

Caring for the body God gave us
A Three-Part Wellness Series
Part One: The Body You Live In

Physical health as faithful stewardship.

As part of our concern for the whole person, body, mind and spirit, we begin a three-part wellness series titled *Tending the Temple*. In this first article, we reflect on physical health, not as vanity, pressure or self-indulgence, but as stewardship: caring responsibly for the body through which we serve God, family, church and community.

There is a particular kind of tiredness many of us know well. Not the satisfying tiredness after a long walk, a full day of good work, or meaningful service, but the depleted, running-on-empty kind that becomes so familiar that we stop noticing it. We simply keep going.

Many people in our congregation are remarkably good at caring for others. We manage households, raise children, support grandchildren, care for ageing parents, serve on committees, attend meetings, visit the sick, prepare food, offer lifts, pray for others, and carry more than people realise. But sometimes, while caring faithfully for everyone around us, we neglect the body that makes much of that care possible.

Somewhere along the way, self-care became either a luxury or a cliché. But from a Christian perspective, caring for our physical health is neither selfish nor optional. It is part of responsible stewardship. The same wisdom that leads us to service a car, tend a garden, or keep a home in order also applies to the body God has entrusted to us.

Paul reminds us: “Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore, honour God with your bodies.”: 1 Corinthians 6:19–20. These words speak first of holiness before God, but they also remind us that our bodies are not disposable instruments. They are part of our discipleship. We serve, worship, love and labour in and through our bodies. When we care wisely for them, we are not withdrawing from service; we are strengthening ourselves for the life of love and service to which Christ calls us.

This does not require a gym membership, expensive food, or a perfect health routine. It begins with attention. It begins with the honesty to ask: Am I running a deficit: on sleep, nourishment, movement, rest or medical care?

Small things matter more than we think: a short walk, drinking enough water, eating a proper meal instead of rushing, making the medical appointment we have postponed, stretching stiff muscles, resting before exhaustion takes over, or going to bed a little earlier. For some, physical health is complicated by illness, age, disability, finances or demanding family responsibilities. This article is therefore not meant to create guilt. It is a gentle invitation to notice one small area where care can begin. Not guilt — simply an invitation to wisdom and care.

Your body is always communicating with you. The question is whether you are listening.

Self-Assessment: How Well Am I Tending My Body?

This self-assessment is not a test. It is simply a quiet reflection tool. Rate each statement honestly:

Often / Sometimes / Rarely

- I get enough sleep to function well most days.
 - I have had, or have planned, a medical check-up where needed.
 - I move my body in some way that is possible for me.
 - I eat with some intention, not only out of convenience.
 - I listen when my body signals stress, pain or exhaustion.
 - I drink enough water during the day.
 - I allow myself to rest without unnecessary guilt.
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Your One Next Step

Look at the list and choose one item you marked “Rarely”. Just one.

What is the smallest possible action you could take this week?

Start there.

Faithfulness often begins not with dramatic change, but with one wise step taken in the right direction.