

Self-Care Covenant, Virginia Conference

In response to the findings of the “Study of Clergy in the Virginia Annual Conference, 1997-98”, the Board of Ordained Ministry proposed (among other initiatives) the development of a self-care model as a standard for what a healthy, balanced lifestyle for Conference clergy, diaconal ministers, and certified professionals might look like. The BOM’s Clergy Self-Care Committee was charged with envisioning such a model and, in response, developed a “Covenant for Self-Care” (below). The Covenant has been used initially by both the Board of Ordained Ministry and the Bishop’s Cabinet in order to model, support, and stimulate the use of this resource.

Covenant for Self-Care

For the benefit of my own life and the ministry to which I am called in Christ...

1. I will keep, as a regular practice, the following spiritual disciplines (beyond sermon and teaching preparation). List at least three: _____

2. I will regularly set aside time for family meals (at least weekly) and family activities (at least monthly). “Family” denotes immediate family, extended family, and/or network of friends.
3. I will adhere to the minimum standards for vacation and days off as articulated in the “Vacation Policy for Virginia Conference Pastors”* adopted by the Bishop’s Cabinet.
4. I will adhere to the “Guidelines for Continuing Theological Education”* as required by the Virginia Conference Board of Ordained Ministry.
5. I will work towards achieving and/or maintaining personal conformity with medically recognized health guidelines for height and weight unless such conformity is deemed unsuitable by my attending physician.
6. I will develop and/or maintain personal relationships with the following persons (friends, family, colleagues) to whom I can go for support in times of stress or difficulty. List at least 3 or 4: _____
7. I will participate in some form(s) of regular exercise appropriate to the particulars of my physical condition and with the knowledge and approval of my attending physician. Briefly describe exercise program: _____

8. I will endeavor to establish/maintain healthy practices with regard to personal nutrition.
9. I will order my personal administrative life through the establishment of legal documents appropriate to the particular circumstances of my relationships: e.g., a personal will, durable power of attorney, living will, and/or guardianship for surviving minor children. I will make known the location of these documents to the following persons (list at least two): _____
10. I will endeavor to establish/maintain healthy practices with regard to proper sleep.

*These can be found on the VA Conference web page at www.vaumc.org.

I covenant all of the above with the following peer-support person or group with whom I will share mutual accountability for our self-care as clergy (please list):
