



moms monthly

support encourage share grow

balance



In what areas of your life do you struggle with balance (family, time, finances, work, ministry)?

How does being out of balance affect your daily life?

What process do you go through when making a decision about your schedule?

Describe what you believe it would take to create a balanced life.

The sound of unbalance...

Every once in a while I hear a strange noise in my basement. It begins with a low rumble. Then a momentary pause. The floor trembles. The windows rattle. And from the depths emerges the sound of a freight train roaring through my basement full tilt: the laundry drum is unbalanced and it is flailing out of control.

Sometimes my life sounds like that. Sometimes my life looks like that.

So, what can our wayward washing machines teach us about our own balancing acts?



1. Respond Immediately

The sooner we address the rumbles the less likely it is that our lack of balance will escalate to unmanageable proportions. Be faithful to promptly address the small things that creep in and threaten stability.

2. Stop Spinning

We need to literally come to a full stop long enough to rearrange or remove things that are causing problems. Something has got to give to prevent uncontrolled spinning.

3. Avoid Overloading

We have a tendency to want to shove a few extra items in the basin, hoping that it can handle

the load. Wishful thinking is not a realistic solution. We need to acknowledge our limitations and make realistic decisions, for ourselves *and* for our children.

4. Consider the Contents

On occasion heavy or oddly-shaped items find their way into the load throwing the whole thing off. We must be intentional about the stuff that we add otherwise we will be setting ourselves up to be off-kilter. As we make choices that truly reflect our priorities we will have to let go of good things to make adequate room for the best things.

Let's silence the sounds of unbalance in our daily routine and work toward a steadier rhythm.

Spiritual balance is not easily found. It requires significant introspection and intention.



Coffee Talk

1. In what ways did you find God's rhythm this month?
2. Describe your personal play date and how it made you feel.
3. What clarity did your children provide with respect to the lack of rest in your home?

In light of God's rest, our anxious, compulsive activities may be exposed as little more than efforts to stay in control, or to fabricate life's meaning out of constant activity.

Marjorie Thompson

Four Enemies of a Balanced Life

- **People-Pleasing:** This is a pursuit destined for failure. It is impossible to live up to everyone's expectations 100% of the time. Keep your priorities in check and say "yes" and "no" with confidence. Remember that God is the one to please.
- **False Guilt:** The only true and necessary guilt we experience is guilt over sin that leads to repentance. Don't let "feeling bad" interfere with your clarity.
- **Disorganization:** Poor management of time and resources is a recipe for disaster. Organize and plan your life to create the time, energy, and space you need.
- **Lack of Margin:** Proper margin acknowledges the reality of life's inevitable but unexpected interruptions and allows many to become opportunities to serve.

Ecc. 3:1 ~ There is a time for everything and a season for every activity under heaven.

mommy moment: Peruse Nancy Leigh DeMoss's insights about priorities and balance. She has compiled transcripts of her radio series, *First Things First*, on her website. Take some time to explore topics and advice that are relevant to your balancing act. http://www.reviveourhearts.com/topics/series.php?series=39&topic_name=Priorities

This Month With Ourselves:

EDUCATE:

Read Luke 10:38-42. When you look at this interaction between Mary, Martha and Jesus, what stands out to you? With which sister do you most identify? How do Jesus' words to Martha highlight his feelings about a life that lacks balance? Read Proverbs 16:11. How would God "weigh" your activities in His balance? In what ways is your sense of balance affected by your spiritual awareness?

EVALUATE:

In Sara Groves' song, *This Journey is My Own*, she reminds us to "live and breathe for an audience of one". How much freedom do you feel to live your life for God alone? In what ways are your decisions affected by people-pleasing? How can you begin to say "yes" and "no" with confidence?

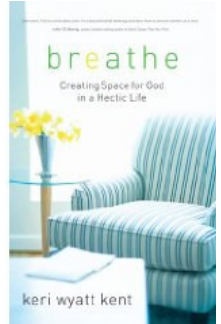
EXPRESS:

In a journal, record your response to this quote by Charles Hummel: *If the Christian is too busy to stop, take spiritual inven-*

tory, and receive his assignments from God, he becomes a slave to the tyranny of the urgent. He may work day and night to achieve much that seems significant to himself and others, but he will not finish the work God has given him to do.

EXPAND:

Read an excellent book that focuses on "creating space for God in a hectic life". We all need room to breathe as we try to find our balance.

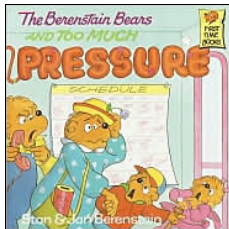


family fun: Use the analogy of a juggling act to help your kids understand the concept of balance. Collect a number of "balls" from around the house. Ask them to try and juggle the balls, adding one at a time at regular intervals. Let them continue trying until they need a rest. Ask questions like, "How many balls do you think you can handle?" "How do you feel as balls are added?" "What activities could the "balls" represent?" "Why do you think jugglers sometimes drop their balls?" "How do you think juggling is like life?" Use leading questions and specific examples to help adapt the activity for your children's ages.

This Month With Our Kids:

MAKE A POINT:

Consider the WHOLE family when making a decision about an activity for one family member. Think about how one commitment will affect the time and energy of others in the family. Consider things like transportation, time of day, frequency, continuity, etc.



MAKE A PROMISE:

Promise NOT to say "yes" impulsively. Every time you are presented with an "opportunity", ask, what exactly does this opportunity provide for your child? If it duplicates or overlaps an existing activity or if the opportunity conflicts with your priorities give yourself permission to say no without guilt.

MAKE A PLAN:

Decide on some firm guidelines as a family about your "extracurricular" commitments. For example, some families allow each child

to have one creative and one active activity at any given time and only if they wish to do so. Others limit their children's involvement to once a week. Give some serious consideration to your own commitments and recreate or maintain margin in your schedule.

People nowadays take time far more seriously than eternity.

Thomas Kelly

"Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her." (Luke 10:41-42)

Schedule Makeovers:

1. Clearly list your priorities.
2. Brainstorm a list of EVERYTHING you do with your time.
3. Brainstorm a list of things that you wish you had the time to do.
4. Carefully discern the "essentials" from the "optionals".



5. Rearrange your optional items according to the "good, better, best" principle for each family member.
6. Reasonably estimate a quantity of time for each item and the relative frequency.
7. For most activities, use the "double-it" principle to ensure adequate margin in

- your schedule for unexpected things.
8. Evaluate each activity on your schedule according to your priorities and begin to add from the top down.
9. Look at your schedule in terms of logical divisions: begin with a day, then a week, then a month, then a year.
10. Block out your time to reflect the balance and rhythm you desire in your life.