

■ by Matt Reichert, Jr. and Jane Schmidt

Striking a Balance

■ **Matt**

A camp leader gently retold me what one of my children had said about me, “My dad said he would ... but he is too busy.” I felt like David when he was confronted by Nathan. My heart sank as I realized that I was “that guy.” I was the dad with empty promises. I had abdicated my primary God-given responsibilities in exchange for the never-ending urgent issues of ministry. I was neglecting my family and blaming it on Jesus. I was on a fast track for burnout, and worse, I was potentially embittering my kids to ministry. I was like Robin Williams in the 90s classic *Hook*; I was the dad that was always “too busy.”

A few weeks later, in a time of solitude, I realized that I did not practice what I provided. I spent years working to facilitate powerful camp experiences for others, but in the frenzy of doing camp ministry, I had lost touch with the power of it personally. Even more frightening, I worked so diligently to provide camp for others that I had not been available to provide the same transformative experiences for my own family. The Lord gently crushed me with truth, so I confessed my sin to trusted brothers and I received sound advice and loving encouragement. I resolved to live differently and not have my family be another casualty of professional ministry.

A friend challenged me to “make appointments with what is important.” Similar advice was passed down from an older ministry leader: Other people will not honor your priorities, but they will honor your appointments, so make appointments with what is most important. I had to learn to make appointments with the people

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—Matt Reichart, Jr.

who need me most. I must fight to prioritize date nights, dance recitals, family dinners and bedtime stories. I must also make appointments with the things that refuel my soul.

I always had internal pushback on this. There were always “yeah, but” excuses in the name of ministry. The bottom line is that I am the chief steward of my time, and I will give an account of how it was spent, so I must invest wisely.

From my experiences, these are the three takeaways if you want to maintain a healthy rhythm in your life:

1. Have trustworthy people in your life that have permission to confront you.
2. Make rhythms of rest and reflection normative. Learn to be still and listen to the Lord.
3. Make your people a priority. Do not sacrifice your family on the altar of ministry.



Matt Reichert, Jr. (known as “Matto” by all his friends) and his wife, Jen, have six children. Matto loves Jesus, his family, adventure and a good cup of coffee. Matto grew up in camping and has been at Pine Valley (Ellwood City, Pennsylvania) for 12 years, currently serving as the camp director.



How two leaders strive for healthy rhythms in their lives

■ Jane

A wise friend once told me camp ministry is not for the faint of heart. Even with good planning, hard-earned wisdom and well-trained staff, chaos can erupt on a camp day just like a simmering pot of oatmeal boils over unexpectedly and splats you in the eye. After 25 years in full-time camp ministry, I have learned that to press on with hope and eagerness I must be in the habit of practicing healthy rhythms.

Five years ago, I found myself extremely fatigued — physically, mentally and spiritually. As God led me through the journey of healing, He revealed to me five daily practices that would comfort, restore, strengthen and give me the grounding to persevere through the hard days.

God's Word

Podcasts, worship lyrics, devotionals and inspiring messages are all encouraging, but nothing should replace the time we spend in God's written word. God's Word for your mind is like food for your body. It will sustain, restore, renew and give you the strength and wisdom for your day.

Movement

Moving our bodies, especially outdoors, will lower our stress, boost our mood and clear our minds. Go for a walk, wash your car by hand, park your car and walk a few extra blocks or do your happy dance.

Creations

Find opportunities to create something. Pick a handful of flowers and arrange them. Cook a new recipe and take the time to present it beautifully on a plate. Grab your camera, look through the lens and snap some pictures. Clean out your closet and create a more peaceful place for your clothes to land. Paint a room. Write in your journal. Learn to watercolor.

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Work

There will always be more work to do and seemingly not enough time to do it. For me, I create a list of tasks that need to be completed and prioritize them by need before I go to bed each night. The next day, I do my best to keep to the list rather than become distracted by the new needs that arise throughout the day. I have learned the value of setting boundaries for how many hours I will allow myself to work each day.

Rest

Sabbath rest is a must, as well as physical and emotional rest. Sabbath rest is time set apart for the Lord. Time to worship, time to listen to His voice and time to linger in His Holy Presence. I strive for Sabbath rest each day as well as a time to rest physically and emotionally. I find rest in reading a good book, stretching and breathing exercises, planning our next vacation or having a thoughtful conversation with a beloved friend. ■



For the past 25 years, Jane Schmidt has co-managed Camp Tapawingo (Falls City, Oregon) with her husband, Brad. Jane loves to create a place guests can call home and actively demonstrate the love of Jesus to others through conversation and hospitality. While Jane is formally a sister to seven and a mom to two, she is a friend and mentor to many. Jane has taken the pain and challenges in her life and asked God to use them to refine her.