

STATISTICS ON PASTORS: 2016 UPDATE

RESEARCH ON THE HAPPENINGS IN PASTORS' PERSONAL AND CHURCH LIVES.

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"So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, "It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word." Acts 6:2-4

A pastor is a person called by God to serve in ministering and leading the people in his or her care in discipleship, to worship closer to Christ as Lord. A pastor is as a shepherd, that lays the model of Christ on their people for replication. The word "pastor" comes from the Latin meaning "to pursue or lead a flock to 'pasture' for grazing." We may not be driving our church folks to the grasslands; nevertheless, being a shepherd in a church means being God's commissioned servant leader--Priest, Minister, or ordained Elder--and leading others to Christ. A biblically-minded minister of the Lord will truly desire the knowledge of God's Word and its proper application in our lives for His Glory. There will be challenges, issues, and setbacks; however, the calling is a great honor and the reward is eternal (Jeremiah. 3:15; Matthew 9:36; 25:32; 26:31; Mark 6:34; 14:27; Luke 2:8, 15, 18, 20; John. 10:2-16; Acts 6:1-7; 20:28; Ephesians 4:11; Philippians 1:27; 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; Hebrews 13:20; James 1:22; 1 Peter 2:25; 5:1-5).

So, what is going on with today's servants of the Church?

Since first studying pastors in the late 80's, we are seeing significant shifts in the last 20 years on how pastors view their calling and how churches treat them.

We have seen that although the work hours are still long and the pay below a living wage, pastors are much happier with their congregations and their marriages are looking stronger. Churches, for the most part, treat their pastors better than we saw in previous studies. Significant strides have been made. The data we collected has pointed to the causes and motivations of stress, burnout, and church dysfunction. Some of these include misguided leadership notions from clergy, laity, and church leadership, as well as a lack of awareness of what are the true calls and duties of a pastor. The statistics do not show a significant variation. Many churches still place unreasonable requirements upon pastors. Pastors, in turn, are overworking themselves to appease congregational expectations while facing volunteer apathy, criticism, and a fear of change.

In 2015-16, we conducted several major studies involving 8,150 participants using randomly selected ministers. The studied included those identified as Evangelical or Reformed. Data sources included 163 long-form handouts with 20 questions, 30 personal interviews, several social media polls, and over 900 alternate email surveys to check validity as well as to retest results from different samplings. The goal: fact-finding, causes, and motivations.

A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE STATISTICS:

- 79% of Evangelical and Reformed pastors are happier personally
- 88% of churches are treating their pastors better, too
- 88% have a high view of Christ
- 75% are better at their spiritual formation
- 57% are more satisfied in their calling
- However, 54% of pastors still work over 55 hours a week
- 57% can't pay their bills
- 54% are overworked and 43% are overstressed
- 53% feel seminary had not properly prepared them for the task.
- 35% battle depression
- 26% are overly fatigued
- 28% are spiritually undernourished and 9% are burnt-out
- 23% are still distant to their families
- 18% work more than 70 hours a week and face unreasonable challenges
- 12% are belittled.
- 3% have had an affair
- **90% feel honored to be a pastor!**

Thus, there is a way to get it right. Pastors need to delegate and train more; church boards and congregations must understand the proper roles of their pastors and learn to work with them, not against.

Synopsis: The biggest problems with pastors and the churches they serve, stem from a lack of desire to please Christ, a lack of love for one another; from a lack of authentic spiritual growth, and a lack of prayer. Take care of these, and you will be *an incredibly faithful and abundant church and a content pastor.*

QUESTIONS:

1. How much time do you spend in prayer daily?
2. Are you happy and fulfilled as a pastor?
3. Have you ever had an inappropriate liaison with a church member?
4. Do you feel that Seminary or Bible College properly prepared you for ministry?
5. How central is Christ's life and death in your church's teachings?
6. How consistent has your church treated you as the pastor?
7. If you are full time, how many hours a week do you work?
8. Have you ever considered leaving the ministry at one time?
9. Do you receive a livable wage?
10. How much time a week do you spend in personal devotions / spiritual growth outside of sermon preparations?
11. What are the biggest challenges you face in your church?
12. If you can have a 'do over,' would you choose another career other than Full Time Ministry?
13. Other collected data.

RESPONSES

How much time do pastors spend in prayer daily? 50% more than an hour a day!



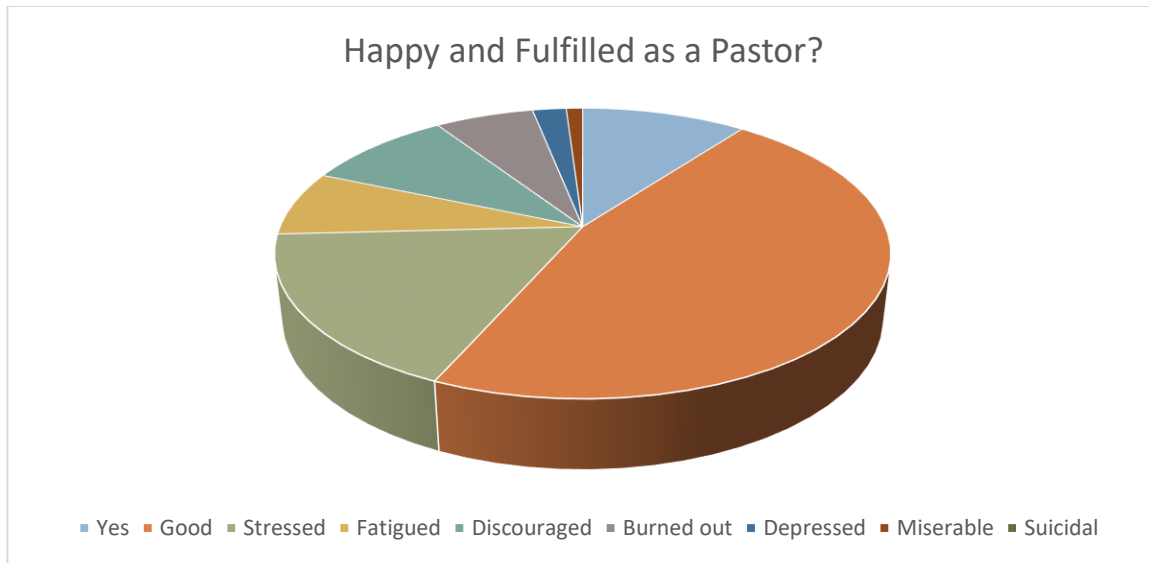
Replies	Frequency
Over 3 hours a day,	3.13%
Over 2 hours a day,	16.67%
Over 1 hours a day,	29.64%
Over 1/2 hour a day,	26.60%
Less than ½ hour a day,	18.75%
Less than 15 minutes a day,	5.21%

(Personal prayer, prayer with others, and corporate prayer.)

