

Body Matters: Your body, and a good Night's sleep

I share this poem by Charles Peguy, a French poet which was highlighted in an article by Lauren F. Winner, a writer:

I don't like the man who doesn't sleep, says
God.

Sleep is the friend of man,

Sleep is the friend of God.

Sleep is perhaps the most beautiful thing

I have created.

And I myself rested on the seventh day. ...

But they tell me that there are men

Who work well and sleep badly.

Who don't sleep.

What a lack of confidence in me.

As I write this article about sleep (yawn!) I realize that it is 22.22 hrs. and my body desperately craves some sleep after a busy day of homework with four children, church, school runs, running the house and a whole host of other things!

Is 24 hours enough? :Many women are in the stage of their lives where they feel 24 hours is just not enough time for the day to do much of anything, let alone time for themselves and time for much needed rest. A typical working day for most women begins at some time between 5.00 and 6.00 am and ends on or just after midnight.

No matter what you are doing with your day, be it running after reports and clients, or kids with diapers or homework, or just running after yourself, we all need a good dose of sleep.

Fast Facts: According to the American National Sleep foundation, most adults need between seven to nine hours of sleep. Not getting enough sleep is linked to several health problems such as weight gain (!), high blood pressure, migraines, and decreased productivity to name a few. This is not to mention the number of avoidable accidents and mishaps that has occurred if only we got a good night's sleep.

This is even more pertinent as one goes older and is on the other side of 40: sleep related health disorders become more pronounced.

Some Causes: So what keeps our bodies and mind working overtime even when it is time to shut down? Although not exhaustive, I would like to mention a few common causes:

Chronic Stress and Worry: Although a certain degree of stress is needed by everyone, chronic stress and worry is one of the most common causes of not getting enough sleep. Stress can come as physical, mental or emotional. We have all gone through or are going through some stressful or worrisome situation in our lives: be it over health, finances, relationships, jobs, whatever. God says that He gives His beloved (you and I) sleep. Sufficient is the day the trouble thereof. We just need to trust Him. Sleeping over the issue is in fact a way of demonstrating our absolute trust in the Lord. Let Him deal with it!

Sleep versus Productivity: Most of us equate not sleeping to being productive, and unfortunately quite the opposite is true. This reminds me of an incident in my undergraduate years. I had a major test which I drank lots of coffee not to fall asleep so that I could study. While the coffee did its job, I was awake all night and was not able to study for the test! I could not get the much

needed rest until nearly 24 hours after I took the coffee. I barely passed the test.

A lot of people can relate to that – maybe not to the coffee (that was the last time I took coffee by the way) but to the ‘gaining’ extra hours. The reality is: nature cannot be cheated. Our bodies were made to rest and as we say in Nigerian pidgin ‘Body no be wood’. We concentrate better, are more alert and active, and are nicer, calmer and kinder after a good night of sleep. Our immunity over certain diseases is also better for it.

Sleep is a gift from God. The OmnipotentHimself, after six days of work created a whole day for rest, and he blessed us with the gift of sleep to rest every day. It is a gift of absolute sweet rest which we deserve after a day of hard work.

We need to acknowledge this and receive it as a gift from God. We also need to understand that staying up to worry over things we can’t control is really eating the bread of sorrows and it is vanity...emptiness. Staying up all night will not solve the problem or resolve the issue.

Sleeping over the issue is an indication of leaving the matter out of your hands and over to God. And an absolute child-like dependence on God. We need to keep this in our consciousness and bring it out whenever the worry wants to take the place of the gift of sound rest that God has given us. An opportunity to express our trust in Him; and enjoying it too!

I challenge you to tell God tonight that as a sign of absolute childlike faith and trust in Him that you are going to bed; and I trust Him who has given us the gift of rest will cause us to cast our cares on Him and have good physical and mental rest.

Here are some tips to help:

1. Go to bed and get up at the same time every day.
2. Establish a regular, relaxing bedtime routine, such as taking a hot shower, or listening to soothing music or reading a good book.
3. Keep work materials, computer, and television out of the sleeping environment.
3. Put your phone on a lower volume ring tone, and turn off chat lines on Blackberry and other smart devices
4. Finish eating at least two to three hours before your regular bedtime.
6. Establish a bed-time routine for children and make sure they go to bed at least half an hour before you
5. Exercise regularly, but complete your workout at least three hours before your bedtime.

On that note, I say...good night!

Would love to hear more tips on what has worked for you in getting enough sleep: Please send an e-mail to contactus@thewomanofvirtue.org; or post on www.facebook.com



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