

Dealing with stress

I. Causes of stress

A. External factors

1. Change
2. Frustration
3. Overload
4. Lack of change
5. Broken relationships

B. Internal factors

1. Personality
2. Self-image
3. Ability of control

II. Sources of stress for full-time ministers

- A. Incorrect self-image (e.g. perfectionism, competition and comparison...)
- B. Dare not to "say no" (way out: say no bravely, clarify expectations, accept limitations)
- C. Wrong motives of ministry (e.g.: pleasing people, seeking for glory)
- D. Wrong focus of ministry (e.g.: towards people or things? Quantitative achievement or quality improvement? Gift matching or personal achievement?)
- E. Misinterpretation of grace (e.g.: identifying success or failure with God's favor)

III. The harm of stress -- leading to exhaustion

Symptoms of exhaustion

- A. Feelings: powerlessness, frustration, discouragement, negative emotions, easily irritated (loss of endurance), self-pity (no one understands)
- B. Spiritually: Insomnia, fatigue, inability to concentrate, confused thinking, slow reaction
- C. Physical: Frequent colds, headaches, quadriplegia, heart problems, poor appetite

IV. Summary

- A. Stress is not necessarily caused by negative or unpleasant things. For example: getting married, taking a vacation, getting promoted, and going to school can also turn good things into bad effects.
- B. Stress is not necessarily negative, it also has positive functions. A little pressure can help

you grow, but too much pressure can have the opposite effect. Therefore, pressure can be a "helper of life" or a "hindrance to life", depending on whether we know how to deal with it properly.

- C. Therefore, healthy Christians do not avoid stress, but learn to distinguish what is too heavy and beyond their ability to cope with.

V. Coping and handling of stress

A. Two forms of coping

1. Problem-focused coping
2. Emotion-focused coping

B. Start from personal life

1. Balance personal life: wisely manage time, work and rest, diet and exercise
2. Establish an effective support system (Psalm 42)
 - To God
 - To Self
 - To others
3. Sensitivity to and handling of sin (Psalm 51)
4. Stable cultivation of spiritual life (Mark 1:32–35)
5. Establish reasonable ministry goals
6. Develop personal ministry style

C. Learn from biblical characters and start with life values (Philippians 1:12-28, 4:11-13)

1. As long as the gospel is spread
2. Live and die for Christ
3. Seek only the benefit of others
4. Be content with what you have