The effectiveness of a pastor and a church is laid upon the foundation that holds it all up, our Lord and our then our communication with Him is prayer. We used this question to assess the pastors and churches shared spiritual condition. The ministry starts and rests on the spiritual condition of the leaders, their devotion to Christ, and what flows from that devotion. For ministry to be blessed and effective, we must be in healthy relationships with our Lord and with one another in communication and accountability. We must not be independent of ourselves, but dependent on our Lord Jesus Christ and to one another.

The pastor cannot have an effective ministry unless prayer is the focal point! We cannot meet the approval of God without prayer! How can we receive His blessings when we leave God out of the loop? If we never bother with God, ourselves, then how can we serve Him and lead others in His direction?

Are you happy and fulfilled as a pastor? 57% say they are! Yet, 43% stressed, 26% overly fatigued, and 9% burnt-out!

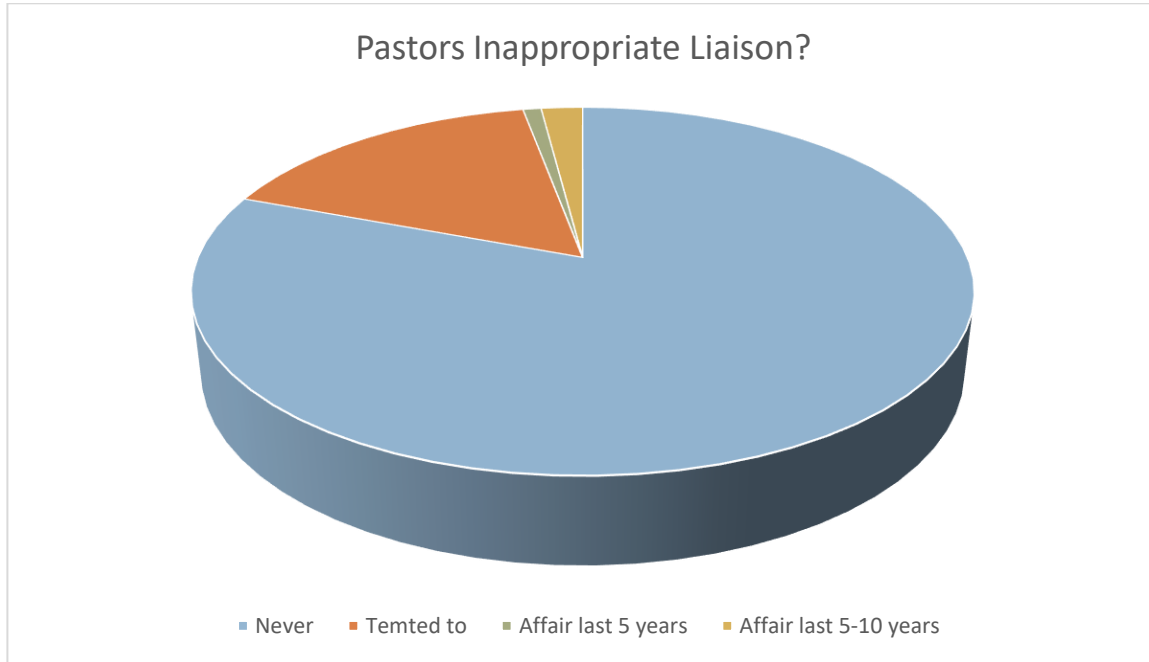


Replies	Frequency
A Fantastic Yes,	10.31%
Very Good,	46.34%
Stressed,	17.53%
Fatigued,	7.22%
Discouraged,	9.28%
Burned out,	6.18%
I am depressed,	2.11
I am miserable,	1.03%
Suicidal,	0.00%

(90% feel honored to be a pastor, but pressed-in duty gives a lower fulfillment. Even though the result shows a 0%, there are pastors who feel suicidal and who are just not responding to this survey.)

We found that pastors are happier than ever, even under stress and treated far better than we seen before. However, the key to a pastors’ contentment is how we look to Christ, not to situations, and declare rough patches as joy. We are to be content and satisfied, to face them, and then learn and grow from them. This does not mean giving up and do nothing; it means to refocus our energies into productivity and faith-not questions and bitterness. It is to have our convictions and fulfillment in Christ (Psalm 32:7-9; Proverbs 15:13; James 1:1-4).

Have pastors ever had an inappropriate liaison with a church member? Yes, less than 3%! (University of Chicago, National Opinion Research Center, 2006, reported that the national average for an affair is actually 15% to 20% for non-Christians, and there are no reliable stats for Christians, perhaps ½ of that number.)

