

Beyond Ordinary Women: Burnout

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I. The “Burn” in Burnout: Definitions and Contributing Factors

Definitions:

- Clinical definition: *Burnout* is a multifaceted condition comprised of three primary aspects: (1) emotional exhaustion, (2) depersonalization, and (3) reduced personal accomplishment. [\[1\]](#)

In other words, the demands of work and life lead to a [prolonged period of stress](#) that leaves one spent and detached, with a decreased desire or capacity to complete the work in front of them.

- *Burnout* - “Energy depletion without commensurate renewal” Dr. Diane Chandler, Regent University

Contributing Factors (among others):

- Demands on Time (Busyness)
- Demands on Emotions (especially for those in ministry)
- Internal and External Pressures
- Relational Difficulties
- Loneliness/Isolation
- Spiritual dryness – primary predictor of emotional exhaustion – the stress dimension of burnout

II. On the Brink of Burnout: Warning Signs

Predictive Patterns:

Pastors that have burned out:

- Neglected their Rest
- Neglected their People
- Neglected their Means of Connecting with God

Manifestations of these patterns:

- Feeling drained – physically and emotionally
- “Shorter Fuse” – emotions seems out of control
- Feelings of failure; reduced ability to juggle demands
- Isolation from friends and family
- Feeling alone, with no one to talk to
- Lack of self-care
- You find yourself often saying “I don’t have time.”
- Loss of interest in goals
- Feeling too tired/busy for spiritual disciplines
- Self-medicating to cope (through food, TV, social media, etc.)
- Working long hours but not feeling a sense of accomplishment
- Feeling under immense pressure to succeed

III. Beating Burnout: Recommended Practices for Prevention and Recovery

- If feeling burned-out, take the invitation to step back and really notice what's going on.
- Identify and Embrace your Limits.
- Cultivate:
 - A healthy rhythm of work and rest
 - Relationships
 - Means of connecting with God
- Empower your team – staff & volunteers

Helpful Resources:

Books:

Ruth Haley Barton – *Sacred Rhythms*

Ruth Haley Barton – *Strengthening the Soul of Your Leadership*

Peter Scazzero – *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality*

Dr. Richard Swenson – *Margin*

Alli Worthington – *Breaking Busy*

Christopher Ash – *Zeal Without Burnout*

Shauna Niequest – *Present Over Perfect*

Dr. Archibald Halt – *The Hidden Link Between Adrenaline and Stress.*

Don Joseph Goewey – *The End of Stress: Four Steps to Rewire Your Brain*