, and physical stress like never before. Mental health is never a one-person solution – so work together! Help each other express thoughts, feelings, and encourage each other to remain physically healthy. When you take care of yourself, you are better equipped to take care of others!

Questions for Reflection and Discussion

1. How have you been taking care of yourselves during this time? What actions have you taken to rest (not to “do nothing” or “be lazy” – but to refill)?
2. Ask each other now! On a scale of 1-10, how are you doing? What’s the weather like? Or, what other way can you qualify/specify your thoughts and emotions?
3. Jesus often retreated to solitary places to pray as part of His self-care habits. How can we follow that behavior?
4. It’s easy to feel guilt or shame if we don’t take time to rest and refill. On the other hand, it is easy to feel guilty when we *do* take that time for ourselves. What can you do to help each other avoid that guilt/shame?
5. What’s something you can do together as a family to just relax and have fun? How can you make that a part of your daily routine?
6. Try this: Allow each person in your family 2-3 minutes to talk about how they feel. Everyone else should commit to silence while others are talking! Even set a timer if you have to. Practice listening – but also practice expressing how you’re feeling as well.
7. What did you come up with for number 5? Here’s your challenge: do that now! Try to not schedule anything else for your day until you have some fun together.

Self-care is so important, especially right now! It is not wrong to take care of yourself. There is a point where it is hurtful to put yourself before others – but that’s not what we’re asking you to do! We are asking you to be mindful of what you are going through – share it with the people you are closest with – understand that you are loved by God and He wants you to thrive!