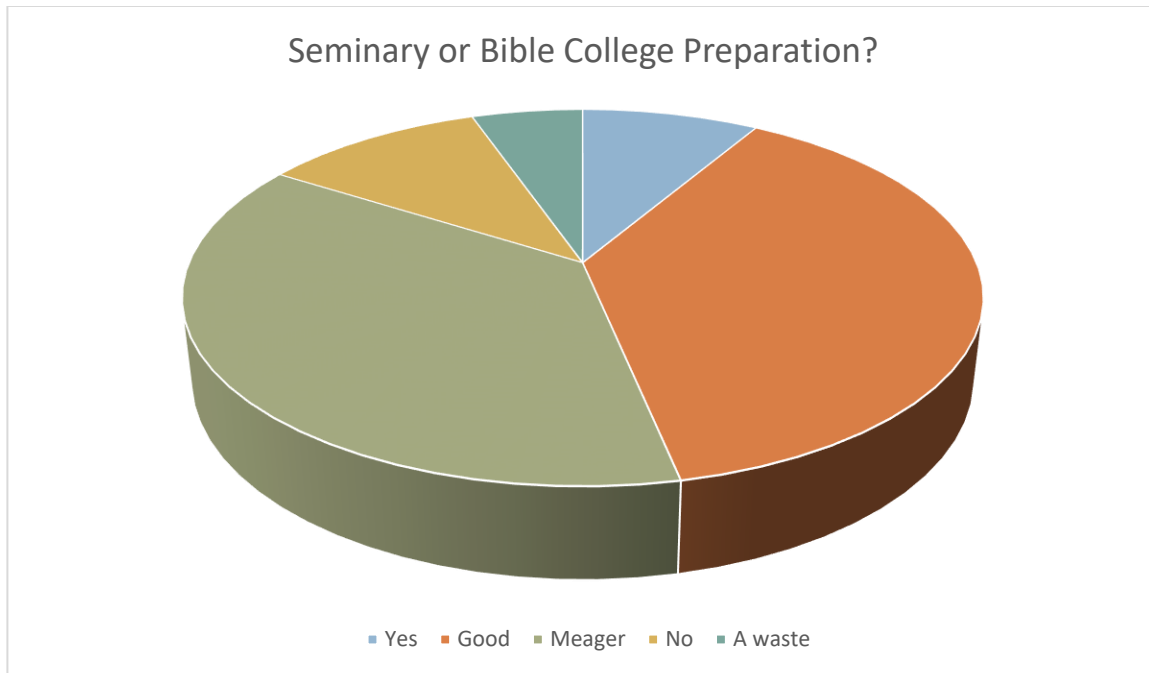


Replies	Frequency
Never or just tempted,	81.27%
I have been tempted and started to, but did not act,	16.49%
I had an extra-marital affair in the last 5 years,	0.90%
I had an extra-marital affair the last 5-10 years,	2.06%

(Taking away the mainline and 'dead' churches' responses we did in the 90's greatly lower this stat from other studies.)

This was a pleasant surprise. Previous studies showed percentages far greater. But, it is all about who you sample. We found that pastors and churches are far more aware and better safeguards are in place. But, when there is a focus on pastor's conferences like what we did in 2000, and those pastors are hurting and many in dysfunctional churches, we get dysfunctional numbers. If we just look at vibrant churches, we get pastors reporting only no. This time we sought a wider sampling seeking more real numbers.

Do pastors feel that Seminary or Bible College properly prepared them for ministry? 53%, No!

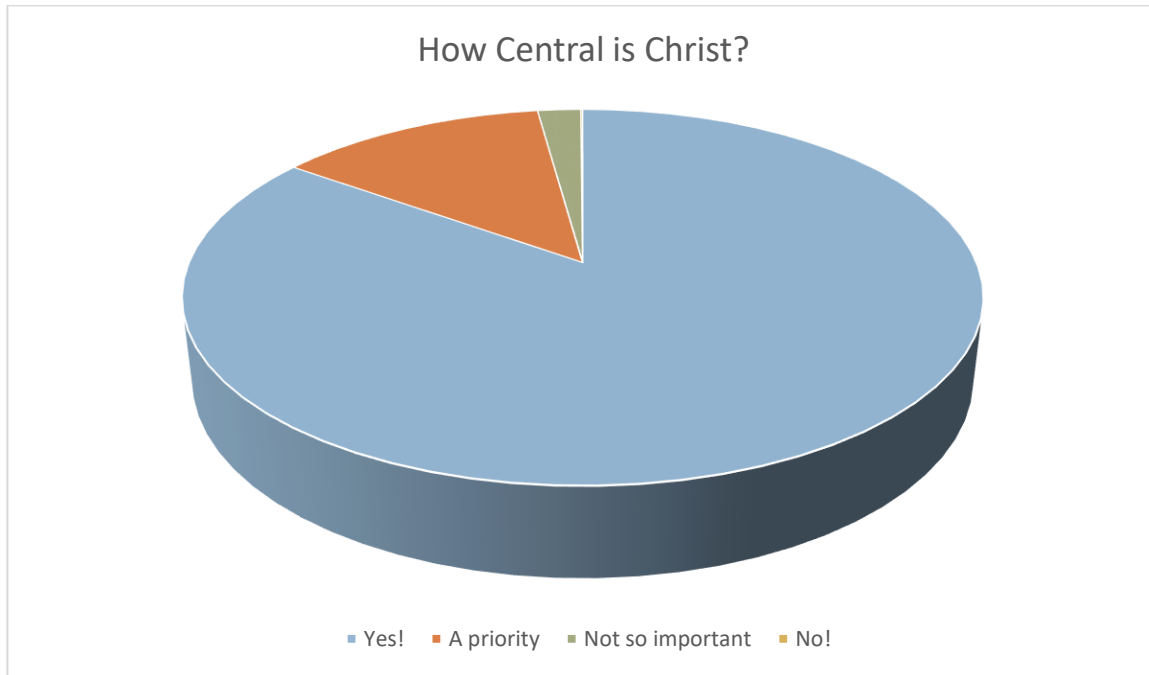


Replies	Frequency
Yes, I was turnkey prepared,	8.52%
Good, I was given the tools,	38.21%
Meager, I just had to do my own learning to prepare,	37.22%
Not at all prepared,	10.70%
A total waste of time,	5.35%

(Are pastors properly equipped to lead their congregations?)

We have seen an improvement since our last Seminary study in 2006. The better seminaries, teach their students good, biblical, and practical theology. They graduate faith-hardy church leaders who can lead others to the deep precepts of our Lord, and create healthy, well-balanced churches that are strong forces of the Kingdom. Yet, most seminary courses are seen as irrelevant to the type of ministry the students, who are in the ministry now, face. Many good, conservative seminaries are graduating aspiring Christian ministers and leaders who have little faith or practical tools on how to pastor and lead.

How central is Christ's life and death in the pastor's teachings? 85% Central!

