

The Healthy Christian

The health of the church is in direct proportion to the health of each individual Christian. If the church is to grow and be healthy, the individual Christians comprising the church must grow spiritually.
- A.W. Tozer, *The Crucified Life* -

When participating in a physical fitness routine there is evidence that people are more likely to stay with it if they are part of a group. A Stafford University study found that people working out in a group, exercised 160% longer than simply working with a partner, and 200% longer than working alone.

Spiritual health requires the same line of thinking. Jesus never made following Him a solitary event. Everything Jesus did pointed toward Christianity being a communal affair. And, just as with physical fitness, there are things that we must do for ourselves, if we want to be healthy members of our Christian communities. If we want our physical body to be healthy, no one can eat right, exercise, or rest for us. The same is true for being a healthy Christian; we must create and practice our own healthy spiritual habits.

#1 Nutrition



But Solid food is for the mature... (Heb 5:14)

The bible is clear that we should mature from spiritual milk to meat. The food we consume contributes to our physical health and growth. In the same way, there are things we can consume that contribute to our spiritual health and growth.

Here are three ways we can mature from spiritual milk to spiritual meat:

1. Consume God's Word Daily. Hearing it only on Sunday is not enough.
2. Commit to a Community. Connect to a group of believers that will challenge you
3. Commune with God Daily. Author E.M. Bounds said, "In God's name I beseech you let prayer nourish your soul as your meals nourish your body." In other words, pray.

Exercise #2

So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. (Jm 2:17)



While good nutrition is important to being healthy, it is only part of the process. Physical health also requires consistent exercise. The same is true for spiritual health. James 2 asks the question, "Isn't it obvious that God-talk without God-acts is outrageous nonsense?" (MSG). James is telling us that God's word has to be combined with physical action for it to be effective. And, while he does offer some suggestions for what these "God-acts" can look like, this is more than just a "good deed to-do list." Our "God-acts" are the bearing of good fruit (deeds) that Jesus spoke of in John 15:5. When we consume the wisdom of God, it should lead us to a desire to be participants in the Gospel.

#3 Rest



...and I will give you rest. (Mt 11:28)

No healthy lifestyle is complete without including the habit of rest. It provides the body with the opportunity to recuperate. Rest is just as important if we're to be a healthy Christian. In Mark 2:27, Jesus said, "The Sabbath was made for man..." Theologian Matthew Henry explains this by saying, "The Sabbath was made a day of rest, only in order to its being a day of holy work, a day of communion with God, a day of praise and thanksgiving; and the rest from worldly business is therefore necessary..." Our rest is intended to provide us with relief from the world and draw us into God. We should seek rest which is focused on communion with God.



#4 Repeat

The key to staying healthy is keeping the routine going and eventually it letting it become habit. But, to make sure you succeed, you have to do it with a community of people who value it as much as you do. You will know you found that community because they will show their love for you in the way they challenge you to walk as Christ walked.