Living a balanced life can be very difficult. Fortunately, the Lord gives us inspired leaders who have taught us how we can live a more balanced life. Their suggestions are often simple, basic principles of the Gospel. When we put these teachings into action we will greatly improve our ability to maintain balance in our lives.

Elder Russell M. Ballard gave insight into living a balanced life when he said, “I have a few suggestions that I hope will be valuable to those of you concerned with balancing life’s demands. These suggestions are very basic; their concepts can easily be overlooked if you are not careful. You will need a strong commitment and personal discipline to incorporate them into your life:"

1. Establish Priorities
2. Set Attainable Goals
3. Budget Wisely
4. Build Relationships
5. Study the Scriptures
6. Take Care of Yourself
7. Live the Gospel
8. Pray Often
9. Stay Focused and Do Your Best


President Dieter F. Uchtdorf taught, “As we turn to our Heavenly Father and seek His wisdom regarding the things that matter most, we learn over and over again the importance of four key relationships: with our God, with our families, with our fellowman, and with ourselves. As we evaluate our own lives with a willing mind, we will see where we have drifted from the more excellent way. The eyes of our understanding will be opened, and we will recognize what needs to be done to purify our heart and refocus our life.”

(“Of Things that Matter Most.” October 2010)

Elder Donald L. Hallstrom, “Leading a balanced life can be difficult for any of us. There is not an exact pattern that works for everyone, and even our own blueprint may change during different phases of life. However, seeking balance—giving adequate time and effort to each of those things that really matter—is vital to success in our mortal probation. There are certain fundamental responsibilities we cannot neglect without serious consequence. What are the essential poles of our lives? I wish to suggest four: our love for Heavenly Father and His Son, our care of our families, our service to the Lord, and our life’s temporal work.”

(“Seeking a Balanced Life.” August 2003.)
“When we put God first, all other things fall into their proper place or drop out of our lives. Our love of the Lord will govern the claims for our affection, the demands of our time, the interests we pursue, and the order of our priorities.”

Ezra Taft Benson

“We also need priorities. Our priorities determine what we seek in life… Jesus taught about priorities when He said, “Seek not the things of this world but seek ye first to build up the kingdom of God, and to establish his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you”... As someone has said, if we do not choose the kingdom of God first, it will make little difference in the long run what we have chosen instead of it.”

Dallin H. Oaks
“Focus and Priorities”

“Think about your life and set your priorities. Find some quiet time regularly to think deeply about where you are going and what you will need to do to get there. Jesus, our exemplar, often “withdrew himself into the wilderness, and prayed” (Luke 5:16). We need to do the same thing occasionally to rejuvenate ourselves spiritually as the Savior did. Write down the tasks you would like to accomplish each day. Keep foremost in mind the sacred covenants you have made with the Lord as you write down your daily schedules.”

M. Russell Ballard
“Keeping Your Life in Balance”

“Desires dictate our priorities, priorities shape our choices, and choices determine our actions. The desires we act on determine our changing, our achieving, and our becoming.”

Dallin H. Oaks
“Desires”

“We should begin by recognizing the reality that just because something is good is not a sufficient reason for doing it. The number of good things we can do far exceeds the time available to accomplish them. Some things are better than good, and these are the things that should command priority attention in our lives.”

Dallin H. Oaks
“Good, Better, Best”

“Balance in large measure is knowing the things that can be changed, putting them in proper perspective, and recognizing the things that will not change. And balance also lies in attitude. May our attitude be one of achieving balance and wisdom and understanding in all that we do.”

James E. Faust
“The Need for Balance in Our Lives”
“We know that there are some essential things that must be taken care of if we are going to achieve eternal life. Those things are making and keeping covenants and doing the things the Lord expects us to do. …

“Every day we start by doing those essential things. It’s not a long list; it’s a few things that tell the Lord we’re aligned with Him. … We have a long list of necessary things. These are the things that help keep life moving. Then we have the list of things that are nice to do. But if we spend our time on that list, and essentials haven’t been taken care of first, then we’re not lined up with our Heavenly Father. [The “nice” things] won’t save us.”

