PWOC

Protestant Women of the Chapel

-Quotes prepped for gallery walk
-Pie(s)-plus server, plates, forks, napkins, water to drink
-Chart paper/white board, markers

WORKSHOP: HELP! I AM OUT OF BALANCE!

By Deb Easterling

LEADER'S GUIDE

RELEVANCE: How do we achieve *balance* with the many roles we have as women? What is God's view on balance in our lives? God's desire is for us to seek Him, follow His lead, and receive His peace. Seeking Him leads to Godly balance which leads to God's peace.

CONTEXT: Material could be relevant and useful for whole PWOC body, a workshop, leadership training, or a retreat.

TIME: 65-85 minutes

HOOK YOUR AUDIENCE: Gallery Walk of Quotes (5-10 minutes)

As people are coming in, encourage them to take a gallery walk around the room to read quotes that you have posted (see the appendix for suggested quotes). Instruct your participants to choose their favorite one and be prepared to say why. After everyone has chosen a quote, take a few minutes to let them share in groups of 2-3. *Note that the quotes are included at the back of the Participant's Guide.*

MAKE YOUR POINT 1: A Piece of the Pie (10 minutes)

> *Note to Trainer: Have a volunteer who is willing to be in charge of the pie(s). She can slice and serve while you talk about life.*

We are going to consider the things we do or are involved in as "sections" of our lives- just like the sections of the pie you are about to eat! If we are to look at our life as a

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whole, where do we put our time and energy? As you eat your piece of pie, begin to think of the areas of your life that encompass a typical week. ***Serve a slice of pie to each participant!***

> *Note to Trainer: Engaging the senses is a powerful way to teach. The more senses you can involve, the more memorable your message will be. Using a common object- like pie- will give them a cue that can remind them of the truths in this workshop- perhaps even years down the road.*

Out of the busyness of life, you chose to be HERE today. And you chose to take a class on balance! So, I am making an educated guess that you might be feeling that your life schedule is a bit crazy and you would like to take some time to focus on how to achieve better balance on a daily/weekly basis.

In the time we have, we will

- Explore the roles God has given us
- Consider the roots of our busy lives
- Explore tools to keeping our lives "in balance"

As we get started, let's define **Balance and Calling**. We talk a lot about having "balance" in our lives. Most of us strive for it. Here is the dictionary definition of balance:

- *the state of having your weight spread equally so that you do not fall*
- *the ability to move or to remain in a position without losing control or falling*
- *a state in which different things occur in equal or proper amounts or have an equal or proper amount of importance*
- *harmony: a state in which various parts form a satisfying and harmonious whole and nothing is out of proportion or unduly emphasized at the expense of the rest*
- **Synonyms:** equilibrium, poise, stability, steadiness

Definition of **Calling**:

- *a strong inner impulse toward a particular course of action especially when accompanied by conviction of divine influence*
- *the vocation or profession in which one customarily engages*

Embracing both concepts- balance and calling- can be a powerful shift in our lives. Think about it. Could it be that God Himself could help us arrange our lives in such a way as to have harmony and stability? Could it be that He has a specific calling for us each day? Imagine living life, compelled to action by God Himself. That's an exciting way to live!

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ENGAGE YOUR LEARNERS: **Pie Activity** (10-15 minutes)

In your Participant's Guide, you will see a circle- this is your "pie."

> *Note to Trainer: This activity is more fun using a paper plate to draw on. You may just want to buy a few extra paper plates so you can have your pie and draw it too!*

Draw lines to create pieces to represent each role you have in your life (i.e. wife, mother, teacher, employee, ministry leader, school volunteer, etc). Do your best to proportion the pieces according to the amount of time you invest in each one. Which pieces are the largest/smallest? Share your "pie" briefly with your neighbor.

> *Note to Trainer: Make sure everybody finishes their pie and has a chance to share it with someone before moving on to the next section.*

Let's consider…which pieces are God-given? Which pieces did we choose for ourselves? Take a few moments –pray- ask God to reveal Himself to you concerning your life and all that you are involved in right now. You may take a moment to journal/make notes, if you wish.

- ***Which of these pieces did you give to me, Father? Did I choose any without asking You first?***
- ***What are my specific callings for THIS TIME?***

> *Note to Trainer: At this point (after participants are finished praying) you may wish to share about a time in your life when you were busy doing many things but found yourself out of balance and perhaps not fulfilling God's calling on your life for that season.*

MAKE YOUR POINT 2: **Evaluate/Basic Tools** (10-15 minutes)

Evaluate: Busyness can be a cover for root issues. Pray. Listen. **Why** are you so busy?

