

Physical

Opening: Good morning, friends! Welcome to this fourth session on preparing for our preferred future. As we wait for others to join us, we have a quick question. How did you feel thinking about today's topic – Taking Care of the Tent: The physical side of preparing for retirement? This can be multiple choice—tell us in the chat provided: Excited; Curious; Guarded; Dread. How do you feel?

We are so glad you joined us to explore the importance of taking care of our physical bodies as part of our preparation for retirement. This is the 4th of six webinars launched by the Third Third Team and our NWD after surveying licensed ministers in our district age 50 and older. Six topics emerged from those surveys all prioritized equally: Spiritual, Mental/Emotional, Social, Physical, Financial, and Timing.

Today we will talk about the Physical arena. You have an opportunity for a mini breakout time in the middle of this talk, then we will place you in a longer breakout group as we finish this talk to discuss some questions, and finally we will wrap up with shared discoveries and look at some recommended resources. Like others, Jared and I will each take the lead on various sessions.

So why are we doing these webinars? We want to equip ministers to be spiritually faithful, emotionally healthy, socially connected, physically strong, and financially free. Free to be a steward of your gifts and callings without the need for role, remuneration or reciprocation. If you are tuning in for the first time, welcome!

We are Ann and Jared Roth...high mileage units who for 47 years were Foursquare church planters and pastors. We retired 3.5 years ago as lead pastors of Evergreen Christian Center in Hillsboro, Oregon. We had a vision for the earliest years of our retirement that included a lot of hiking, biking, and kayaking in 50 National Parks and international trips to do the same. It has been fun—but at heart we are fellow adventurers with all of you, following Jesus through each season of life with ideas, dreams and desires, and trusting Him with the twists and turns.

First, a confession. Jared and I are sharing today as two people with our own journey to be fit and healthy. We struggled, experimented and developed new habits across the seasons of our life...and we continue to learn. We are with you, friends.

Let's start with a look at what research is showing us: Physical health in the U.S. since 2019 has gotten worse, with obesity rates reaching roughly 38.4% and diabetes diagnoses hitting a new high of 13.6%. Only 1 in 4 adults meet recommended physical activity guidelines, while sedentary lifestyles and poor nutrition contribute to widespread chronic diseases. Life expectancy has declined, driven by, among other factors, these declining health metrics. But if you are curious like us you may wonder: How do pastors compare to these metrics for the general population?

Let's review a few key physical health findings for U.S. clergy:

- **Weight & Chronic Illness:** Obesity rates of 43% are notably higher among clergy than in demographically matched U.S. adults. Chronic issues including hypertension, diabetes, and cardiovascular risks remain significant concerns, with many indicators showing a, sustained, or worsening trend over the past decade.

One disturbing trend from a 10-year study indicated a steady decline in self-reported, "very good" or, "excellent", health among pastors, indicating, a, long-term, trend of decreasing well-being, despite some improvements in, specific lifestyle, habits. Research shows that the data on pastoral health often varies based on denomination indicating that each denomination has its unique culture that supports or deters physically healthy practices. We want to take a moment and talk about that in some brief breakout groups. See this question in the chat: What are some ways that our Foursquare culture supports or deters physically healthy practices?

Mini - Breakout Groups

Ann will take Breakout group responses to this question.

Pastors can face long hours and stress that take an emotional toll. We often neglect self-care. Throw in a pandemic, pastoring in a politically charged culture that divides even close families, and we have the perfect storm for our physical health to deteriorate unless we are intentional and disciplined about caring for our body. We need this one body we are given to perform optimally if we want to love, serve well, and have fun into our retirement! What is our part in living well and long?

Beginning in 2008, Duke University conducted a 15-year study of United Methodist pastors. What did they learn? Initially they discovered concerning rates of chronic diseases so they continued to monitor these trends. By 2023, 25% of these pastors had two or more chronic diseases, diabetes, arthritis, asthma, hypertension, COPD, angina, and coronary heart disease. We have to be intentional to get different results.