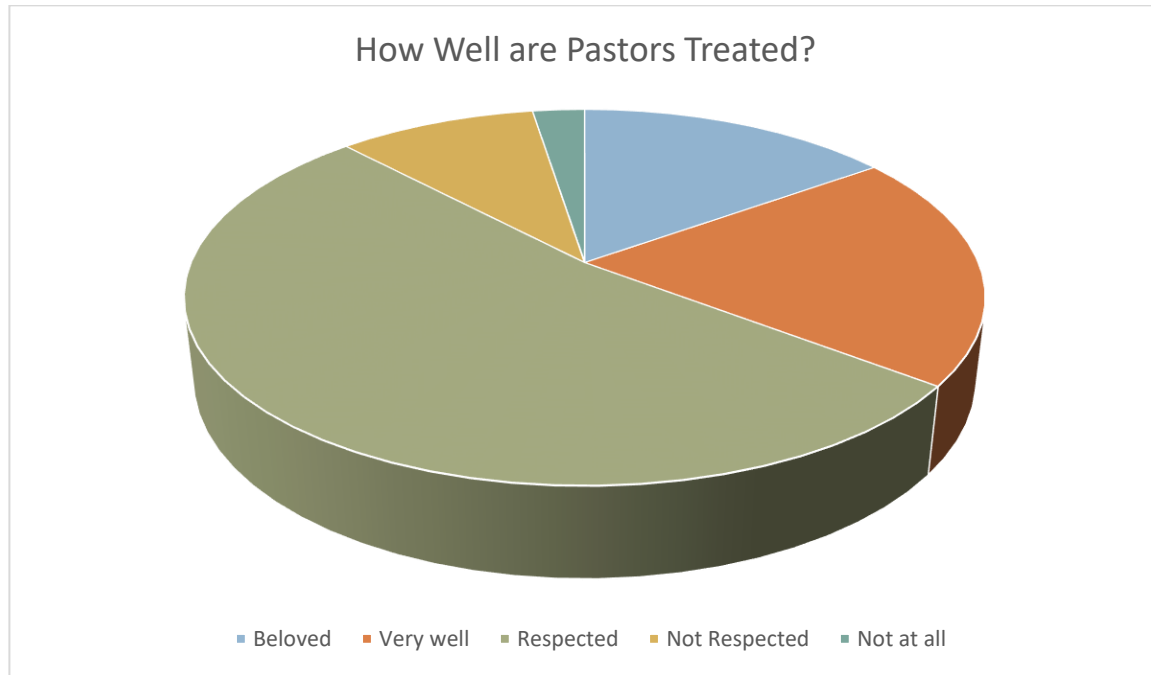


Replies	Frequency
Yes, Without the Resurrection there is no reason for the Church,	84.87%
It is one of our priorities,	12.96%
I do not think it is that important,	2.08%
Not at all,	0.09%

(This measures the receptivity to the Lordship of Christ correlated to pastors personal lives and how leaders respect their pastors.)

Two of the primary foundations of the Gospel Message are who Jesus is and what He did on the cross for us. So, if we do not have a high view of Christ as LORD, then what are we about? That is why many mainline denominational churches are collapsing. They have no real purpose anymore. We have to trust in our Good Shepherd to lead us to the good pastures, and we are to do our part with gratitude and diligence and not run away from His pen. We also are called to be led by the Word and not by our pride or by false teachers, the thieves who would rob us of God's instructions and replace them with nonsense and dangerous cliffs from which we could fall.

How consistent has the church treated their pastor? 88% Are Treated Well!

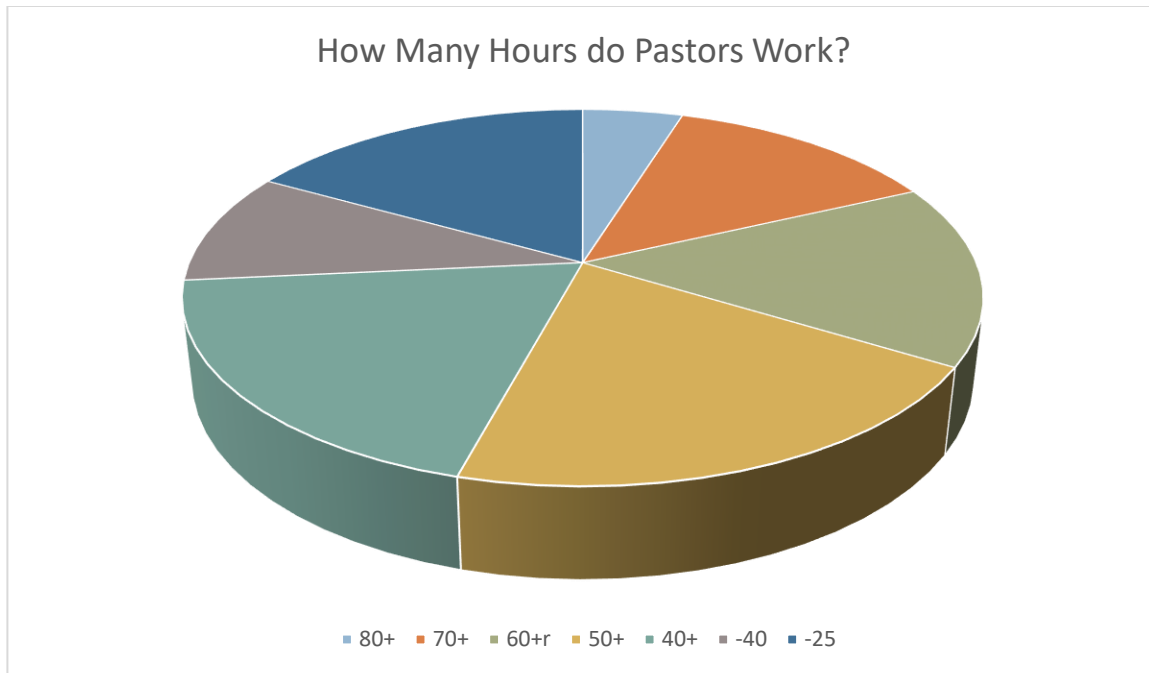


Replies	Frequency
I am beloved,	15.15%
I am well cared for,	20.20%
I am listened to and respected,	52.58%
I am not respected,	9.56%
I am a stray dog they do not want around,	2.51%

(This gives us a rating on pastor appreciation.)

Pastors are more appreciated than ever! When we first started to do these studies in the late 80's through 2000, we saw many pastors broken, depressed, and very few satisfied. We were the hired hands, and churches either overly adored and fixated on their pastor or, in most cases, were treated terribly. We see there have been great strides within the church leaderships, denominational managements and realistic job descriptions and expectations. This, along with many organizations sounding the alarm, pastors are in a better place now, than ever before.

How many hours a week do full time pastors work? 54% more than 55, 18% more than 70 hours a week!

