

Lutheran Women in Mission

Exercise: Temple Maintenance by Elaine Boettcher

Sing "Praise to the Lord, the Almighty" (*LW* 444, *TLH* 39, *LWB* 543) or "Lord, Be Glorified" (*Jesus' People Sing*, pg. 52).

The ad for a certain book reads: "Your body is fearfully and wonderfully made—so move it or lose it! Learn how to eat right, reduce stress, and get into the best shape ever." Look on self-help shelves of your local bookstore, and you will find books that touch on the same subject. Let's take a look at the light God's Word sheds on maintaining bodily well-being and usefulness.

Wonderfully Made?

First let's consider our origins:

1. Read **Psalm 139:13-16**. What do these verses tell us about our Creator? What do they say about the origin of our bodies?

2. Does the word "wonderful" come to mind when you think about your body? Why or why not? According to the following verses, what changes came after the fall into sin?

- **Genesis 3:7**
- **Genesis 3:16-19**

3. Recite or read together Martin Luther's Explanation to the First Article of the Creed from your catechism or hymnal (*LW* pg. 301). What does this tell us about God's role in body maintenance?

God's Dwelling Place

Consider your body as the temple of God.

1. What does **1 Kings 9:1-3** tell us about the temple built by Solomon?

What was the purpose of this temple?

2. Read **1 Corinthians 6:19-20**. What makes our body a temple?

For what important and lifelong purpose is it to be used? Why? (See also **Ephesians 5:25-30**)

3. Read the following verses and list ways we can use our bodies to honor God.

- **Romans 6:12-14**
- **1 Corinthians 10:31**
- **Titus 2:11-12**

Keeping Fit



Consider the stewardship of the body.

1. Read **Luke 19:12-23**. How does this apply to the way we take care of and use our bodies?

2. Read **1 Timothy 4:8**. What is Paul's perspective on the value of exercise?

Physical fitness is not an end in itself, but it enables us to serve God and our neighbor. Does your lack of exercise, overeating or other abuse keep you from using your body to serve God? How can you make a conscious effort to improve your "temple care?"

3. When, according to **Philippians 3:20-21**, will you have the perfect body?

Closing

Sing or say together stanza 1 of "O God, My Faithful God" (LW 371):

O God, my faithful God, True fountain ever flowing,
Without whom nothing is, All perfect gifts bestowing:
Give me a healthy frame, And may I have within
A conscience free from blame, A soul unstained by sin.

Elaine Boettcher lives in Menomonee Falls, Wisconsin with her husband, Fred, pastor emeritus of Beautiful Savior Lutheran, Waukesha, Wisconsin. Elaine is a past district LWML vice-president and church organist. She and Fred have five children and eleven grandchildren.

Does exercise help?

Consider exercise benefits*:

- Reduces your risk of heart disease, high blood pressure, osteoporosis, diabetes and obesity
- Keeps joints, tendons and ligaments flexible
- Contributes to your mental well-being
- Helps relieve stress and anxiety
- Increases your energy and endurance
- Helps you sleep better



Walking is one of the best exercises; it is easy, safe and cheap. Brisk walking can burn as many calories as running but is less likely to cause injuries than running or jogging. Walking doesn't require any training or special equipment, except for good shoes. As an aerobic and weight-bearing exercise, walking is good for your heart and helps prevent osteoporosis.

Rev. Dr. LeRoy Hass of the South Wisconsin District LCMS Ministerial Health Committee says: "God has given us a priceless investment: our body. Yet we somehow think we don't have to take care of it and, worse, may even abuse it by what we take in through our mouths or by chronically idling major muscle groups. Such abuse directly affects our well being and functioning as Christ's servants. It often causes aches, pains and illness (difficult for you and your family) that can be avoided by adopting a healthy lifestyle."

*www.familydoctor.org under "Exercise: A Healthy Habit to start and Keep"

