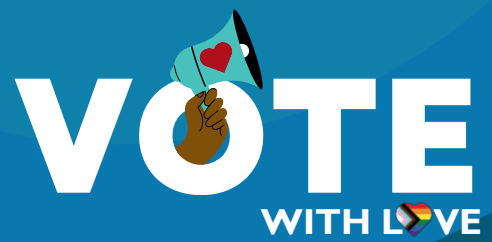


Taking the Time for Self-Care This Election Season



Think for a moment: when was the last time you took a break for self-care? Taking time for rest and rejuvenation is faithful stewardship of the one body you have to minister to others.

As national elections near in the United States, our televisions, computer screens, emails, social media, mailboxes and voicemails are demanding our attention. Through messaging intentionally created to heighten our emotion, we can sometimes forget that rest is resistance. Self-care is a divine, spiritual practice, drawn from the Sabbath, that keeps us healthy and grounded in times of turmoil in our outside world.

Over the past two years, many of us have experienced a range of emotions while addressing others' anxiety and fears. We are exhausted in body and mind, and sometimes even in spirit, as we consider what comes next and how we can continue responding.

Consider taking a moment to participate in one of the following activities to center and ground yourself during this election season:

- The most essential bodily activity that we can control is our breathing. A deep breath is helpful at any time. The 4-7-8 Calm Breathing Exercise (inhale for 4 seconds, hold for 7 seconds, exhale for 8 seconds) promotes relaxation, reduces anxiety, and can also help you fall asleep more quickly.
- A breath prayer combines two essentials: a conversation with God and breathing. An example is: (Inhale) God of all creation, (Exhale) fill me now with your peace.
 - (I) God of all creation, (E) fill me with your love.
 - (I) God of all creation, (E) guide me in your desires.
 - (I) God of all creation, (E) grant me the courage to do your will. Amen.
- Feeling anxious or stressed can cause some people to overeat, while others lose their appetite and refuse food. Foods high in Omega-3 fatty acids, protein, fiber, Vitamin B-12, magnesium, and probiotics may help reduce anxiety and stress. If you have no appetite, stay hydrated by drinking water and tea, and choose protein and calorie-dense foods that appeal to you.
- Go outdoors and commune with God and nature. Even a small five-minute reprieve from an indoor environment can provide the Benefits of Being in Nature. It frees our minds to think more deeply, gain insights, and meditate.
- Come and Find the Quiet Center in the multifaceted life we lead and simply be. Just sit back and listen or sing along.

May grace and love abound, and may your soul find peace as we all work toward a healthier, more just world. Share this with someone who may need it in this moment.

Provided by the UCC Wellness Ministries & UCC Office of Public Policy & Advocacy