

Dealing with Holiday Stress

"The true significance of Christmas is found in pausing to celebrate God's love for us and expressing that love to one another." Rick Warren

Five Principles to Focus on During the Holidays

1. Choose functions where you can experience meaningful fellowship.
 - a. Your schedule can be packed with parties.
 - b. Real fellowship occurs when there is heart to heart sharing.
 - c. True listening skills must take place.
2. Make it a time for personal growth.
 - a. The holidays can be a time of hurt and despair.
 - b. Use the Christmas holiday as a time of reconciliation as God intended.
 - c. The most valuable gift you can give someone is your forgiveness. It benefits you as well as the receiver.
3. This is an excellent time of year for helpful service.
 - a. Simple acts of service are what Christmas is all about.
 - b. Everyone can use a helping hand at this time of year.
4. Make time to participate in joyful worship.
 - a. You must take time to truly thank God for His gift to you.
 - b. Allow the music of the season to minister to you.
5. Many people are open to the gospel during this time so sharing the good news should be a priority.

There is no way to eliminate stress, but my attitude is the key to making the holidays easier to deal with.

Secrets to Reducing Holiday Stress

1. Set an example of a calm spirit for those around you.
 - a. As a Christian, God can give a peace that passes all understanding.
 - b. You set the tone for your family.
 - c. It's your choice.

2. Be flexible.
 - a. Forget the perfect picture. Plans may not unfold as you desire.
 - b. Your worth is not determined by what you do or have.
 - c. Discover your family's style and be content with it.

3. You can't please everyone.
 - a. The gifts you give do not define you; the value is in the gift-giver.
 - b. Give your plan your best shot and then follow through.
 - c. Remember it is just one holiday, not your entire world.

4. Take time to plan for the next few weeks.
 - a. Goals may be planned in the areas of your budget, schedules or family and friends.
 - b. Be sure to write them down and refer to them often.
 - c. Take requests from your family for special events to determine a schedule and then stick to the plan.

5. Expect and deal with criticism wisely.
 - a. You know what situations will "set you off" so prepare for them.
 - 1) Be ready with an invisible shield
 - 2) Do no absorb the comment or reaction.
 - 3) Simply let it go.
 - b. Dr. Minirth, Christian psychiatrist, tells his clients to not use this time of year to fix any family problems. Keep to the goal of showing love and peace.

6. Allow yourself to feel what you are feeling but don't dwell on them.
 - a. At the end of a hectic day, be sure to spend time with "The Reason for the Season".
 - b. Take time to allow yourself to express the feelings of a missed loved one.
 - c. Take time for yourself.
 - d. Keep things in perspective - Volunteering can help get your focus off yourself.