

Focus on Heart Wellness This Week

As we learned in the sermon yesterday, if you were to ask Proverbs in the Old Testament about the key to self-care, it would invariably say - start with your heart. It wisely assumes that everything we are at any given moment is an outflow from our heart (Prov. 4.23).



So this week, take some time to put its heart wellness tips into practice:

- 1) Only God really knows our heart, so carve out at least one period of time this week to sit quietly, and ask Him to show you what's really going on inside you (Prov. 14.10, 21.2). You can use questions like - what are my most common emotions, what's my mental set point (what ideas or frame of mind do I return to over and over again), why am I doing what I do (what are my motives), etc.?
- 2) Remember to remember: what in your life are you trying to remember right now, how will you do it, and what physical cues will you use to trigger your memory? (Prov. 4.5-6)
- 3) Use good words about yourself consciously this week, and seek out spending time with someone else who uses their words constructively and positively. (Prov. 12.25) Remember, as neurologist Andrew Newberg puts it, "Sticks and stones may break your bones, but words will change your brain."
- 4) During your time with God this week in which you ask Him to reveal your heart to you (#1 above), also see if you can identify a dream, passion, hope, or goal that you've been putting off, and try to find at least one concrete step you can take toward it, even if small. A "hope deferred" can make us "sick," whereas one realized is no less than "a tree of life," so says Prov. 13.12.
- 5) Last, take time to enjoy a sensuous delight this week, something that engages your eyes, ears, touch, taste, and smell (Prov. 27.9). Your physical senses can have a powerful, uplifting effect on your heart.

Love of Nature

Thanks to Charlie Reece for helping us reflecting on "love of nature" or creation stewardship yesterday during our worship gathering. Here's a reprint of Charlie's slides:

God is incredible, creative love.

Love God with all our hearts, minds, and strength – first command.

- This includes loving God's creation – as much of it as we are able to know.

God invites us to learn and create with Him.

- Jesus is the vine, we are the branches.
- Creation is the Master's garden – it's not ours.
- We are but some of the amazing creatures God has developed in this garden.

I stand in staggering awe of creation

- Beauty, scale, intricacy, diversity, ever-changing life forms on a physical matrix that has a very finely tuned balance of forces.
- Amazingly awesome and precious.

We are challenged to be responsible stewards lovingly tending the Master's garden.

- Well, we are waking up to the fact that collectively we've been pretty poor stewards.
- We've been soiling the nest that we share with every other living thing on this planet.
- Pollution of many sorts, over-exploitation of non-renewable resources, shifting the solar energy heat balance that drives climate, soil exhaustion, over-fishing ...
- Consider your care for the resources that you reach for when you shop, when at the sink faucet, or the gas pump; when at the recycling or waste bin.
- Consider **all** the consequences of the chemicals that you apply in and around your home, not just the convenient ones.
- Consider how these actions are informed by your love of God's creation.
- Consider how we might better embody such loving stewardship in the life and activities of KirkWood.
- Energy usage
- Consumables
- Property usage modeling service and ecological care

From the website for Earth Care Congregations (in the PCUSA): "Our faith urges us to strive for eco-justice: defending and healing creation while working to assure justice for all of creation and the human beings who live in it. This call is rooted in the human vocation of "tilling and keeping" the garden from Genesis 2:15, as well as Christ's charge to work with and for the most vulnerable. Because of their love for Christ who is firstborn of all creation (Colossians 1:15), churches are challenged to live in a manner consistent with God's call to not only care for creation, but commune with creation."

[Presbyterian Mission Agency Earth Care Congregations: A Guide to Greening Presbyterian Churches](#)