

BALANCE MY CHOICE

Wellness Pointers

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BUT WHEN NOTHING IS VALUED FOR WHAT IT IS,
EVERYTHING IS DESTINED TO BE WASTED.

WENDELL BERRY



EMPLOYEE WELLNESS
Southern Adventist University

ENVIRONMENTAL

Emotional | Environmental | Financial | Mental | Occupational | Physical | Social | Spiritual

Our Lord's Two "Customs"

***"...on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom." (v. 16)
For reading & meditation -- Luke 4:14-30***

One reason there is a casual approach to personal devotions in the Christian church today is a reaction to the legalism of past days. Another reason is the rise of the charismatic movement.

In the early days of the charismatic renewal, many of its leaders from the historic denominations who had been fed on a diet of legalism began to emphasize (quite rightly) the joy of knowing Christ's presence through the indwelling Spirit every hour of the day. People in charismatic services often said: "Now I don't have to have a daily quiet time in order to feel God's presence. Every waking minute is a quiet time." Dangerous stuff. The danger lies not in emphasizing that we are in Christ's presence every hour of the day but the de-emphasis on closeting oneself alone with Him in personal prayer and study of His Word. Although most leaders of the charismatic renewal did not teach or encourage people to dispense with their personal times of devotion with the Lord, many came to believe they could get through the day simply by speaking in tongues.

Nothing must become a substitute for those private and personal moments we spend in prayer and communion with Christ. Our Lord knew and sensed the presence of God with Him and in Him to a degree we will never fully experience here on this earth, but it is said of Him in Scripture that He had two "customs." One custom was to go regularly to the house of God; the other was to pray regularly. And these must be our customs too.



Lord Jesus, if You needed to spend time closeted with Your Father in personal prayer, then how much more do I need to also. Help me steer a middle course between legalism and casualness. For Your own dear Name's sake. Amen.



ESSENTIAL HABITS FOR A HEALTHY HEART

February is American Heart Month -- and a good time to remember that it's never too late to start protecting your heart health. According to the NIH National Heart Lung and Blood Institute, people can lower their heart disease risk enormously (by as much as 82 percent) simply by adopting sensible health habits.

'The Big Four' -- Habits For A Healthy Lifestyle

So, what does a healthy lifestyle consist of? Here are the basics: If you eat a nutritious diet, get regular physical activity, maintain a healthy weight, and stop smoking, you will help to keep your heart healthy. But doing just one or two of these "Big Four" habits isn't enough to protect your heart. To keep your heart strong and healthy, it is vital to adopt and practice all four lifestyle habits.

Some people may need to take additional steps to prevent heart disease. For example, if you have diabetes, you also will need to keep your blood sugar levels under control. Whatever your current health condition or habits, creating an action plan to improve your lifestyle will make a positive difference in your heart health.

So keep at it. Work with your doctor. Ask family members and friends for support. If you slip, try again. Be good to your heart, and it will reward you many times over -- with a better chance for a longer, more vigorous life. For more information about heart health, visit the National Heart Lung and Blood Institute at www.nhlbi.nih.gov.

Change Takes Effort -- One Step At A Time

Taking care of your heart is one of the most important things you can do for your health and well-being. But, because heart health involves changing daily habits, it can require some real effort. To make the process easier, try tackling only one habit at a time. For example, if you smoke cigarettes and also eat a diet high in saturated fats, work first on kicking the smoking habit. Then, once you've become comfortable as a nonsmoker, begin to skim the fat from your diet.

Remember, nobody's perfect. Nobody always eats the ideal diet or gets just the right amount of physical activity. The important thing is to follow a sensible, realistic plan that will gradually lessen your chances of developing heart disease.

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We Name Names!

Artery Crust. Judging by the label, Marie Callendar's (16.5 oz) Chicken Pot Pie has "only" 520 calories, 11 grams of saturated fat, and 800 mg of sodium. But look again. Those numbers are for only half a pie. Eat the entire pie, as most people probably do, and you're talking 1,040 calories, 22 grams of saturated fat (more than a day's worth), and 1,600 mg of sodium (an entire day's worth).

Triple Bypass. Can't decide what to pick from a restaurant menu? No worries. Now you can order not just one entree, but two ... or three ... all at once. Olive Garden's Tour of Italy -- Homemade Lasagna, Lightly Breaded Chicken Parmagiana, and Creamy Fettuccine Alfredo -- comes with 1,450 calories, 33 grams of saturated fat, and 3,830 mg of sodium. Add a breadstick (150 calories and 400 mg of sodium) and a plate of Garden-Fresh Salad with dressing (350 calories and 1,930 mg of sodium) and you'll consume almost 2,000 calories (an entire day's worth) and 6,160 mg of sodium (4 days' worth) in a single meal!

Salt's On! An average cup of Campbell's Condensed soup has 760 mg of sodium. But most people eat the whole can of soup, which contains 1,900 mg of sodium -- more than most adults should consume in an entire day! Look for Campbell's Healthy Request, Progresso Reduced Sodium, and Healthy Choice soups with sodium in the 400s (still a lot if you eat the whole can). Brands like Amy's, Imagine Foods, Pacific Natural Foods, and Tabatchnick have even less sodium.

Tortilla Terror. Interested in a Chipotle Chicken Burrito (tortilla, rice, pinto beans, cheese, chicken, sour cream, and salsa)? Think of its 970 calories and 18 grams of saturated fat, as three 6-inch Subway BLT Classic Subs! Skipping the cheese or sour cream cuts the saturated fat to 6 grams, but you still end up with 750 calories and more than a day's worth of sodium. Yikes!