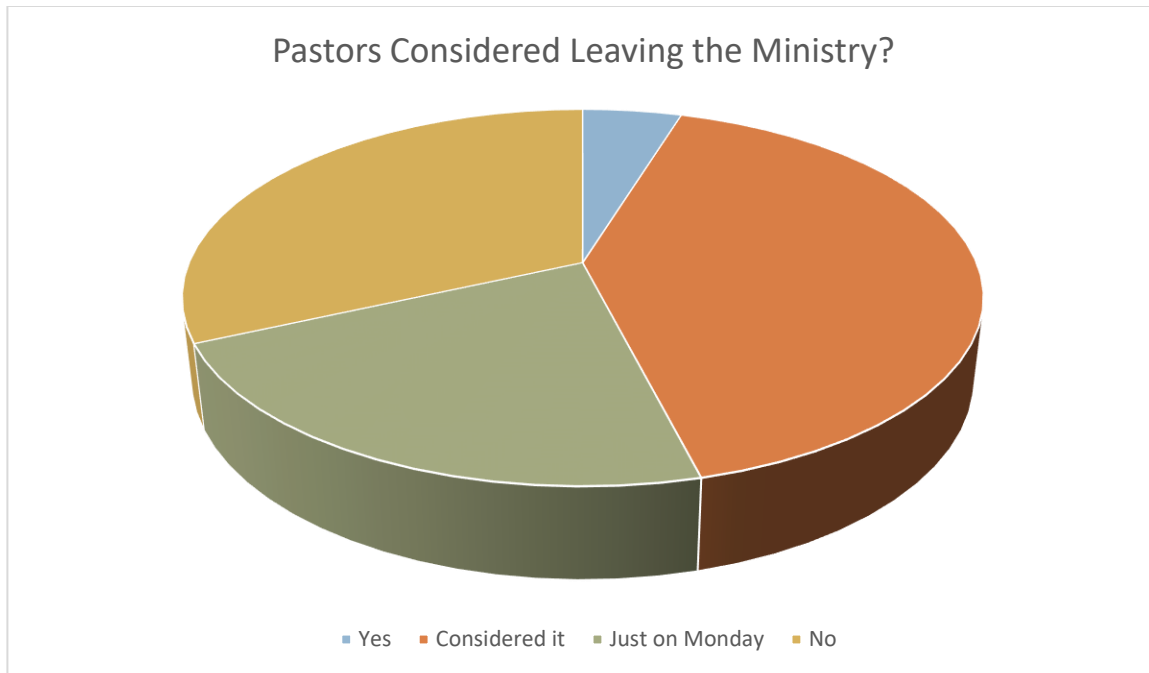


Replies	Frequency
More than 80?	4.82%
More than 70?	13.25%
More than 60?	15.66%
More than 50?	20.48%
More than 40?	19.28%
Less than 40?	9.64%
Less than 25?	16.87%

(This measures the receptiveness for burnout.)

Although we see improvement in how much time in a week that pastors work, they are still way over taxed in stress and work hours. This is an area that needs attention. The families are not seeing needed quality time, and churches do not get their best by overwork.

Have pastors ever considered leaving the ministry at one time? 77%, prefer to stay!

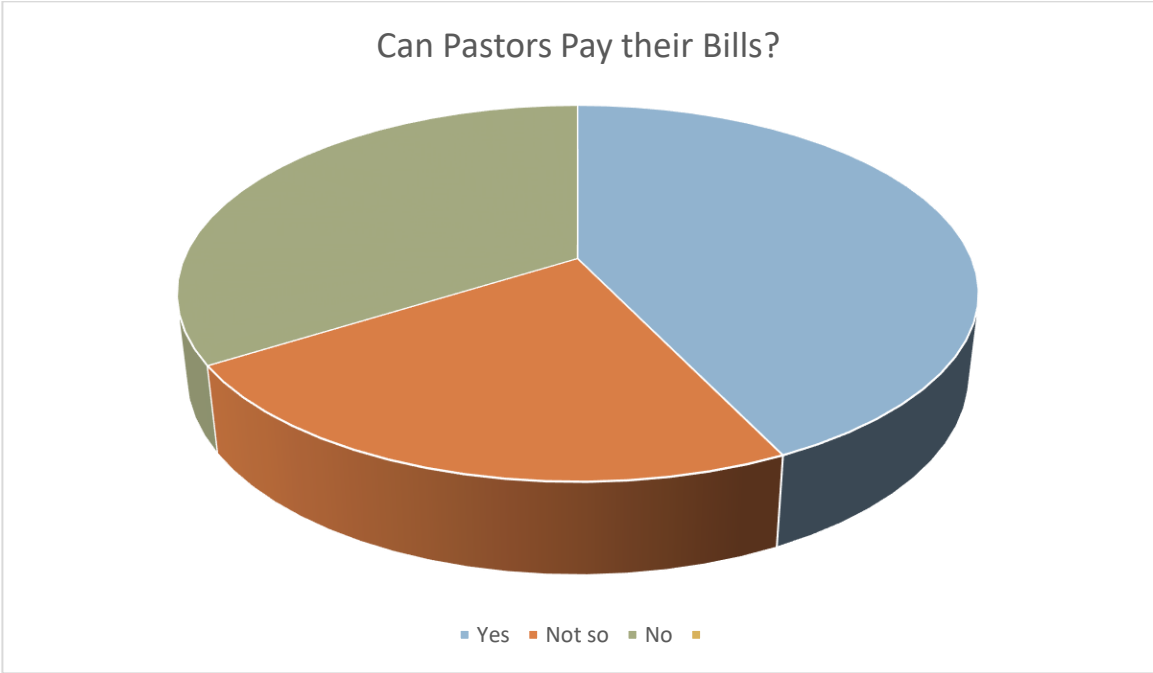


Replies	Frequency
Yes, looking now,	4.76%
Yes, I have seriously considered it (18% will leave the ministry for a better, less stressful job, 23% will not leave),	41.27%
No, just on Monday, I quickly get back to it,	22.21%
No,	31.76%

(Are pastors in the right profession and call?) (This does not include pastors who already left the ministry, many in the first 5-10 years, in which case creates a very different stat.)

Pastors are staying more and longer. What we learned from our interviews, it is about the honor of the call. Jesus plainly tells us that who we are, we are all the sheep, pastors are the sheep in front, He is the Shepherd, we are His, He is for us. Jesus is the One, True, Living Lord God of the universe who condescends into humanity to give us mercy, guidance, and salvation from a caring, loving, nurturing, yet The Most Holy and Sovereign LORD. When pastors fully realize and seize this responsibly, they will stay, even in the mud of it all.

Do pastors receive a livable wage? 57% No!