In 2026, health experts emphasize that improving physical health after 50 is best achieved through a holistic approach. We are going to talk about 4 big elements for physical health—Eat, Sleep, Move, and Preventative Care!

EAT:

Shift Nutritional focus to "Food as Fuel".

2026 guidelines recommend focusing on nourishment rather than restrictive dieting.

- **Increase Protein:** Aim for 1.0 gram of protein per kilogram of body weight daily (about 75–90 grams for a 165lb person) to maintain muscle mass.
- **Focus on whole foods:** Prioritize leafy greens, berries, fatty fish (omega-3s), and fiber-rich legumes while limiting highly processed foods and added sugars.
- **Hydration:** Be proactive about drinking water. (friend story-habit stacking)

SLEEP:

Optimize Rest and Recovery:

Physical health is deeply tied to sleep and stress management.

- **Sleep Hygiene:** Aim for 7 to 9 hours of quality rest.
- **Create a soothing area to sleep!**

- No screens before bed.

MOVE: Physical activity and strength maintenance. (mobility, endurance)

Effective strategies for 2026 include:

1. Adopt "Functional Fitness" Routines:

Instead of generic exercises, focus on movements that support independence and daily activities.

- Aerobic Activity: Aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity activity (like brisk walking or water aerobics) or 75 minutes of vigorous activity (like jogging or cycling) weekly.
- Resistance Training: Prioritize muscle-strengthening activities at least two days per week to combat age-related muscle loss. Focus on large muscle groups using weights, resistance bands, or bodyweight exercises like squats and push-ups.
- Balance & Flexibility: Incorporate activities like Tai Chi, yoga, to reduce the risk of falls and maintain joint mobility. (Story)

Proactive Preventative Care

Monitoring health markers allows for earlier intervention before minor issues become chronic.

- Annual Wellness Visits: If you are on Medicare you can use their free preventive services for annual check-ups which include screenings for blood pressure, cholesterol, and diabetes. If not, your insurance may cover an annual physical in their preventative car. For a great baseline on some important measures like VO2 Max, flexibility, Resting heart rate, Basal Metabolism, Lean Mass, and more you can checkout DEXA-Scan or similar services near you.
- Routine Screenings: Stay current on screenings for colorectal cancer (starting at age 45), mammograms, and bone density.
- Vaccinations: Stay updated on annual flu shots, COVID-19 boosters, and the shingles vaccine and others recommended by your primary care physician.
- Recovery: Practice Sabbath

Let's consider some healthy rhythms for sustainable living as you prepare for retirement. (Story- God then Bod)

We begin by asking: What's your starting point—How would you currently assess your physical health? Likert scale of 1 – 5, 1 being the lowest, 5 the highest

- Energy
- Flexibility
- Endurance
- Stress levels
- Medical conditions

Second, ask yourself: What routine checkups or preventative measures do you already practice (annual checkups, screenings, medications). What might you need to add?

Third, ask yourself: How does your current level of physical health align with your desired retirement lifestyle (travel, grandkids, continued ministry).

BREAKOUT GROUP Questions

Planning ahead:

1. What small realistic changes could you make this year to improve your health?
2. How can you cultivate accountability with your spouse, friends, or other pastors—to encourage health habits?
3. What vision do you have for your retirement years, and what physical capacity will you need to live it out well?

Let's hear some of your take aways from the questions you looked at in your breakout group!

On the NWD website you will find a Trellis of Development. Scroll down and under Third /Third, you will see a longer list of resources for any of the six topics we are exploring.

Resources we want to highlight for you today that pertain to the Physical area:

1. The Second Fifty: Answers to the 7 Big Questions of Midlife and Beyond by Debra Whitman, 2024
2. The Blue Zones: Nine Lessons for Living Longer by Dan Buettner, 2012
3. Atomic Habits: Tiny Changes, Remarkable Results by James Clear, 2018
4. Next Level, by Stacey Simms, PhD. (This one is for women in peri-menopause, menopause, and beyond.)

Next week we tackle the topic often thought of first in preparing for the future - finances. How to be financially free to say "Yes!". We'll start with a big question. "How much is enough?"