

# Finding Balance and Setting Boundaries between Work and Home

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## by the Rev. David C. Fleming and Jo Marie Fleming

Post-Seminary Applied Learning and Support (PALS) is a collaborative effort of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod’s Pastoral Education department and LCMS districts to help pastors and their wives in the transition from seminary to congregation. To learn more, visit [lcms.org/pals](http://lcms.org/pals).

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## Contents

Outline.....	4
Discussion Questions.....	5
Bibliography.....	7

# Outline

## Introduction

### Segment 1:

The Lord's vocations for us. The beginning of our conversation about boundaries and balance in service to our congregations and families.

### Segment 2:

A pastor's wife gives her perspective on the joys and challenges of life in the parsonage.

### Segment 3:

A radical suggestion from Eugene Peterson and some more easily initiated ways to allow the Lord's balance to help with the time challenges at church and at home.



# Discussion Questions

## Segment 1

1. What are the Lord's expectations for your work as a steward of the mysteries of God?

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2. What unrealistic expectations do some of the members of your congregation have for you?

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3. What expectations do you have for yourself that are hurting you?

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4. When you violate your boundaries, what's your motivation? Is it to please people at the expense of your family?

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5. Do you take a day off?

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6. What would your wife (or best friend) say about your schedule?

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## Segment 2

1. What has worked for you in staying connected to your family?

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**2.** What would your wife (or best friend) say has been the most challenging obstacle to time together?

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**3.** What advice from other pastors about balance and boundaries has been helpful?

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**4.** How does your congregation help you and the congregants to be available for service in family vocations? What more could be done to foster a pro-family vocation attitude?

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### Segment 3

**1.** What do you think of Eugene Peterson's "Sabbath" practice? If you practiced such a "Sabbath," what benefits do you think you would find?

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**2.** What time management or task management system has helped you use your time most efficiently?

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**3.** While email, the internet and social media are exceedingly helpful tools, how have you found them to interrupt good work? What boundaries have you found helpful in regard to these?

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4. Have you participated in a Doxology or Grace Place retreat? What have you heard from those who have?

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5. How do you and your family dwell richly in the Word together?

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## Bibliography for Further Study

Bonhoeffer, Dietrich, and John W. Doberstein. *Life Together*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1993. Print.

Covey, Stephen R. *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People: Restoring the Character Ethic*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1989. Print.

Doxology: The Lutheran Center for Spiritual Care and Counsel. *doxology.us*

Focus on the Family: Thriving Pastor. *thrivingpastor.com* (Several articles here are quite helpful, although you might have to wade through some non-Lutheran theology.)

## Conclusion

Close with prayer for each of the men and their families.

Grace Place Wellness Ministries.  
*graceplacewellness.org*

Kleinig, John W. *Grace upon Grace: Spirituality for Today*. St. Louis, MO: Concordia, 2008. Print.

Peterson, Eugene H. *Working the Angles: The Shape of Pastoral Integrity*. Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 1987. Print.

Veith, Gene Edward. *The Spirituality of the Cross: The Way of the First Evangelicals*. St. Louis, MO: Concordia, 1999. Print. (Especially the chapter on vocation)



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