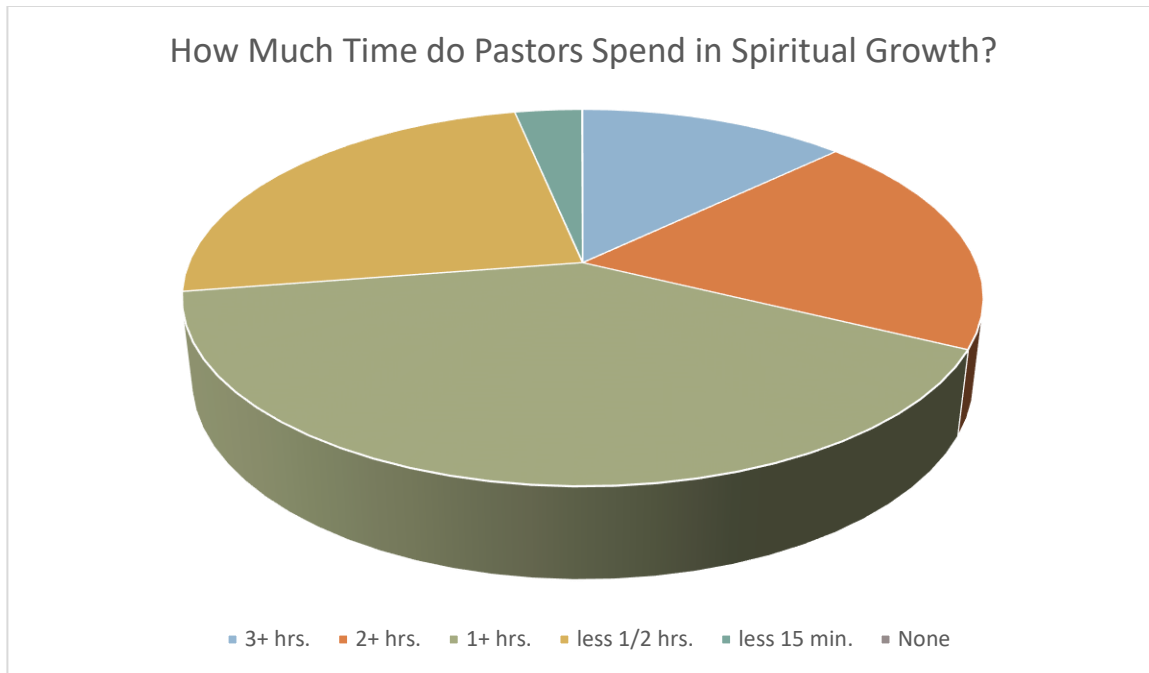


Replies	Frequency
Yes, I can pay my bills and take care of my family,	42.86%
Not really, on a very tight budget,	23.21%
No, I am very stressed and/or work a second job,	33.93%

(How does money and budget stress the pastor’s family.)

Authentic pastors do not go into real impacting ministry for the money. It is all about the call and our response. However, if pastors are so overstressed by finances, they can’t put on the front burner the priorities of ministry, community and church.

How much time a week do pastors spend in personal devotions and spiritual growth outside of sermon preparations? 72% Over an hour a Day!



Replies	Frequency
Over 3 hours a day,	12.90%
Over 2 hours a day,	19.35%
Over 1 hour a day,	40.29%
Less than ½ hour a day,	24.19%
Less than 15 minutes a day,	3.23%
None,	0.04%

(Indicates the spiritual vitality of the pastor.)

We see the greater number of prayer time directly impacts the greatest amount of personal satisfaction in ministry and church health! There is nothing more significant or momentous a pastor or church can do on their part than to be more centered on Christ. And, we do this best when we are in communication with Christ our Lord, so we can be healthy and growing. And in turn have healthy and growing churches. Prayer is the ultimate *change agent* God uses to impact us with His Holy Spirit and Truth! Then, we can be impacting upon others with synergy.

What are the biggest challenges pastors face in their church? 45% are Volunteers and Change!



Replies

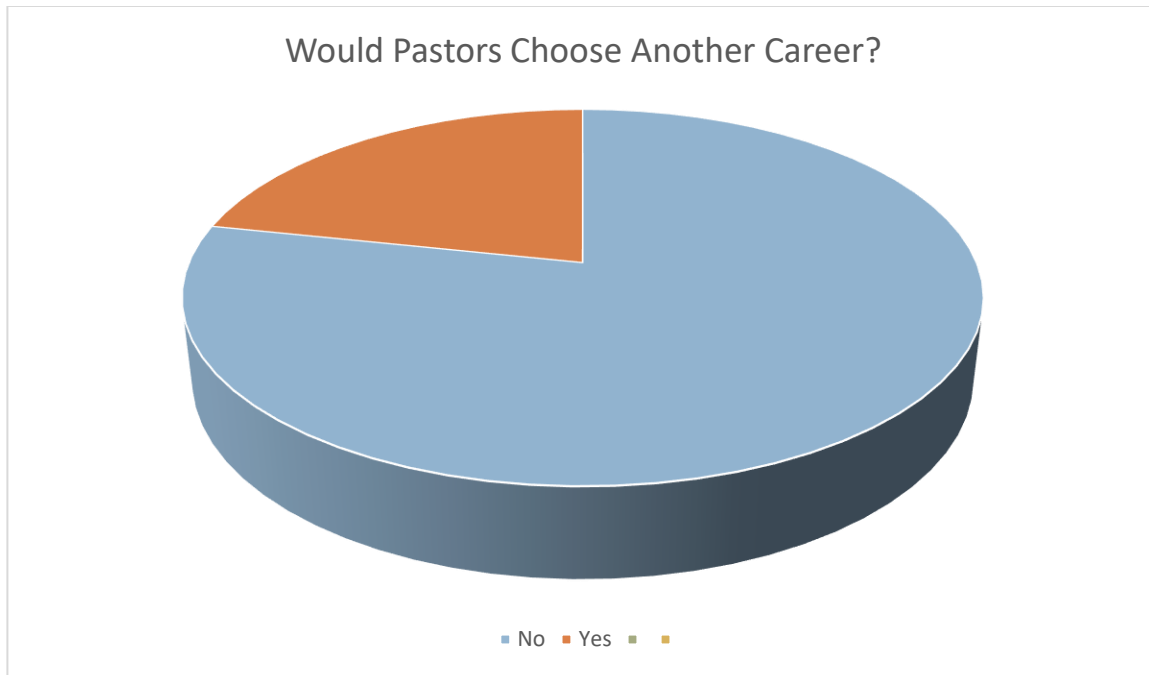
Frequency

Recruiting Volunteers,	24.04%
Leading my People through Change (this includes apathy, fighting dead traditions and members focusing on the wrong or meaningless things),	21.41%
Developing New Leaders	19.24%
Balancing an Unrealistic Expectations,	12.93%
Handling Congregational Conflicts,	10.03%
Handling Criticism,	6.73%
Staff Conflicts,	5.62%

(Where does the lion's share of stress come from?) (Pastors also reported a struggle to create a quality and impacting sermon every week.)

Pastors are facing the same challenges, since the Early Church. We found when pastors realize they are a shepherd, God's commissioned leader, stress goes way down. Our Guide is Jesus, the Holy One who gently leads us and guides His leaders to care for His flock, the Church. Consider that Jesus comes to us as the Good Shepherd, as we have all gone astray; He brings us back to His fold (Psalm 23; 79:13, 95:7, 80:1, 100:3; Isaiah 40:11; 53:6; Matthew 14: 13-21; John 10:11; Acts 20:28; Heb. 13:20; James 5: 19-20).

