

# A New Normal

How students are re-establishing intentional routines

By CLAIRE NIESHALLA

Just like that, the routine that students have had for the past seven months was completely disrupted by the unexpected global pandemic.

It is a strange new normal, and with only a little over a month left of the school year, everyone is looking to settle in sooner than later. So, what are we to do when there are no longer physical classes to attend, a quiet library to hunker down in for hours or teammates to keep you accountable at practice each day?

Thankfully, there are actions that can be taken to achieve the smoothest transition from an old routine to a new one – personal to virtual.

Now that everything is online, it may be a struggle to find time where your eyes are not looking at a screen. Freshman Emily Clementz said this can be physically and mentally exhausting, and she was confident she was not the only one who feels this way. She has also been figuring out ways to combat this and praises the simple, yet difficult act of taking breaks.

“Every time you step away from your homework – but not in a procrastinating or lazy way – you can use it as a chance to trust that God is big enough to allow you a break and also help you complete your work,” Clementz said.

Not only does she view these temporary breaks as a pause from homework, but more importantly, as an opportunity to acknowledge the Lord’s faithfulness amidst all that is going on. To Clementz, intentional routine does not mean constant work, but deliberate effort rewarded with moments to be still.

Furthermore, it allows an excellent opportunity to create time for activities outside of school. As a Taylor student, Clementz realizes how important this is to the vitality of a community, family and personal well-being. She encourages students to schedule time into their routine to play a game or go on a walk with your family.

Instead of viewing these times as inconvenient, Clementz finds herself praying.

“God, thank you for this time of regeneration, and I trust you to give me the strength to finish everything that I need to get done for school.”

She reminds us through this prayer that our schoolwork is not ours to will, and we are wasting time by attempting to go it on our own. It takes being in a posture of thankfulness towards God, the giver of all good gifts and sustainer of peace and joy in this time of fear and the unknown.

Practicing a daily routine also motivates us to stay in a rhythm, empowering us to avoid procrastination by keeping up with assignments and responsibilities, as well as being more successful academically, socially and physically.

Freshman Esther Michael is passionately invested in the Taylor community, but she has used her time at home to settle into a new normal by establishing these practical actions for an intentional routine:

- Wake up at a consistent time every day.

- Have a daily task or two that doesn't change. (Ex: reading your Bible, brushing your teeth, eating breakfast, etc.)
- Make sure to also schedule something in your day that you enjoy doing, so not everything feels like a chore.
- Have someone who is keeping you accountable (friends, parents, etc.) to stick to your goal of getting up on time, hitting those daily tasks or whatever it may be.
- Block out specific study/homework times during the day. Pretend you have a class or something and don't think you can do anything else during that block.
- As you're going to sleep, think of one thing you're excited to do tomorrow. Try to remember that same thing when you wake up.
- Start small, with one or two things you're trying to do every day. Then build on that.

Along with taking time to take breaks, these simple action items could be the power moves we need to help establish a desired or necessary routine during this time.

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