Start this list on chart paper or a white board. Write these 6 items down and then ask your participants for their thoughts. Add their answers to the board. They may add items like: feeling responsible, expectations, wanting to be needed or "in the know", selfishness, the "I need to meet that need" syndrome, traditions… There are no "right" answers here. Let the list be tailored to your group.

- Perfectionism?
- To impress or out-perform?
- Pride?

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- Proving self?
- Comparing self to others?
- Guilt?

Discovering the *why* can lead you to some surprising insights which can help you more accurately evaluate which roles God is truly calling you to. You have nothing to prove- you are created in Christ Jesus- you are HIS workmanship. Believe this.

- *For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works,* ***which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.*** *Ephesians 2:10*

Journal your answers to these questions in the space below…be honest. You are encouraged to continue exploring these questions later- perhaps with your spouse.

1. Do I have a frantic or overwhelming pace in life right now? Is it worth it?

2. How will this continued pace impact my family, my health, my ministry?

3. Will these things matter in eternity?

Note: Deb's answer – frantic pace? Yes. Worth it? Most often, yes. Sometimes the pace is frantic and God is the only One to provide the inner steadiness amidst the overwhelming needs.

Basic Tools **for conquering busyness, honoring your husband and family, and bringing your life into balance:**

Read the following list and mark what speaks most directly to your mind and heart.
(adapted from - Rick Ezell – How to Balance Your Life and Ministry)

- **Respect the priority of your marriage:** Set a non-negotiable date night. Communicate. Do devotions together. Honor one another above yourselves. Surprise your spouse. Love him/her according to their personal love language.

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- **Always get your spouse's permission/blessing** before saying yes to ministry positions. What you do affects your spouse and your family.
- **Set boundaries:** Set a limit to how many nights you are out a week doing ministry. Give your spouse veto power over your schedule. Do not miss your own kids' events for ministry purposes. Allow ample time for rest at home, listening, and fun.
- **Set the tone in your home:** Ensure that your home is a refuge of affection, warmth, and encouragement. If you are too busy, you set a tone of stress and chaos. May the Word of God be visible in your home and in your actions.
- **Be intentional with your own children:** Include your kids in ministry. Allow them to enjoy the perks about serving at church. Be present when you are home. Find unique ways to encourage and celebrate them. Be creative and fun!
- **Eliminate the unnecessary**. Many of the things we engage in are not necessarily wrong – they are simply not necessary.
- **Ask for help.**
- **Do what you can. . .** Mark 14:8. She has done what she could… (Jesus anointed at Bethany). *What is your "what you can"?*
    - Mark 14:6-9 (NIV) "Leave her alone," said Jesus. "Why are you bothering her? She has done a beautiful thing to me. The poor you will always have with you, and you can help them any time you want. But you will not always have me. **She did what she could**. She poured perfume on my body beforehand to prepare for my burial. Truly I tell you, wherever the gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her."
- **Consistently monitor and assess your involvement** – does it match up with the direction you sense God has given you?

Note: 5 out of the 9 tools are directly related to family. Is this significant to you?

Picture this: A mobile or wind chime is made of individual pieces that are all connected. When one piece moves, all of the other pieces are affected as well. This is how it is in ministry. This is how it is with our family. Each piece of our pie affects the other pieces.

"I" don't do ministry. "We" do ministry…as a family. As a couple. Whether my husband is a Follower or not. WE are doing ministry in the sense that what I do in each of my roles – to include ministry roles - plays a part in, and shapes our lives.

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ENGAGE YOUR LEARNERS: (5-10 minutes)

Go back and rank the Basic Tools from 1-9 in order of importance for your own life, for this season. You may share your thoughts with your neighbor, if you would like to.

If time allows. Poll your participants to see what their #1 was and why.

MAKE YOUR POINT 3: **The Whole Pie/Foundational Tools** (10 minutes)

We often look at our lives only as the PIECES of a pie. We compartmentalize and try to be sure that we are giving equal time/energy to each piece. But what if we looked at the pie as a WHOLE and not as pieces? Where are all of the pieces connected in a pie? *(At the center.)*

And if we are Followers of Christ and desire to live for Him, What is the center when our life pieces come together? *(God.)*

- *Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship.* Romans 12:1

If we see each part of our lives. . . each calling God has given us. . . and how we move in those callings as an act of worship to Him, how would that change things? Would that influence our perspective on how we approach each task, each role, each calling?