“No woman ever has enough time, enough energy, and enough strength to do all the good things that are in her mind to do. We have to have the help of the Holy Ghost to take care of the most essential, and then the necessary, and fill in the nice-to-do things around that.”

Julie B. Beck

“Go to the Lord for Help with Balance”

**Tips to Focus your Priorities**

A. Begin by asking yourself:
   1. What matters most to me?
   2. What do I hope to accomplish in 1 year, 5 years, 20 years, Lifetime?
   3. Do my daily activities reflect those values?

B. List your priorities and personal goals on a paper.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example:</th>
<th>Priorities</th>
<th>Goals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>God</td>
<td>Return to God’s Presence.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marriage</td>
<td>Have a Celestial Marriage.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>Compassionate, Educated, Faithful</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home</td>
<td>A place of love, peace and happiness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

C. Review the chart “Essential, Necessary, Nice-to-Do and Distractions”

D. Highlight the “Essential” items on your list and schedule time in your calendar for these items.

**Tip:** It may be helpful to set prompts or alarms on your phone for these items. By making the “Essential Things” routine you will find more time to do the necessary and nice-to-do.

E. With the remaining items on your list place them in order of priority – reflecting the level of importance each has in accomplishing your goals.

F. Begin each day by listing the tasks of the day. Focus first on the “Essential,” then continue on with the highest priorities. “Keep foremost the sacred covenants you have made with the Lord as you write down your daily schedule.” M. Russell Ballard (“Keeping Life’s Demands in Balance”)

G. Take time in the evening to review the present day and prepare for the next day. Simple planning can greatly improve the balance in your life.

H. Look for ways to simplify task that are necessary, but time consuming.

I. Recognize that balancing life is an ongoing process. Take time regularly to find quiet when you can ponder your responsibilities and needs. Seek personal inspiration to maintain a proper balance.
“The ability to qualify for, receive, and act on personal revelation is the single most important skill that can be acquired in this life.”

Julie B. Beck

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Essential</th>
<th>Necessary</th>
<th>Nice to Do</th>
<th>Distractions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The “Essential” are those things in our lives that lead to eternal life. The things that are “Essential” in our lives generally do not take up a lot of time, but must be done regularly to provide the spiritual growth needed.</td>
<td>The “Necessary” are those things that provide for our temporal well being, contribute to self-reliance, improve family relationships, and fulfill our responsibilities at work and church. These items are very important and often require a lot of time to do. Many of the items “Necessary” in our lives will become easier to manage with planning and improved skills.</td>
<td>The “Nice-to-Do” are those things add variety to our lives, but they won’t save us. When we focus on the “Essential” and “Necessary” first, we will be surprise how many “Nice-to-Do” things we are still able to enjoy. We should recognize that our lives will have different seasons. Some times we will have less time for the “Nice-to-Do”. Beware of over-scheduling your family with the “Nice-to-Do”.</td>
<td>“Distractions” are those things that stop us from doing more important things. They may become addictive and generally do not improve the individual comparative to time spent engaged in the activity. It may be helpful to keep a daily log. Note every thirty minutes of your day for 1–3 weeks. You will soon recognize distractions in your life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRIMARY GOAL: To be exalted with our families.</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Seeking Personal Revelation through Prayer
- Recording impressions and tender mercies in your journal
- Studying scriptures daily (both individually and as a family)
- Taking time to ponder and fast
- Weekly Family Home Evenings
- Keeping the Commandments
- Receiving all the ordinances
- Attending the Temple
- Paying Tithing
- Keeping the Sabbath Day holy
- Becoming Christlike
- Developing relationships with family and friends
- Meaningful time for husband and wife
- Homemaking (cooking, cleaning, working)
- Time Management and Planning
- Living providently
- Budgeting
- Giving compassionate service
- Doing temple and family history work
- Sharing the gospel
- Serving in the Church
- Receiving an Education
- Health Maintenance
- Work
- Crafts
- Hobbies
- Recreational reading
- Lunches with friends
- Movies
- Sports
- Travel
- Developing a website
- Children’s Hobbies
- Gardening
- Home Improvement Projects
- Community Involvement
- Volunteering for PTA
- Surfing the Internet
- Watching Television
- Idleness
- Video Gaming
- Obsessive Blogging & Pinning
- Texting
- Social Media
- Staying up too late so you are not functioning at full capacity.
- Sleeping “longer than is needful”
- Anything in excess

