

**Word Notes Sunday 15/01/17**  
**Helen Parker: Monday Morning Christianity – Stress and Work/Life balance**

**Summary** (read this bit out to remind cell members what was said on Sunday, listen to the podcast if you missed the talk <http://www.newmarketcommunitychurch.co.uk/podcasts.htm>)

**Key Texts: Ex 16:1-24; Matt 6:19-26 & 34**

God's Word is often referred to as our manual for life yet we can be guilty of waiting for a breakdown before reaching for the answer instead of doing the day to day maintenance. Here's some starting points for dealing with stress and life balance:

**Have Good Priorities.**

Life is full of competing demands, to handle them we need a clear set of priorities. From the Bible we can glean the following as a Godly order: First God, then our Core Relationships (eg spouse, family) and then the work God has called us too. It's easy to get these out of order but when we do the natural blessings that flow from relationship with God, with our spouse and family and from our serving get distorted.

**Managing your time.**

Don't try to fit God into your timetable, but work in His. A clear example from Jesus' life is in John 11:1-16. Lazarus is sick, Jesus is elsewhere and the disciples kept urging him to go. When he did eventually go Lazarus had died. But Jesus knew the right time to do things. It takes courage and gumption to go against the logical choice.

**Break free from addiction (and idols).**

We might immediately think of alcohol, drugs, smoking or sex but we can also be addicted to work! Seek accountability from people who know you well and who can help break free. Practice doing nothing!

**Discipline is freedom.**

When getting life balance right is difficult it's discipline that keeps us going. Discipline of rest, of being with God. Jesus promised us "rest for our souls" when we do things his way (Matt 11:28-30) and it takes guts to give things to God, to release control. Review the last month. What was the balance like and what should it be like. Then be disciplined in applying any changes, make conscious effort to give it to God to find freedom from debilitating stress

**Stop and review**

Am I doing the right thing? In my job, lifestyle or family - or is there another way? In all these it's good to review maybe once a year. Couples can do this together to form a united front against the challenges of life. Jesus warns us to take care of today – tomorrow has enough problems of it's own, Matt 11:28-30.

**Dealing with Stress.**

In 2 Cor 4:8 & 9 Paul talks of being "hard pressed on every side, but not destroyed" – that's stress! Yet he says that living with Jesus firmly rooted in our lives we don't just survive we thrive.

**Stress management**

- Stay healthy - do you not know your bodies are temples of the HS. Treat it with respect 1 Cor 6:12.
- Fight fear - inbuilt reaction. Ps 112:7 says to be aware and trust in the Lord. It's a real emotion but the issue is probably not as bad as we think. Use the adrenaline that fear naturally engenders to turn to God for help and shoot up one of those arrow prayers.
- Take joy seriously - God wants us to have joy. It may seem wrong in the pit of despair but even there God wants you to have joy - don't be anxious but pray and rejoice. 1 Thes 5:16-18.
- Take an emotional break
- Minister in the opposite spirit. 1 Cor 4:12-13 gives us the example to bless when we are cursed. We need God in our life for that to happen as it goes against all our own ideas
- Take control of your thoughts - avoid the negative spiral. Phil 4:8 - finally brothers .... think about those good things and the God of peace will be with you.
- Pray and read the bible - none of this works unless we have the attitude of prayer. Phil 4:6,7

**Application** *(this is the bit where cell members get to participate. Lead discussions around these points)*

Work/Life balance rule #1 is to get your priorities right eg: God, Family, Church. Discuss the difference between “God” Stuff and “Good Stuff” and how to know the difference.

What are the challenges of living to God’s timetable as opposed to our own? How do you deal with them?

When challenges do come we can take refuge in “discipline”. How does that work for you?

Do you take stock of your life, your commitments etc? How can that help with work/life balance and keep stress at bay?

Are you a “stressy” person? Do you have major ups and downs? How can Helen’s 7 points help and what would it take to make one or more of those changes in your life?

**Witness** *(this is the bit where the cell talks, plans and prays about how to share the Good News)*

Paul recounts the challenges he faced, yet remained triumphant. How would being like that reach a world that is lost and stressed to the limit?