If pastors were given a 'do over,' would they choose another career other than full time ministry? 78%, No!



Replies	Frequency
No. I am Happy where I am in my calling,	78.33%
Yes. If I can, I would never have entered the ministry as a career,	21.67%

(Validity and corresponding question.) (We also asked if they were ever divorced; we did not get a significant response to be statistically accurate. The data showed 2%. The divorce rate in their churches tends to be under 3%, drastically different than other studies and reporting. This needs wider research.)

Pastors want to stay in their call and in ministry! The content pastor's we interviewed knew who they are and Who Christ is, and thus look to Him over difficulties. Effective leadership is always in following Christ first and in all things operate in gentleness; a Fruit of the Spirit. It is to be more than just a personality; it is to be who we are from the work of the Holy Spirit within us (Proverbs 15:1; Philippians 4: 5; Ephesians 4:1-2; 2 Timothy 2:24; 1 Thessalonians 2:7). When we saw this occur, the churches were prospering.

OTHER GATHERED DATA

We collected these insights from interviews, consulting data, social media polls and pastors conference surveys (Not indicative of a national random sampling like those above, but provides insights and warnings):

Pastors are happier, but not healthier. Congregations are much more in tune with what is going on with their church leadership and their pastor's needs; but, we have a way to go.

- 65% of pastors feel their family is in a 'glass house' and fear they are not good enough to meet expectations.
- 35% of pastors feel their churches are in sync to their family needs.
- 56% of pastor's families are pleased with their church.
- 24% of family's resent the church and its effects on their family.
- 52% of pastors feel they are overworked and can't meet their church's unrealistic expectations.
- 44% of pastors feel their churches are in sync to ministry agendas.
- 58% of pastors feel they do not have any good true friends.
- 42% of pastors feel their church, empowers them to have a life outside of the church.
- 34% of pastor's battle discouragement on a regular basis. 66% do not.
- 35% of pastor's battle depression or fear of inadequacy. 65% do not (This is an opposite correspondence from our last major study in 1992 and 2000).
- 27% of pastors stated they have no one to turn to if they are facing a crisis. 73% do.
- 60% of pastor's wives feel their church teats their family well
- 22% of pastor's wives feel the ministry places undue expectations on their family.
- 26% of pastor's wives feel church is a prime source of stress for their family.
- 63% of pastor's wives feel finances is a prime source of stress for their family.
- 45% of pastors spend 10-15 hours a week in sermon preparation, 25% spend 15 to 20 hours, 25% less than 10 hours per sermon. In contrast to the 'masters,'* John MacArthur is, 32 hours, John Piper is 14 to 16 hours, Tim Keller is 14-16 hours a week. But then again, these guys have it down, whereas a more inexperienced pastor may take longer, and a lazy or ineffective pastor will be under 8 (* pastoralized.com). (Pastors also reported a struggle to create a quality and impacting sermon every week.)
- 50% of Pastors reported they spend an average of 3 to 4 hours a week in needless meetings! 25% spend more than 5 hours a week!
- 77% of pastors spend 20 hours a week or more with their families; this is significantly up from previous studies!
- An observation, not researched, of many pastors today, perhaps 50%, is that they are very unhealthy, overweight, with health problems stemming from poor food intake and excess junk food, a lack of exercise, and to a lesser extent, alcohol. Three doctors I talked to with who see a lot of pastors have told me there is a significant increase of hypertension, obesity, cardiovascular problems, and depression.

PARTICIPANTS

We conducted several major studies of 8,150 participants using randomly selected ministers--those identified as Evangelical or Reformed--from various databases composed of Christian radio station lists, proprietary lists, random Google searches, and international ministries. We used twelve short questions for optimal receptivity and results. We then collected 163 20-question long-form handouts and conducted 30 interviews with pastors at various regional conferences to dig deeper and assess the causes and motivations of the findings. We then conducted several Facebook polls and over 900 email surveys to check validity and retest results from different samplings. The accuracy, relevancy, and soundness of these studies remained true and are suitable to point out the baselines of what churches and pastors need to be aware of.

The study took place between January 2015 and July 2016 and includes random samplings of 8,150 participants who were employed as a full-time senior Pastor or staff Pastor, like an associate, from 31 States and 20 Countries. We only looked at Ordained ministers who considered themselves Evangelical or Reformed (we do not have a full denominational breakdown, but they include CRC, URC, OP, EPC, PCA and other Presbyterian, Evangelical Free, Covenant, Transformational, CCC, Missiological, Calvary Chapel, Nondenominational, and various Baptist's and other Independents). There were 5,500 (68%) from the United States and 2,250 (32%) international. 59% were the Senior or lead or solo Pastor. (Previous studies we conducted also had a significant number of mainline denominations. We did not survey them for this study).

States include: Alabama (3%), Arizona (1.2%), California (14.8%), Colorado (3%), South Carolina (3%), North Carolina (5%) Connecticut (2%), Florida (3%), Georgia (2.5%), Idaho, Illinois (3%), Kansas (1.3%), Indiana, (6.3%) Iowa (1.3%), Massachusetts (1.2%), Michigan (2.3%), Minnesota (2.5%), Missouri (2.4%), Montana (2.2%), New Jersey (6%), New York (3.2%), Ohio (6%), Oregon (3%), Pennsylvania (3%), Pittsburgh, Tennessee, Texas (4%), Virginia (3%), West Virginia, Washington (6.2%), and Wisconsin.

Counties include: Burma, Canada (4%), Caribbean, England (1.4%), Europe (1.3%), Ghana, India (4.3%), Ireland, Kenya (3%), Kuwait, New Zealand, Nigeria (3%), Pakistan, Philippines (5.5%), Romania, Rwanda, South Africa (2.1%), United Kingdom and Uganda. (We attempted to sample Latin American pastors, in Spanish and Portuguese, and received no response yet.)

FINDINGS

These recent findings show a paradigm shift on how congregations and Elders are treating pastors. Pastors are much happier and content in their roles! Most churches are better at having realistic job descriptions and allowing them to take at least one full day off and two weeks of vacation on average.

Pastors are much happier today as compared to 15 and 25 years ago; congregations are treating pastors better. But, many can't pay their bills and are still overworked, overstressed and burnt-out; thus, we have a way to go to get it right.

There is a direct correlation to how pastors manage their spiritual formation and the health of the church and the health of the pastor's home.

There is a direct correlation to the happiness of the pastor and the vitality of Biblical doctrine in conjunction with the spiritual formation of the church leadership. Yet, most pastors are expected to be on call 24/7.