** Chart derived from “And Upon the Handmaids in Those Days will I Pour Out My Spirit,” by Julie B. Beck.

Living a Balanced Life - 4
“Every true home is an influence of blessing in the community where it stands. Its lights shine out. Its songs ring out. Its spirit breathes out... Some homes... are perpetually pouring out sweetness and fragrance. The ideal Christian home is a far-reaching benediction... It is a place where one who is in trouble may go confident ever of sympathy and comfort. It is a place where the young people love to go, because they know they are welcome and because they find inspiration and help there.”

J. R. Miller

(Home-Making, 70-71.)

“Mothers who know create a climate for spiritual and temporal growth in their homes. Another word for nurturing is homemaking. Homemaking includes cooking, washing clothes and dishes, and keeping an orderly home. Home is where women have the most power and influence; therefore, Latter-day Saint women should be the best homemakers in the world. Working beside children in homemaking tasks creates opportunities to teach and model qualities children should emulate. Nurturing mothers are knowledgeable, but all the education women attain will avail them nothing if they do not have the skill to make a home that creates a climate for spiritual growth. Growth happens best in a “house of order,” and women should pattern their homes after the Lord’s house.”

Julie B. Beck

“Mothers who Know”

President Brigham Young said: “Study order and cleanliness in your various occupations. ... Make your homes lovely, and adorn your hearts with the grace of God.”

(Discourses of Brigham Young, 200.)

“Organize yourselves; prepare every needful thing, and establish a house, even a house of prayer, a house of fasting, a house of faith, a house of learning, a house of glory, a house of order, a house of God.”

Doctrine & Covenants 109:8

As Latter-day Saint homebuilders, our greatest challenge is to bring up our children in light and truth—to develop the spiritual nature of each family member. Our greatest role is as a teacher.

Marian B. Boyer

“Organize Yourselves”
Living a Balanced Life

A major portion of each day is spent managing the “Necessary” things in our lives (healthy food, an orderly and peaceful home, clothing and personal care, love and family relationships, and service in the church). It is important that we develop great home management skills so that we can spend less time focusing on the “Necessary” and more time doing the “Essential” and “Nice-to-Do” things in our lives.

The Latter-day Saint Woman: Basic Manual for Women has some excellent information on managing our homes:

Lesson 20: Managing Our Homes

“When we keep our homes tidy, we feel a sense of pride. We enjoy a peaceful atmosphere at home when it is clean. We can find anything we want whenever we want it. A well-organized home is easier to keep clean than a disorganized home.

“We need to organize not only our homes but also our time. Some women spend too much time keeping their homes clean and organized. They need to learn how to spend less time on housework in order to spend more time being with their families, developing talents, and serving others. Housework is important, but it should not take away from more important things. Having a clean home should not be our main goal; it should be part of our goal to be happy and have happy families. We need time to develop our talents and learn to live the principles of the gospel. We should have time to serve in church positions, help our neighbors and those in need, and be good missionaries. When we keep our homes clean without spending too much time on housework, we are free to spend more time in family activities and to do other important things.”

1. A Place for Everything

To be comfortable, a house has to be functional. The first step in organizing our homes is to decide what the function of each room is. Then we can put what we need in that room in well-organized drawers and cupboards.

Keeping our homes tidy is easier if all family members take

Keeping the Home In Balance

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Cooking and Meal Preparation:

Create a Meal Plan Calendar
Use food storage effectively to decrease grocery shopping.

Rotate meal preparation assignments with family members.

Cook double or triple the quantity and immediately freeze for later meals.

Create a “Dinner Group” in which 4 – 6 participants prepare the same dish for each participant.

