

# 5-a-day Ministry

## A longer exploration

### **A tool not a program**

This framework of thinking about 5-a-day is only offered as a tool, for you to work with and use. It is not a program to sign-up to, complete, work towards or feel guilty about missing. You and you alone are responsible for your spirituality and your leadership gifts and skills. 5-a-day is offered as a helpful framework to begin to think about your self-leadership, the looking after you bit of your life in ministry.

### **Not prescriptive**

The last thing most people want is another tick-box, another item on the list, another pressure point to induce even more guilt than we have daily already. 5-a-day is not meant to be prescriptive in any way. If it is anything it is a self-observation; “When I think about it, days in my life that include these things usually feel better than days that don’t.” Once such an observation is made, self-observation, it is then still entirely up to you as to what to do about it.

### **3 not 5!**

5-a-day is purely coincidental. In the context of thinking about healthy ministry, the food standards agency’s golden figure of 5 seemed to have a natural parallel. However, if your observation is that there are 3 things that if I do them daily... then that’s completely fine.

### **Some not all**

I have plenty of days where I get only 4, 3, sometimes only 2 of my 5-a-day. The point of the framework is that it alerts me to what is missing so that midway through my week I have a good idea about why I am not feeling on top of things. Again, 5-a-day is not a program, but a self-observation that if listened to, may well prevent the week going pear shaped, the curacy feeling like a burden and ministry ending in burn-out. And no, I don’t think I am being dramatic. Ministry casualties are plenty and a fair portion can be attributed to lack of self-leadership.

### **A wide variety of fruit and veg!**

The beauty of the food standard agency’s 5-a-day is that there is a huge variety of fruit and veg available to choose from. This is the same for the life-giving activities in ministry; the question is which of them have become daily for you. These may well be very different for other people in different ministry contexts. Even a catch-all activity like prayer will mean different things for different people. For some, daily office with the rest of the ministry team will be a source of life, for other it may not. If attending daily office is compulsory, it may well not become one of your 5-a-day simply because you have little choice about it. Prayer too might not be one of your 5-a-day because it may be consumed by another activity such as walking. Some people find that their best prayer time is when walking and so walking becomes one of the 5, not prayer. The point is that we live in such different contexts and have such a wide spectrum of spirituality that it becomes up to each person how a framework like 5-a-day might work for them.