

# The Non-Negotiables in the Pastor's Week

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There may not ever be a 'normal' week in the life of a pastor. Much varies from week to week. But amidst all of the uncertainties and distractions, the man of God must commit himself to a few non-negotiables in the ministry.

## **1. Soul-Warming Communion with Jesus Christ.**

The pastor must delight his soul with spiritual food each day. If he neglects anything, let it be anything but this. David cried out that there is one thing that he seeks, that he may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of his life and to behold the beauty of the Lord (Ps 27:4). The Apostle Paul said that he wanted to know Christ (Phil 3:10). Moses entreated the Lord that he would see God's glory (Ex 33:18). The shepherd who leads God's flock must make certain that he leads the flock by exemplifying a close walk with Jesus Christ. That is, the pastor must desire Christ. He must long for more of Christ. He must pray to Christ. He must yearn for eternal, sinless fellowship with Christ. He should warm his soul each day as he communes with Christ. This does not include the commentaries and exegetical helps for sermon preparation. This, rather, is the man of God, alone with God, filling his heart and soul with God. Whatever else happens and whatever else presses, let every pastor diligently ensure that this takes place in his daily life.

## **2. Diligent Studying of the Bible.**

The man of God must follow the lead of Ezra who studied the Law, he practiced the Law, and then he taught it in Israel (Ezra 7:10). To study the Law meant to seek the Law, to passionately desire it. The preacher must study to show himself approved; a workman who never needs to be ashamed (2 Tim 2:15). To preach demands that the man studies. To herald is to sit still and research. To speak for God means that the man must have the words of God from the Word of God so that he can faithfully open his mouth as the messenger of God to the people of God. This absolutely requires diligent and careful study of the Scriptures. No normal man can adequately preach the Word on Sunday if he prepared the sermon minutes before that day or the previous day. It is near impossible for the Word of God to soak in the man of God's soul and take hold of him if he begins studying the day before he preaches. He must diligently study, faithfully research, acutely examine, carefully scrutinize, and prayerfully observe the text. If he neglects anything during the week, let the pastor never omit the diligent study of Scripture.

## **3. Frequent Praying to the Lord.**

Faced with much opposition, Nehemiah prayed to the Lord to strengthen his hands (Neh 6:9). When needing to make decisions in the presence of others, Nehemiah prayed (Neh 2:4). Paul prayed constantly (1 Thess 1:2-3). No man of God prays too much. No shepherd of God ever runs out of items to bring before God's Throne. The minister who serves the flock of God must frequently pray to the Lord. As Paul modeled, he did not cease giving thanks for the Ephesian believers praying that they would have greater knowledge of God and His graces (Eph 1:15-17). A shepherd cannot bring the sheep to the Lord frequently enough. The pastor must pray for all of his flock. As the Israelite priest of old carried the names of Israel on his shoulders, so God's undershepherd must bear the names of God's blood-bought sheep on his heart frequently. If the pastor omits anything, let him never forsake his prayer life.

## **4. Zealous Pursuing of Christian Holiness.**

The man of God constantly finds nourishment in the words of faith (1 Tim 4:6). The man of God must take pains with Godly things and 'be in them' (1 Tim 4:15). He must discipline himself for godliness (1 Tim 4:7). He must pursue holiness knowing that God requires this to see the Lord (Heb 12:14). This man resolves to set nothing before his eyes that is unclean (Ps 101:3). Men of God must pursue righteousness and godliness (1 Tim 6:11; 2 Tim 2:22). Just as Christ unswervingly followed the Father and did His will, so the shepherd of Christ's flock must zealously and diligently pursue holiness. This man fights against sin. He endeavors to repent of all known sin. He carefully lives in such a way so as to never live and walk in any known sin. He mortifies the evil in his life. He pursues Christ, loves Christ, looks to Christ, worships Christ, seeks Christ, and lives with the anticipation of seeing Christ. If he neglects anything in the Christian ministry, the pastor must never decrease his zeal for Christ-exalting holiness and purity.