

Balance in the Fire Life



Is it Possible?

www.bringingbackbrotherhood.org

Why is Balance Important?

“Early on he worked more than 64 hours a week arriving home between 8 and 10 pm each night. The cost of the lifestyle was his marriage. ‘All I worked for was wiped out with one phone call to the divorce lawyer.’” *An excerpt from Faith on the Fire Line by Fellowship of Christian Firefighters.*



How Much Time Do We Have?

- 168 hours in a week -
Work-sideline job- sleep-
extra activities &
commitments=time we have
left over.



- 24 hours X 7 days: 168
hours
- Average Firefighter work
week: 56 hours

- Sideline job: 30 hours
a week

Average Firefighter
sleep cycle: (4-6 hours
a night) 48 hours a
week (should be 56
hours a week to be
healthy)

- Extra Curricular
Activities: Gym,
writing, school: 10
hours a week

How Much Time is Left Over?

- This leaves 24 hours a week for our families. Or to put it in terms that really hit home, 3.85 hours a day with our loved ones!



So We Have A Problem!

- We work too many hours
- We suffer span of control issues (overcommitted)
- We suffer from lack of sleep
- Our relationships suffer
- We have high divorce rates, higher incidences of anxiety/PTSD/depression, alcoholism/substance abuse, and increased suicide risk



In the midst of our search for success & serving others we have forgotten about our first priority: Our family!



What Are We Sacrificing?

- Another class that we teach and we miss another ball game....
- Another hour at the desk late at night and our spouse falls asleep in tears feeling more and more alone...
- Another conference we attend away from family, and our children are growing up...
- Another promotion we earn and responsibility we take on, while our role at home is diminishing and fading...

Starting Over-Reprioritization

- What is most important to you?
- How much time do you invest in ___?
- What is holding you back from spending more time with those that you love?



- The pinnacle of success is not the pinnacle of significance. A thousand lives impacted and saved on the fire ground while we neglect our own family is the ultimate hypocrisy that many of us, including myself, have tried to justify as “part of the job.”





This



Should Never Be More Important
Than Faith & Family!

A New Decision Making Model

- Will this help me in my faith?
- Will this make me a better husband/wife?
- Will this make me a better father/mother?
- Will this make me a better firefighter?



Span of Control For Fire Life:

- Agree **NOT** to commit to something without discussing it as a family first
- Agree **NOT** to commit to something new without releasing something old.
- During times of overload, Agree to be supportive to one another and block off time for family R&R.



Learn to Say NO!

- It's okay to say No and do so respectfully...
- Saying No to new opportunities in order to have time with our loved ones is a sign of true servant leadership.
- Saying No to others basically means saying Yes to your family
- This will not make you popular but it will help you be at peace.



When Your Home, Be Home!

- Limit your fire life from taking away from your home life.
- Turn off work emails
- Limit Social Media time
- Don't answer the phone unless emergent
- Give Your Full Attention to Your Family



Pour Your Passion Into Them!

- You Train intensely, Study Intensely, & Work-out with great intensity
- Why Not Give Your Family That Same Passion & Intensity
- Do they not deserve the best you have to offer?



Balance isn't about achieving equilibrium!

- Sometimes you will find yourself overcommitted
- Sometimes you will find yourself overwhelmed
- Sometimes you will find yourself missing too many family commitments
- Place safeguards in your marriage that allows for both of you to hit the pause button!



Communicate!



Take Back Your Fire House!



- Start making time for simple Joys!
- Take time for YOU!
- Make memories out of moments...
- Remember your God given role versus the title you carry at work

Does this mean everything will be perfect?

• NO!

- But it does mean that you will make better decisions, have more time together, and focus on what is truly important...

Your Family!



Want More Resources?



- Our mission is to strengthen and encourage marriages and families in the fire service through our online resources and communities and our Commitment Weekend events for firefighter couples.
- <http://247commitment.org/>



Fellowship of Christian Firefighters

- The annual married couples conference will be held in Clarkesville, Virginia February 17-19, 2017. Learn how to strengthen your marriage as you serve in the fire service. The conference is designed for any firefighter or first responder who desires to make their marriage thrive.
- <http://www.fellowshipofchristianfirefighters.com/index.cfm?section=1>



- The Mission: to encourage, inspire, and provide the critically valuable resources for those who have chosen to answer the call of their fellow man. When the citizens call 911, we respond. When first responders need help, who do we call? We have the answer: His name is Jesus Christ.
- www.bringingbackbrotherhood.org