

KEY THEMES FOR BEING PRESENT AS CHURCH LEADERSHIP

The information below was derived from the collective input of the Elders and Elder Wives present in the group discussions facilitated by 360 Wellness at the March 2026 Elder Conference in Akron. The participants were asked the following question:

- *What are some disciplines or activities that you have learned to help you to be 'present' throughout the day? What would you like to share with your fellow elders and wives?*

1. WHAT IS A MINDSET TO ENCOURAGE BEING PRESENT?

- Talk things out instead of ruminating; pray rather than overthinking.
- Avoid overcommitment and keep expectations realistic.
- Use humor – find ways to laugh together.
- Practice grateful awareness—notice the mission-aligned people around you (rather than just the difficult people and situations).
- Change environments intentionally to 'shift gears' between roles.
- Limit phone and email distractions when with people.
- Discuss boundaries and make decisions with your spouse; include wives as partners in the ministry as much as appropriate.

2. WHAT ARE WAYS TO BUILD INTENTIONAL CONNECTION?

- Ask your spouse how they are feeling; share brief touchpoints during the day.
- Create daily rhythms (logistical touchpoints or end-of-day check-ins).
- Put phones away, practice eye contact, and prioritize each other's love languages.
- Share daily 'high and low' moments or surprises.
- Pray out loud together.
- Take regular 36–48-hour getaways to reconnect and align calendars.
- Decompress personally before connecting; use a short reset ritual (e.g., music, a few minutes at the piano).
- Prioritize family meals, daily walks, weekly dates, and phone-free dinners. Be willing to go out for dinner if you need to in order to help with focus.



3. WHAT ARE ACTIVITIES THAT HELP YOU BE PRESENT?

- Do activities together without phones; enjoy simple hobbies (e.g., puzzles, Lego, reading, games).
- Spend time in nature.
- Use physical resets—exercise, hot drinks, or cold showers—to boost alertness and mood.
- Use small reset rituals (e.g., ice cream, a fresh haircut) that help you feel lighter.
- Take notes when appropriate to stay engaged; avoid multitasking when listening.
- Spend time with grandchildren.
- Recite Scripture; play worship music.
- Pray together intentionally (e.g., before church or the day's work).
- Share regular breakfast rhythms.
- Choose a true Sabbath day if Sunday isn't restful.
- Use tools like FANOS as a ritual.
- Practice breathing, relaxation, or brief Scripture meditation before focusing.
- Sync schedules for short interactions (walks, outdoor moments) and maintain healthy sleep routines.
- Do simple tasks together (like dishes) as an opportunity to talk and connect.
- Play light-hearted ongoing phone games as a quick connection point.
- Proactively plan vacations with clear boundaries.