Factory Reject. People don't expect light desserts at The Cheesecake Factory. But the Chocolate Tower Truffle Cake kicks things up a notch. If it weren't served on its side, this one would stand over six inches tall. And upright or not, the slab of cake still weighs in at three-quarters of a pound. What do you get for all that heft? Just 1,760 calories and 2 1/2 days' worth of saturated fat (50 grams), mostly from chocolate, sugar, cream, white flour, and butter.

Burial Grands. No one thinks of cinnamon rolls as health food. But each Pillsbury Grands! Cinnabon Cinnamon Roll with Icing has 310 calories and 2 grams of saturated fat plus 2 1/2 grams of trans fat (more than a day's worth) and 5 teaspoons of sugar. Companies are dumping their partially hydrogenated oils left and right, yet Pillsbury still makes most of its rolls and biscuits with the stuff.

Transgression. "Excellent source of ALA Omega 3," declares the Land O'Lakes Margarine box. Who knew that Land O'Lakes stick margarine was so heart healthy? It isn't. Each tablespoon of the spread has 2 1/2 grams of trans fat (more than an entire day's limit) and 2 grams of saturated fat. And beware of other trans-filled sticks by Blue Bonnet, Parkay, Country Crock, and Fleischmann's. At least those brands don't imply that a bit of ALA outweighs the harm caused by the margarine's trans and saturated fat. Shopping tip: Look for tub margarines -- most have little or no trans fat.

Starbucks on Steroids. The Starbucks Venti (20 oz) White Chocolate Mocha with 2% milk and whipped cream is more than a mere cup of coffee. It's worse than a McDonald's Quarter Pounder with Cheese. Few people have room in their diets for the 580 calories and 15 grams of saturated fats that this hefty beverage supplies. But you can lose 130 calories and almost two-thirds of the bad fat if you order it with nonfat milk and no whipped cream.

Extreme Ice Cream. An average half-cup serving of Haagen-Dazs ice cream squeezes half-a-day's saturated fat and a third-of-a-day's cholesterol into your artery walls and makes nearly a 300-calorie down-payment on your next set of fat cells -- if you can stop at a petite half-cup!

Stone Cold. Cold Stone Creamery's Oh Fudge! shake (chocolate ice cream, milk, and fudge syrup) starts at 1,250 calories for the "Like It" (16 oz) size. That's more than a large (32 oz) McDonald's McCafe Chocolate Triple Thick Shake. The "Love It" (20 oz) has 1,660 calories and the "Gotta Have It" (24 oz) reaches 1,920 calories (just about an entire day's worth) and 69 grams of saturated fat (3 1/2 days' worth). That's the saturated fat content of two 16-oz T-bone steaks plus a buttered baked potato, all blended into a handy 24 oz cup.

Far better alternatives are available to you.
Turn the page for some healthier choices!

10 Super Foods...

For Better Health!

Sweet Potatoes.

A nutritional All-Star -- one of the best vegetables you can eat. They're loaded with carotenoids, vitamin C, potassium, and fiber. Bake and then mix in some unsweetened applesauce or crushed pineapple for extra moisture and sweetness.

Mangoes.

Just one cup of mango supplies 100% of a day's vitamin C, one-third of a day's vitamin A, a decent dose of blood-pressure-lowering potassium, and 3 grams of fiber. Bonus: mango is one of the fruits least likely to have pesticide residues.

Unsweetened Greek Yogurt.

Non-fat, plain Greek yogurt has a pleasant tartness that's a perfect foil for the natural sweetness of berries, bananas, or your favorite breakfast cereal. It's strained, so even the fat-free versions are thick and creamy. And the lost liquid means that the yogurt that's left has twice the protein of ordinary yogurt -- about 17 grams in 6 ounces of plain Greek yogurt.

Broccoli.

It has lots of vitamin C, carotenoids, vitamin K, and folic acid. Steam it just enough so that it's still firm and add a sprinkle of red pepper flakes and a spritz of lemon juice.

Wild Salmon.

The omega-3 fats in fatty fish like salmon can help reduce the risk of sudden-death heart attacks. And wild-caught salmon has less PCB contaminants than farmed salmon.

Crispbreads.

Whole-grain rye crackers, like Wasa, Kavli, and Ryvita -- usually called crispbreads -- are loaded with fiber and often fat-free. Drizzle with a little honey and sprinkle with cinnamon to satisfy your sweet tooth.

Garbanzo Beans.

All beans are good beans. They're rich in protein, fiber, iron, magnesium, potassium, and zinc. But garbanzos stand out because they're so versatile. Just drain, rinse, and toss a handful on your green salad; throw them into vegetable stews, curries, and soups; mix them with brown rice, whole wheat couscous, bulgur, or other whole grains.

Watermelon.

Watermelon is a heavyweight in the nutrient department. A standard serving (about 2 cups) has one-third of a day's vitamins A and C, a nice shot of potassium, and a healthy dose of lycopene for only 80 fat-free, salt-free calories. And when they're in season, watermelons are often locally grown, which means they may have smaller carbon footprints than some other fruits.

Butternut Squash.

Steam a sliced squash or buy peeled, diced butternut squash at the supermarket that's ready to go into the oven, a stir-fry, or a soup. It's an easy way to get lots of vitamins A and C and fiber.

Leafy Greens.

Don't miss out on powerhouse greens like kale, collards, spinach, turnip greens, mustard greens, and Swiss chard. These stand-out leafy greens are jam-packed with vitamins A, C, and K, folate, potassium, magnesium, calcium, iron, lutein, and fiber. Serve with a splash of lemon juice or red wine vinegar.