Humility and Self Care: Outline of a Short Presentation
for NACC Covid Listening Session, July 29, 2020

The Books of Wisdom—Psalms, Proverbs, Sirach, etc.—have passages that warn against going beyond your power. They seem to suggest a relationship between humility and self care. Here is an example:

Humble yourself the more, the greater you are,
    and you will find favor with God.
For great is the power of God;
    by the humble he is glorified.
What is too sublime for you, seek not,
    into things beyond your strength search not.
What is committed to you, attend to;
    for what is hidden is not your concern.
With what is too much for you meddle not,
    when shown things beyond human understanding.  –Sirach 3:18-22

Why do chaplains sometimes have trouble with self-care?
• high standards of excellence
• competencies that encourage us to go the extra mile
• Jesus as our model—who gave his all

Examples of when we might disregard self care
• one more visit
• one last phone call
• fear of letting down our team if we take time for ourselves

Seeing self-care in the light of humility might help: Some things are beyond our strength, especially in times of Covid. Sometimes all we can do is focus on what’s in front of us. A sense of peace—and even joy—can come from recognizing our limitations. Richard Rohr: “joyful acceptance of a limited world.”

As for Jesus, he too recognized his limits and took time for himself. He encouraged us to be humble and do the same:
    Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened,
    and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and
    learn for me, for I am meek and humble of heart;
    and you will find rest for yourselves, for my yoke
    is easy and my burden light.  –Matthew 11: 28-30

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