And IS there such a thing as <u>Balance</u> in life? Or do our lives radiate from the Center --- God --- and are all of our "pieces" really more like one continuous circle that intersect and flow into one another? Is Balance more about allowing God to BE my center and having everything flow from that? Ponder it…as we move into some ***foundational*** tools!

The following list was compiled through wisdom gained from several sources - please see resource list in the appendix.

Foundational tools for keeping *Godly* balance in our lives:

- **Seek first His Kingdom**
  - But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. Matt 6:33 (ESV)
  - *What God says is first today is first today!* -Jill Briscoe

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  - *It's a great release to know that the secret to 'doing it all' is not necessarily 'doing it all,' but rather discovering which part of the 'all' He has given us to do and doing all of that.* -Jill Briscoe
- **Abide in Christ. . .Stay connected to Him** – 24/7
  - *Remain in Me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in Me.* John 15:4 (NIV)
  - *Keep the focus on Christ: Doing things for Christ in ministry is not synonymous with abiding in Him. Protect your personal time with God above everything.* -Kristin Charles
  - Check your spiritual barometer – *The reason many people's lives are out of balance is because of something internal, not because of something external on a calendar. Often it is not because of something physical, but because of something spiritual.* -Rick Ezell

- **Prayer** – as a spiritual discipline; to avoid burnout
  - *The discipline of prayer is the intentional, concentrated, and regular effort to create space for God.* Henri Nouwen, *Spiritual Formation*
  - *A life without a quiet center easily becomes delusional.* –Nouwen
  - *Prayer is being unbusy with God instead of being busy with other things.* –Nouwen
  - *Once your mind, heart, and body are reunited in prayer, your whole life will become one act of thanksgiving and praise. Then, when your time for prayer is done and you must leave your special place, you will remain prayerful at all times and places, and will be filled with the presence of God.* -Nouwen

- **Move where and when God directs - Discipline to obey God's direction**
  - *He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.* 1 Thessalonians 5:24 (ESV)
  - Follow the "God cloud" in front of you, as the Israelites did -- even when you would rather not.
  - *It takes courage to disappoint people, especially those you love*. -Jill Briscoe
  - *Jesus was busy all His life, but as the Father directed. -Jill Briscoe*
  - *Sometimes we get so busy rowing the boat, we don't take the time to stop and see where we're going…or what we are becoming. -Wayne Cordeiro*

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- **Thanksgiving – Eucharisteo**.
    - **Eu** overwhelmingly good feeling about something. means good or well. It denotes a general good disposition.
    - **Charis** is the Greek word for grace or "freely granted favor." Combined they mean "an outpouring of grace and wonderful feelings that freely flow from the heart in response to someone or something."
    - *The real problem of life is never a lack of time. The real problem of life- of my life- is lack of thanksgiving. Thanksgiving makes time.* -Ann Voskamp

Read the excerpt below from pgs 71-72 of *A Thousand Gifts* by Ann Voskamp: *(read it slowly, let the words sink in)*

*Like the God-Man counting His too-few loaves and not-enough fishes. The one I remember from felt boards and figures pressed out smooth, where 'Jesus then took the loaves, **gave thanks**, and distributed to those who were seated as much as they wanted.' Gave thanks. He'd done it there too? Again? I'd missed it all of my life? I'd never considered those two words, the bridge words there in the middle, the crossing over that took the not enough and made it enough.*

Gave thanks. Eucharisteo.

Jesus embraces His not enough…He gives thanks…and there is more than enough. More than enough!

Eucharisteo always, always precedes the miracle. And who doesn't need a miracle like that every day? Thanksgiving makes time. Really? Give thanks and get time? Give thanks…slow time down with all your attention—and your basket of not-enough-time multiplies into more than enough time…

The real problem of life is never a lack of time. The real problem of life—in my life—is lack of thanksgiving.

Worship. Rest for the body. Inner rest.

