

Staying Strong as a Family When One Member Is Weak

Burnout, depression and chronic illness are exhausting for affected individuals, but they also create burdens for their families. Children may feel neglected and unloved, and spouses may feel lonely and unsupported. The results can be frustration and guilt in all parties and lasting damage to relationships. This session will explore the dynamics of families with a member experiencing exhaustion and examine practical steps to reduce its harm. We will also consider how to recover as a family whether the affected person recovers from the exhaustion or not.

Paul Coulter lives in Lisburn, Northern Ireland, with his Chinese Malaysian wife, Gar-Ling, and their two teenage children. He holds degrees in medical genetics, medicine and theology (PhD). Having previously served as a medical doctor, cross-cultural pastor and lecturer in practical theology and missiology, he is now Head of Ministry Operations with Living Leadership (<http://www.livingleadership.org>), an organisation helping leaders and their families live joyfully in Christ and serve Him faithfully. He is also Executive Director of the Centre for Christianity in Society (<http://www.christianityinsociety.org>), which seeks to connect Christ with issues and needs in contemporary culture in Ireland and online. Paul is the author of three books - 'Clarion Call: Finding Joy in Christ with John the Baptist,' 'Serving Two Masters? Probing the Tensions Between Science and Faith in the Art of Healthcare,' and 'Keeping Care Pastoral: the Heart of Gospel-Shaped Pastoral Care' - several book chapters and multiple articles, including several on (<http://BeThinking.org>). He speaks and writes regularly on matters in leadership, pastoral care, ethics and apologetics. In his spare time, he loves to walk in hills and forests, cycle on flat roads and read about history.

I. Building resilience - qualities of strong families

II. Biblical perspectives on family strength in weakness

A. The Divine Family (Phil. 2; 4:11-13)

B. The Church family (1 Cor. 12; Rom. 12)

C. Present weakness and coming strength (2 Cor. 4:7-18; Rom. 8:18-39)

III. Navigating family stress (after Reuben Hill)

A. Event

B. Resources

C. Perceptions

IV. Recovering as a family

A. Coping mechanisms

B. Thriving in a 'new normal'

C. Families of faith, hope and love