Each dish is swapped, providing all participants 4 – 6 prepared meals.

Prepare a crock-pot meal the night before a busy day so you simply turn it on in the morning.

Have an assigned “Baking Day” in which you make multiple meals to freeze.

Create Dinner Traditions:

Monday – Italian Night
Tuesday – Mexican Night
Wednesday – Family Favorites
Thursday – Soup & Salad
Friday – Pizza & Movie
Saturday – Sandwich Bar
Fast Sunday – Waffle Bar

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part. The responsibility for keeping the home clean and tidy should be shared by everyone. President Brigham Young counseled: “Teach little children the principles of order.”

2. Simplifying Our Housework

It takes less time to do a job if we have organized our working conditions first. It helps to arrange equipment before we begin so we do not have to retrace our steps to get something we need. We can also save energy by putting the tools we need within easy reach.

Another way to simplify our work is to clean up after ourselves as soon as we have finished something. Clutter multiplies fast. More things fall accidentally when clutter is left on counters or other work areas. Pots, pans, and dishes are harder to get clean if they have been left sitting with food on them. The sooner we clean up after ourselves, the easier it is.

A third way to make housework easier is to accomplish several things at the same time. Some homemakers wear an apron with pockets. They can walk through the house, tidying up as they go. Efficient homemakers combine some tasks. For example, they talk or plan while working with their hands. They fold clothes while teaching children how to handle a personal problem or while talking on the telephone. It is fun to create ways to use our time efficiently.

3. Planning Helps Get Things Done

Some people are always busy, but they do not seem to accomplish much. We need to decide what is most important and do those things first.

Sometimes we may not finish everything we have planned for the day. If we do the most important things first, however, we have used our time well. As we plan our work, it is important to remember to be flexible. Our plans seldom turn out just as we expect. Little and big emergencies interrupt us during the day, but if we know where we are going, we will accomplish our work. We will feel happy at the end of the day. We will have more time to spend with our families. –

“Prophetic counsel has taught us that “no other success can compensate for failure in the home” and that “the most important of the Lord’s work you will ever do will be within the walls of your own homes”… For many, properly caring for the family is the first area of compromise when other demands arise, since the results of neglect are not always immediately apparent. But nurturing the husband-wife relationship and building a spiritual home require men and women of vision and commitment.”

Donald L. Hallstrom

“In a world of turmoil and uncertainty, it is more important than ever to make our families the center of our lives and the top of our priorities. Families lie at the center of our Heavenly Father’s plan.”

L. Tom Parry

“Scriptures, family home evening, and family prayer will strengthen families. We need to take every opportunity to strengthen families and support one another to stay on the right path.”

Barbara Thompson

“Husband and wife have a solemn responsibility to love and care for each other and for their children. ‘Children are an heritage of the Lord’ (Psalms 127:3). Parents have a sacred duty to rear their children in love and righteousness... Husbands and wives—mothers and fathers—will be held accountable before God for the discharge of these obligations.”

The Family: A Proclamation to the World

“Stay close to your parents, relatives, and friends. They will help you keep a balance in your life. Build relationships with your family and friends through open and honest communication. Good family relationships can be maintained through gentle, loving, thoughtful communication. Remember that often a glance, a wink, a nod, or a touch will say more than words. A sense of humor and good listening are also vital parts of good communication.”