- *Rest is not always to the body first, but the inner rest that energizes us for the work He has called us to do…the Sabbath of the heart that should happen 24/7.* –Jill Briscoe
- The Sabbath is for: *The work of the soul as it worships itself into rest!* -Jill Briscoe

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ENGAGE YOUR LEARNERS: (10 minutes)

*Work in a group of 2 or 3. Choose one item from the list of **Foundational Tools for Keeping Godly Balance.** Share either a) How you have experienced God through that practice or b) Why you would like to branch out in this area- (i.e. try something new). After everyone has shared, take a moment to pray for one another.*

REFLECTION TIME: (5 minutes)

Look back through your notes. What has God spoken to you during this time? Please journal/take notes of 1-3 things that have been fresh insights or reminders for you:

To Continue the Journey of Insight and Transformation. . . To consider later:

- **Be honest:** Has He called you to each of those roles you put in your pieces? What actions could you take? Who can hold you accountable?

- **Your Challenge:** On a card, write down 1-3 realistic things you will do within the next two weeks to begin to address the area the Spirit spoke to you. Write down one verse that you need to hear daily.

- **My Challenge to Us:** Take this information home and discuss it with your spouse (in person or via skype!). Ask their thoughts. Receive those thoughts!

- **Place your card in a frequently visible place** and ask one person to hold you accountable, if you are so brave! (Ask God to reveal that person to you).

Don't leave it here. . . continue to ask God to show you how you can keep Him first, abide in Him, be more intentional in prayer, be obedient to His direction, give Him more thanksgiving, and find rest through worship.

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APPENDIX:

Resources:

- Kristin Charles Blog - http://ministry-to-children.com/balancing-family-and-ministry/
- Just Between Us Magazine - http://justbetweenus.org/pages/page.asp?page_id=74057 (Articles by Jill Briscoe and Becky Tirabassi)
- Rick Ezell article - http://www.lifeway.com/Article/youth-How-to-Balance-Your-Life-and-Ministry
- *Leading on Empty* by Wayne Cordeiro
- *One Thousand Gifts* by Ann Voskamp
- *Spiritual Formation* by Henri Nouwen

Gallery Walk Quotes/Scripture

- *The real problem of life is never a lack of time. The real problem of life --- of my life --- is lack of thanksgiving. Thanksgiving makes time.* -Ann Voskamp
- *Sometimes we get so busy rowing the boat, we don't take the time to stop and see where we're going. . . or what we are becoming.* -Wayne Cordeiro
- *It's a great release to know that the secret to "doing it all" is not necessarily "doing it all", but rather discovering which part of the "all" He has given us to do and doing all of that.* -Jill Briscoe
- *Piglet noticed that even though he had a very small heart, it could hold a rather large amount of gratitude.* A.A. Milne – *Winnie the Pooh*
- *Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice…The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. . . And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:4-7, 19 ESV*
- *The reason many people's lives are out of balance is because of something internal, not because of something external on a calendar. Often it is not because of something physical, but because of something spiritual.* -Rick Ezell

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PARTICIPANT'S GUIDE

RELEVANCE: How do we achieve *balance* with the many roles we have as women? What is God's view on balance in our lives? God's desire is for us to seek Him, follow His lead, and receive His peace. Seeking Him leads to Godly balance which leads to God's peace.

INTRO: Take a gallery walk around the room to read quotes that are posted. Choose your favorite one and be prepared to say why. After everyone has chosen a quote, you will share in groups of 2-3.

1. A PIECE OF THE PIE

In the time we have, we will

- Explore the roles God has given us
- Consider the roots of our busy lives
- Explore tools to keeping our lives "in balance"

Balance:

- *the state of having your weight spread equally so that you do not fall*
- *the ability to move or to remain in a position without losing control or falling*
- *a state in which different things occur in equal or proper amounts or have an equal or proper amount of importance*
- *harmony: a state in which various parts form a satisfying and harmonious whole and nothing is out of proportion or unduly emphasized at the expense of the rest*
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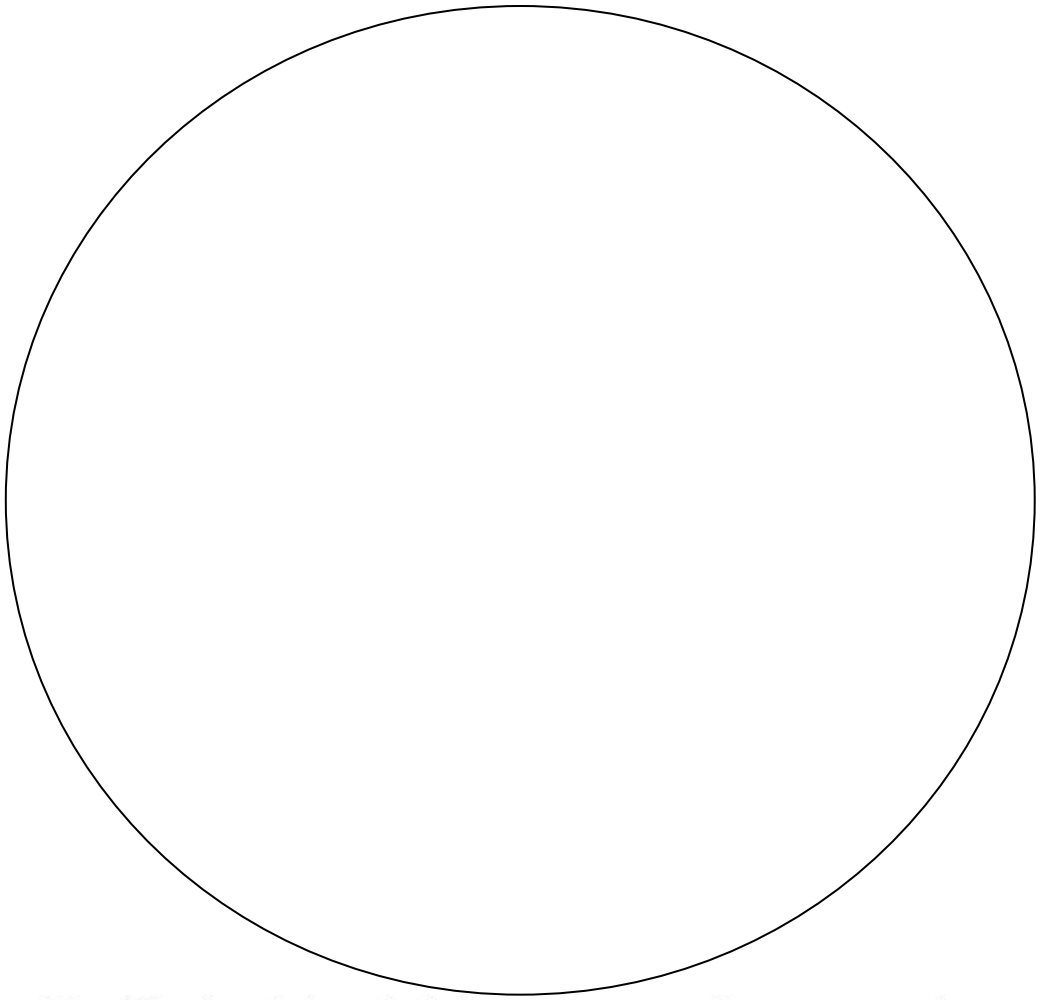
PIE ACTIVITY:

Draw lines on your "pie" below to create pieces to represent each role you have in your life (i.e. wife, mother, teacher, employee, ministry leader, school volunteer, etc). Do your best to proportion the pieces according to the amount of time you invest in each one. Which pieces are the largest/smallest? Share your "pie" briefly with your neighbor.



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- ***Which of these pieces did you give to me, Father? Did I choose any without asking You first?***

- ***What are my specific callings for THIS TIME?***

II. EVALUATE/BASIC TOOLS

Evaluate: Busyness can be a cover for root issues. Pray. Listen. **Why** are you so busy?

Discovering the *why* can lead you to some surprising insights which can help you more accurately evaluate which roles God is truly calling you to. You have nothing to prove- you are created in Christ Jesus- you are HIS workmanship. Believe this.

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Journal your answers to these questions in the space below…be honest. You are encouraged to continue exploring these questions later- perhaps with your spouse.

1. **Do I have a frantic or overwhelming pace in life right now? Is it worth it?**

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2. **How will this continued pace impact my family, my health, my ministry?**

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- **Do what you can. . .** Mark 14:8. She has done what she could… (Jesus anointed at Bethany). *What is your "what you can"?*
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Note: 5 out of the 9 tools are directly related to family. Is this significant to you?

ACTIVITY:

Go back and rank the Basic Tools from 1-9 in order of importance for your own life, for this season. You may share your thoughts with your neighbor, if you would like to.

III. THE WHOLE PIE/FOUNDATIONAL TOOLS

Where are all of the pieces connected in a pie? _____

What is the center when our life pieces come together? _____

- *Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship.* Romans 12:1

- Is Balance more about allowing God to BE my center and having everything flow from that? Ponder it…as we move into some ***foundational*** tools!

