

The Spiritual Significance of Self-Care

A man pushes himself to the maximum for a number of months, without proper rest or exercise. As he grows increasingly weary he finds relationships at work and at home becoming heavier to sustain... A time soon comes when prayer, too, has become heavier and God seems further away than before... A woman has struggled in certain relationships and finds herself anxious and depressed. She takes no steps to cope in a healthier way with what becomes an ongoing condition of depression.... The day then comes when her energy toward her habitual spiritual practices wanes and, for a time, she loses hope of growing in love of God... If we are tired or depressed, the step to discouragement in our God-given calling, to diminishing fidelity in prayer or in God's service generally, is very small. From the perspective of the spiritual life... it is imperative that we be wise stewards of all dimensions of the humanity God has given us.

*(Fr. Timothy M. Gallagher, OMV, *The Discernment of Spirits: An Ignatian Guide for Everyday Living*, p. 61).*