



Mrs Rebecca Duffin,
History Teacher

Avoiding Burnout in Early Teaching Years

The high number of teachers leaving the profession within the first five years is concerning, so now more than ever, it's important to be intentional about self-care to keep teachers' careers on track.

Young educators need to rest and have boundaries.

I had the privilege of speaking at the Anglican EdComm seminar for new and preservice teachers, where I reminded young educators of the need to rest and have boundaries.

Teaching, like any career, has challenges. However, God's word reminds us that He is with us no matter what happens – both at work and in our private life. God is our strength, and He commands us to rest. I hope to empower new teachers to remember God's word: know when to stop and rejuvenate.

As a new teacher, it can be easy to be overenthusiastic and to work hard without boundaries at the expense of sleep, which may unwittingly lead toward burnout.

It's important that we remember that God tells us to rest, because rest is good. Teachers need to remember this too, especially given expectations that may come from colleagues, students and parents. I believe it is important that teachers be passionate and rise to the significance of their profession. We should also be wise about balancing our work and private lives – the same counsel we would offer students about study and wellbeing.

I pray we remember the importance of caring for each other in the body of Christ, and that we are reminded that God wants us to care for ourselves and for each other. This

includes self care and boundaries for ourselves, and having grace and consideration for our colleagues, our children's teachers, our student's families.

There was definitely a point of time when I thought about leaving teaching. I wanted to make a significant difference to my students and sacrificed my own self care because of a perfectionist nature. I couldn't set my own boundaries. I wanted to fulfil my role to my own high standards, and compromised time with friends and family, and exercising, to strive for that. I had tried to do it on my own. It was only after reaching out to more experienced colleagues and teachers to help me with practical strategies, that I learnt to set clear boundaries guided by God's wisdom, to rest and reengage with life outside the classroom.

In my teaching at Roseville College, I am empowered to speak out about the importance of self care and boundaries for all teachers.

The strategies around self care are more than doing things that work for you alone; they are about doing things that work for everyone. One easy area to set boundaries is emails, because they come in any time of day and there's an expectation that you will reply in a short timeframe.

Our policy around email use at Roseville College is extremely empowering and supportive for staff. A policy may cover simple tactics such as "delay send" or managing the "rules and alerts" around email use. It helps everyone be aware of and enforce boundaries – with students, parents and colleagues – so that teachers can benefit from self care when away from the classroom.