M. Russell Ballard
“Keeping Your Life in Balance”
In the October 2006 General Conference, M. Russell Ballard gave a fantastic talk entitled, “O Be Wise,” which is full of great advice on how we can serve faithfully in our callings. The six key points are:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Focus on People and Principles — not programs.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>. Learn the personalities, strengths, concerns and hopes of those we serve so we can better help them.</td>
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<tr>
<td>. Meetings should focus on the needs of the people.</td>
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<td>. Use email, telephone, or texts to manage routine decisions and scheduling.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Be Innovative</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>. Seek the inspiration of the Spirit to solve problems in ways that will best help those we serve; stay within the guidelines giving in church handbooks.</td>
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<tr>
<td>. Simplify our callings whenever possible.</td>
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<tr>
<td>. Learn to make decisions and take actions; occasionally mistakes may happen, but these will help us make better decisions in the future.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Divide the work and delegate responsibility</th>
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<tr>
<td>. “There is a difference between being responsible for getting the work done and doing the work yourself.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>. Gone are the days when the Relief Society President should be visiting those that have been missed… “Not only is this unwise; it isn’t home or visiting teaching. Home teaching isn’t about numbers or reporting visits to a home… it is about love of people.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>. Assignments should be made, responsibilities should be delegated and members should be allowed to fulfill their stewardship as best they can. Counsel, advise, persuade—but don’t do the work for them.</td>
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<tr>
<td>. Allow others to progress even if mean getting less-than-perfect results.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Eliminate Guilt</th>
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<tr>
<td>. “I hope it goes without saying that guilt is not a proper motivational technique for leaders and teachers in the gospel of Jesus Christ. We must always motivate through love and sincere appreciation, not by creating guilt. I like the thought “Catch others doing something right.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>. Sometimes feelings of guilt can come “when our time and attention is torn between competing demands and priorities. As mortals, we simply cannot do everything at once.” Sometimes family demands or professional responsibilities will need to come first. At other times church responsibilities will be the priority.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Thoughtfully allocate our resources of time, income and energy</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>. “No matter what your family needs are or your responsibilities in the Church, there is no such thing as ‘done.’ There will always be more you can do.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>. We need to be wise in protecting our health and just do the best we can.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>. Know your own capabilities and limitations and pace yourself.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“A word to you leaders about extending responsibilities to members and especially to recent converts. President Hinckley said that every new member of the Church needs a responsibility. Whatever responsibility may be extended should not overwhelm new members but should give them ample opportunity to become comfortable in the Church by learning its doctrine and by rubbing shoulders with friendly members. It should anchor them to the restored gospel through increasing their testimony and giving meaningful service.”

— M. Russell Ballard
“Keeping Your Life in Balance”
“Wherefore, do not spend money for that which is of no worth, nor your labor for that which cannot satisfy”

2 Nephi 9:51

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Balancing Family and Business Travel

Schedule times to do a family devotional, scripture study or family home evening by cell phone or Web Video Chat

Face-to-Face video telephone calls can be very beneficial for young children to interact with parents

Simplify home routines

Send home a Post Card

Show children travel destinations on a map or globe

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Fun Ideas to do with Children during Video Chats:

- Show and Tell – Show something that helps you tell about your day.
- Give a tour of Hotel Room –
- Play “Can You Guess It?” – Place an unknown object really close/far from the camera. Everyone tries to guess the object as it gets pulled into focus.

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“But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”

Matthew 6:33

“And see that all these things are done in wisdom and order; for it is not requisite that a man should run faster than he has strength.”

Mosiah 4:27

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“If we are employed, we have a responsibility to our employer. We are not at liberty to short-change him, as it were, in order to take care of the business of the [church]. We have a responsibility… deal right with our employer.”

Gordon B. Hinckley


“There are some women (it has become very many in fact) who have to work to provide for the needs of their families. To you I say, do the very best you can. I hope that if you are employed full-time you are doing it to ensure that basic needs are met and not simply to indulge a taste for an elaborate home, fancy cars, and other luxuries. The greatest job that any mother will ever do will be in nurturing, teaching, lifting, encouraging, and rearing her children in righteousness and truth. None other can adequately take her place.

“It is well-nigh impossible to be a full-time homemaker and a full-time employee. I know how some of you struggle with decisions concerning this matter. I repeat, do the very best you can.”

Gordon B. Hinckley

“Women of the Church.” October 1996

“I believe that for most of us the best medicine for loneliness is work, service in behalf of others. I do not minimize your problems, but I do not hesitate to say that there are many others whose problems are more serious than are yours. Reach out to serve them, to help them, to encourage them.”

Gordon B. Hinckley

“Women of the Church.” October 1996

“Thou shalt not idle away thy time, neither shalt thou bury thy talent.”

