

Fitness means exercising good stewardship of 'temple,' speaker stresses_72604

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By Ferrell Foster

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SAN ANTONIO-Being healthy is not just about losing weight and looking good; it's about "physical stewardship" of the body throughout life, fitness trainer Marsha Taplett insisted.

"We are on a Christian journey and a wellness journey," Tap-lett said during a seminar at the African American Fellowship/ Church Health and Growth Conference.

She called for a holistic approach to wellness that reflects how Jesus told people to love God with all of their heart, soul, mind and strength in the Gospel of Mark.

Conference
leader
Marsha Tap-
lett
recommends
a holistic
approach to
fitness that
includes
body, mind
and spirit.

The heart represents emotions; soul, spirituality; mind, thought processes; and strength, the physical, Taplett said.

“Think of our body as the temple of the Holy Spirit,” she said. “Physical stewardship is an act of worship.”

She compared a person's body to a church sanctuary.

“We wouldn't put our trash in the (church) sanctuary, because we give reverence to our sanctuary,” she said.

Christians should treat their bodies with similar reverence, she urged.

“Spirituality will always be before physical, but they're always together,” she added. “If you're emotionally not well, you're not well.”

And the same goes for physical, mental and spiritual health, Taplett added.

“A healthy body enables us to be ready to serve God,” she said. “If we're not at our best physically, we're not at our best in ministry.”

She encouraged participants to “think about physical activity and eating

right as an everyday lifestyle.”

In regard to proper nutrition, Taplett said, “My philosophy is, we shouldn't diet.” Sensible eating and balance are best.

“We're supposed to have carbohydrates, protein and fat,” she said, referring to various weight-loss plans that severely restrict consumption of such items.

Taplett encouraged participants to not skip meals, noting, “Every time you skip a meal, you set up your body to retain body fat.”

“We can't get so caught up in looking good,” she said. That's making the body an idol. “That's extreme. That's out of balance.”

Taplett listed several components of a fit body-cardiovascular ability, muscular strength, flexibility, balance and posture-and gave simple suggestions for how to improve in those areas.

- ◆ Cardiovascular: Walk at least 15 minutes a day to maintain the heart's health. Biking and aerobics also are helpful.

- ◆ Muscular strength: A person doesn't have to lift weights to strengthen muscles, Taplett said.

She had class members stand in front of their chairs and then move downward halfway toward a sitting position.

That simple exercise increases lower-body strength and is an example of the type of exercise that work muscles without lifting weights.

- ◆ Flexibility: Bending over and touching toes is an example of stretching that helps a person maintain “range of motion,” she said.

Most people cannot touch their toes at age 40 simply because they don't do

it. "It's never too late to get it back," she added.

- ◆ Balance: Taplett suggested "something as simple as lifting one foot." A person can do that while standing in a bank or checkout line, while washing dishes or just waiting for someone.

- ◆ Posture: How people present themselves is important, she said. It's as simple as standing and sitting with back straight and shoulders back. "If we're not conscious of it, we lose it," she observed.

"Whatever you have today, you want to try to maintain it," Taplett said. And "it's OK to add this kind of activity in our churches."

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