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  - *The discipline of prayer is the intentional, concentrated, and regular effort to create space for God.* Henri Nouwen, *Spiritual Formation*
  - *A life without a quiet center easily becomes delusional.* –Nouwen
  - *Prayer is being unbusy with God instead of being busy with other things.* –Nouwen
  - *Once your mind, heart, and body are reunited in prayer, your whole life will become one act of thanksgiving and praise. Then, when your time for prayer is done and you must leave your special place, you will remain prayerful at all times and places, and will be filled with the presence of God.* –Nouwen

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- **Move where and when God directs - Discipline to obey God's direction**
  - *He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.* 1 Thessalonians 5:24 (ESV)
  - Follow the "God cloud" in front of you, as the Israelites did -- even when you would rather not.
  - *It takes courage to disappoint people, especially those you love*. -Jill Briscoe
  - *Jesus was busy all His life, but as the Father directed. -Jill Briscoe*
  - *Sometimes we get so busy rowing the boat, we don't take the time to stop and see where we're going…or what we are becoming. -Wayne Cordeiro*

- **Thanksgiving – Eucharisteo**.
  - **Eu** overwhelmingly good feeling about something. means good or well. It denotes a general good disposition.
  - **Charis** is the Greek word for grace or "freely granted favor." Combined they mean "an outpouring of grace and wonderful feelings that freely flow from the heart in response to someone or something."
  - *The real problem of life is never a lack of time. The real problem of life- of my life- is lack of thanksgiving. Thanksgiving makes time.* -Ann Voskamp

- **Worship. Rest for the body. Inner rest.**
  - *Rest is not always to the body first, but the inner rest that energizes us for the work He has called us to do…the Sabbath of the heart that should happen 24/7.* –Jill Briscoe
  - The Sabbath is for: *The work of the soul as it worships itself into rest!* -Jill Briscoe

ACTIVITY:

Work in a group of 2 or 3. Choose one item from the list of ***Foundational Tools for Keeping Godly Balance.*** *Share either a) How you have experienced God through that practice or b) Why you would like to branch out in this area- (i.e. try something new). After everyone has shared, take a moment to pray for one another.*

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REFLECTION TIME: (5 minutes)

Look back through your notes. What has God spoken to you during this time? Please journal/take notes of 1-3 things that have been fresh insights or reminders for you:

To Continue the Journey of Insight and Transformation. . . To consider later:

- **Be honest:** Has He called you to each of those roles you put in your pieces? What actions could you take? Who can hold you accountable?

- **Your Challenge:** On a card, write down 1-3 realistic things you will do within the next two weeks to begin to address the area the Spirit spoke to you. Write down one verse that you need to hear daily.

- **My Challenge to Us:** Take this information home and discuss it with your spouse (in person or via skype!). Ask their thoughts. Receive those thoughts!

- **Place your card in a frequently visible place** and ask one person to hold you accountable, if you are so brave! (Ask God to reveal that person to you).

Don't leave it here. . . continue to ask God to show you how you can keep Him first, abide in Him, be more intentional in prayer, be obedient to His direction, give Him more thanksgiving, and find rest through worship.

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APPENDIX

Resources:

- Kristin Charles Blog - http://ministry-to-children.com/balancing-family-and-ministry/
- Just Between Us Magazine - http://justbetweenus.org/pages/page.asp?page_id=74057 (Articles by Jill Briscoe and Becky Tirabassi)
- Rick Ezell article - http://www.lifeway.com/Article/youth-How-to-Balance-Your-Life-and-Ministry
- *Leading on Empty* by Wayne Cordeiro
- One Thousand Gifts by Ann Voskamp
- *Spiritual Formation* by Henri Nouwen

Gallery Walk Quotes/Scripture

- *The real problem of life is never a lack of time. The real problem of life --- of my life --- is lack of thanksgiving. Thanksgiving makes time.* -Ann Voskamp
- *Sometimes we get so busy rowing the boat, we don't take the time to stop and see where we're going. . . or what we are becoming.* -Wayne Cordeiro
- *It's a great release to know that the secret to "doing it all" is not necessarily "doing it all", but rather discovering which part of the "all" He has given us to do and doing all of that.* -Jill Briscoe
- *Piglet noticed that even though he had a very small heart, it could hold a rather large amount of gratitude.* A.A. Milne – *Winnie the Pooh*
- *Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice…The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. . . And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:4-7, 19 ESV*
- *The reason many people's lives are out of balance is because of something internal, not because of something external on a calendar. Often it is not because of something physical, but because of something spiritual.* -Rick Ezell

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