Doctrine and Covenants 60:13

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“Good balance comes in doing things in a timely way and in not procrastinating our preparation or waiting to fulfill our responsibilities until the last minute.”

M. Russell Ballard

“O Be Wise”
“Our birthright—and purpose of our great voyage on this earth—is to seek and experience eternal happiness.”

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“We know that sometimes it can be difficult to keep our heads above water. In fact, in our world of change, challenges, and checklists, sometimes it can seem nearly impossible to avoid feeling overwhelmed by emotions of suffering and sorrow... Two principles that may help you find a path to peace, hope, and joy—even during times of trial and distress.”

1. The Work of Creation
“The desire to create is one of the deepest yearnings of the human soul. No matter our talents, education, backgrounds, or abilities, we each have an inherent wish to create something that did not exist before... Everyone can create.”

2. Being Compassionate
When we reach out to bless the lives of others, our lives are blessed as well. Service and sacrifice open the windows of heaven, allowing choice blessings to descend upon us.”

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Dieter F. Uchtdorf
“Happiness, Your Heritage”

“Often the lack of clear direction and goals can waste our time and energy and contribute to imbalance in our lives... The ride through mortality can be smoother for us when we strive to stay in balance. Our main goal should be to seek “immortality and eternal life” (Moses 1:39). With this as our goal, why not eliminate from our lives the things that clamor for and consume our thoughts, feelings, and energies without contributing to our reaching that goal?... Just do the very best you can each day. Do the basic things and, before you realize it, your life will be full of spiritual understanding that will confirm to you that your Heavenly Father loves you. When a person knows this, then life will be full of purpose and meaning, making balance easier to maintain.”

M. Russell Ballard
“Keeping Your Life in Balance”

“Sometimes the things that distract us are not bad in and of themselves; often they even make us feel good. It is possible to take even good things to excess... anything can become a distraction if we take them to extremes and allow them to dominate our time and our attention at the expense of things that matter most. We need balance in life.”

Dieter F. Uchtdorf
“We are Doing a Great Work and Cannot Come Down”

“Mothers who know do less. They permit less of what will not bear good fruit eternally. They allow less media in their homes, less distraction, less activity that draws their children away from their home. Mothers who know are willing to live on less and consume less of the world’s goods in order to spend more time with their children—more time eating together, more time working together, more time reading together, more time talking, laughing, singing, and exemplifying. These mothers choose carefully and do not try to choose it all.”

Julie B. Beck
“Mothers Who Know”

“When we focus on a few basic objectives, we are more likely to be able to manage the many demands that life makes on us.”

M. Russell Ballard
“Keeping Your Life in Balance”
“Many people, including me, have difficulty finding the time for sufficient rest, exercise, and relaxation. We must schedule time on our daily calendars for these activities if we are to enjoy a healthy and balanced life. Good physical appearance enhances our dignity and self-respect.”

M. Russell Ballard
“Keeping Your Life in Balance”

“I am suggesting that the time has come to get our houses in order … Self-reliance cannot obtain when there is serious debt hanging over a household. One has neither independence nor freedom from bondage when he is obligated to others.”

Gordon B. Hinckley

“Everyone faces financial challenges in life. Through wise budgeting, control your real needs and measure them carefully against your many wants in life. Far too many individuals and families have incurred too much debt... Perhaps none need the principle of balance in their lives more than those who are driven toward accumulating “things” in this world… In my judgment, we never will have balance in our lives unless our finances are securely under control.”

M. Russell Ballard
“Keeping Your Life in Balance”

“We would do well to slow down a little, proceed at the optimum speed for our circumstances, focus on the significant, lift up our eyes, and truly see the things that matter most. Let us be mindful of the foundational precepts our Heavenly Father has given to His children that will establish the basis of a rich and fruitful mortal life with promises of eternal happiness. ... Sisters, diligently doing the things that matter most will lead us to the Savior of the world... In the complexity, confusion, and rush of modern living, this is the “more excellent way.”

Dieter F. Uchtdorf
“Of Things that Matter Most”
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