

## 4 Steps to Cultivating Pastor Resilience

How to take care of yourself as you care for others.

JAMIE ATEN & KENT ANNAN

Your church and community need your help now more than ever because of COVID-19. But they are also going to need you later, too. You probably already realize this, but you are in the middle of a marathon, not a sprint.

If you are going to fight the good fight, finish the race, and keep the faith (2 Tim. 4:7), you are going to have to make sure there's enough in the "tank" to reach the finish line. Following are some steps you can take to help keep you from burning out. Don't just take our word for it. Below are some lessons from pastors who went through Hurricane Katrina.

### Hold on to faith

You've probably [preached](#) numerous sermons encouraging others to remember that God is with them even in times of trouble. Now is the time to practice what you preach. Set aside special times for prayer, especially in the moments when you feel you don't have time to pray.

In those difficult times, we need prayer the most. As I've written before, "We must be reminded of the simple truth—keep praying and talking to God when crisis hits. Strive for meaning through journaling, prayer, Scripture reading, and conversations with those you trust."

### Seek social support

A common struggle I've heard from pastors around the globe amidst disasters like the current pandemic is a tendency to withdraw socially because of the pressure they feel to "keep it all together." Granted, during COVID-19 you need to be physically distancing, but it doesn't mean you should isolate yourself relationally. Don't hesitate to reach out to others for [support](#).

Be sure to take time out when you can to recharge by spending time with those you care about, with those you are staying at home with, or by reaching out virtually to trusted friends. Being a pastor doesn't mean you are immune to common COVID-19 struggles (e.g., stress, anxiety, depression), so also [know when to get professional support](#). Give yourself some grace; you are not just a minister, you are also someone going through a pandemic.

### Establish a routine

Know that if you are experiencing a loss of 'normalcy' as you lead your church through COVID-19 and what's next, that you aren't alone. Because of COVID-19, life can feel like it is changing week-to-week, day-to-day, and even hour-to-hour.

Continue to expect additional changes in your pastoral role. At the same time, do your best to find ways to establish a healthy rhythm and routine to your ministry. The more you can try and get back to what you were doing in life before COVID-19, the better.

I recognize you can't just go back to how things were. Rather, I'm suggesting you try and carve out some calm in the chaos. Try to build in some structure as best as you can to your day. Familiar faces, schedules, and mundane tasks, even if done virtually, can go a long way in helping buffer against burnout. There is something soothing and healing in routine.

### Set some boundaries

COVID-19 has caused more work that needs to be done than you'll ever be able to accomplish in one day. Plus, technology has made you more accessible than ever before to your church and community. Whether this is a blessing or curse depends on your ability to set healthy boundaries. I'm not telling you to stop helping others. I'm not even going to ask you to strive for balance right now.

As a result of years of studying and working with pastors around the globe on the topic of burnout, I've concluded there's no such thing as true balance. Instead, I'd encourage you to work toward establishing healthy ministry rhythms. It's okay to ride cresting waves of business as long as you remember to get off the "board" every once in a while and enjoy still waters. Overall, be sure to create space for rest, eating healthy, exercising, and unwinding when possible.

### **Conclusion**

Yes, you are doing God's work as you care for others. But keep in mind that even Christ sought out moments and times of solitude, fellowship, and renewal during his ministry on earth. You would be wise to do the same. Don't get so caught up in the work of the Lord that you forget the Lord of the work—and his call to rest.

Portions of this article were adapted from a piece that was first published at [pastors.com](https://pastors.com).

*Jamie Aten, Ph.D., is founder and executive director of the Humanitarian Disaster Institute at Wheaton College. Follow on Twitter at [@drjamieaten](https://twitter.com/drjamieaten) or visit [jamieaten.com](https://jamieaten.com).*

*Kent Annan, M.Div., is director of Humanitarian & Disaster Leadership at Wheaton College. Follow on Twitter at [@kentannan](https://twitter.com/kentannan) or visit [kentannan.com](https://kentannan.com).*

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