Seminaries and Bible Colleges have done a poor job at properly preparing ministers of the Word. Yet, they appear to be better than they were 20 years ago. Some, like Fuller, BIOLA and AZUSA have made tremendous strides to be more relevant to the true needs of the Church. However, too many pastors are graduating with Graduate Degrees in Divinity or a Biblical Science who do not know how to build their faith or know the Word, or how to teach or disciple Christ's precepts, or how to lead and manage a church. Other key areas are missed, including how to develop leaders, recruit people, or how to manage conflict. These are not even engaged; rather, there is an overabundance of useless esoteric ideas with no practical ministry applications!

Although pastor's personal lives are far better than ever, and devotional time is better spent than in the previous decades of our research, too many Pastors still neglect the basics of the faith.

There is still too much overwork by a lack of training of the church leadership teams, the development of equipped small group leaders and a lack of proper delegation of the ministry workload. This creates the overwork from the unrealistic expectations from elders and their church leaders.

There is too much focus on the wrong things in today's Church, including how to entertain and wow the crowd, even neglecting good teaching and replacing it with new teachings, or too much focus on meaningless trends and entertainment.

Pastors still get so overwhelmed with the business of the work they forget the Who and why it is all about. Many church boards place too many expectations and expect their minister to do it all while they just go to meetings. Meetings are considered the ministry instead of the strategy and planning of the ministry. They all can easily forget who God is, and who we are in Christ. If the pastor does not know who God is and what our call and responsibilities are, then how are they to grow in our faith, in maturity, and in character, not to mention in leading others in the direction of God's call? It can't be done! All you will have is burnout. What remains is a lifeless or

weak church filled with fads, factions or dysfunctions, and this is the result of no direction in life brought on by a distinct lack of discernment and spiritual growth.

The mismanagement of a pastor leads to anger against God and His godly leaders. We will then lead others away, as well. We will be leading people in hopelessness and despair, because most people in the church are not growing in the faith, and they will not discern the difference.

Congregations are filled with hurting people who hurt other people. They have heavy loads of life, weary from a lack of spiritual formation and discipleship as well as life skills, and do not know how to give it over to Christ. They fear that they are losing 'their' church, too. So, they take their hurt and apprehensions, turn it into artillery, and fire that at pastors. Pastors are overwhelmed with criticism and factions, who fear change and store stock loads of hurt.

APPLICATIONS

In Acts, chapter 6, the disciples faced some of the same dilemmas pastors do today. Their churches were growing, opposition and criticism was increasing, their time was stretched, and they were overwhelmed. The solution, beyond the prayer and spiritual formation that they were doing, was implementing a management model that spread out the work load with godly equipped followers of Christ. This started the call to recruit and train mature, godly people to do the ministering--think deacons, elders, and small group leaders--while they did the equipping. If more churches did this, they would be healthier and stronger, as would the pastors and their families (Acts 6:1-7; 1 Timothy 4:13-21; Titus 1:4-6; James 5:1-15; 1 Peter 5:4-6; Hebrews 12:14-15).

Thus, what needs to be worked on is how pastors delegate and train lay people and staff to share the workload; the pastor becomes the main trainer and equipper for the church ministry. In addition, church boards need to understand the Biblical role of a minister of God and make an effort to work with them and not against. Working against pastors just creates more stress for everyone while vital ministry needs go unmet.

In addition, it is the Pastor's responsibility to know the Word, grow in the faith, and apply it with correct knowledge, based on God's Word; pastors impart this to their congregations. It is the responsibility of the leadership of a church to receive training to do the ministry, not expect the pastor to do it all.

Furthermore, if a church is going to employ a pastor, they must care for their pastor. Give the pastor adequate days off and vacations, a reasonable workload, and a laity that responds. Allow their families the opportunity to be normal and even fail with grace.

The fact is that a pastor is a leader who inspires, equips, and trains the congregation in ministry and action. The pastor is to lead the people to worship, preaches, teaches, disciples, and helps others in those roles. A pastor is not a do-it-all, someone who is paid so the people can sit back and do nothing.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Pastors will receive criticism, and congregations fear change; it comes with the job. Pastors, and anyone in church leadership, must learn to not take it personally; rather, listen, give empathy, encourage and allow congregants to vent. Listen carefully as the criticism may be valid; apologize and heed. Some criticism may come from malevolent people who just are hateful; exercise church discipline. But, most of the time, the criticism comes from a fear--of change, of loneliness, of not being a part of the community, not being fed. These people feel they are irrelevant. They feel unloved and unheard. Listen and let them know they are listened to. Give them a forum for input and ownership of what is going on so they are part of the process. Put in lots of prayer, too. This solves most issues.

The biggest problems stem from a lack of desire to please Christ, a lack of love for one another, from a lack of spiritual growth, and a lack of prayer.

Take care of these, and you will be *an incredibly faithful and abundant church and a content pastor.*

Here are some tried and true items gleaned from these studies that pastors and church leaders can do to move things on the right path.

- Pastors must build their own spiritual formation before they lead or teach others. You cannot lead where you do not know the Way!
- Pastors must have 2 full days off a week and should not work more than 50 hours per week!
- Pastors must have at least 3 weeks of vacation and periodic sabbaticals.
- Pastors must be given a living wage or expect hours cut to be bi-vocational.
- The laity must respond to the work God has called and not expect the pastor to do it all.
- The laity must realize the Biblical role and responsibility of the pastor and respect their 'office' even if they do not personally like them.
- The laity and leadership must keep their pastor in prayer and give them encouragement! This also gives reassurance to their families.
- The laity must respond to their responsibility as the ministry engagers, not to be pew-sitters.
- The laity and leaders must realize the work of God, not compare their church or pastor to others. Do not give in to the numbers game, expected growth, or numbers; rather, seek faith and Fruit.
- There are way too many meetings; cut them! Meetings must be restructured so they are the 'huddles' to the game. That is, only have meetings when they are necessary for planning; meetings are not the ministry. Have clear agendas and talking points that are given in advance, listen, open and close on time, and pray significantly! This will save countless hours of wasted time and stress and get your church on God's purpose. And help you recruit and keep volunteers and leaders!
- The pastor's family will not be perfect, because they are no different than any other family birthed in original sin and living in a fallen world. Realize they need understanding, compassion. They need to be heard, and sometimes, left alone.

- Pastors must grow their faith, spending at least 30 minutes a day on personal growth, Bible reading, prayer, and devotions outside of teaching preparation. The more the better! Budget that time!
- The congregation must realize not everyone will like the pastors; but, they must empower them to do as they are called. We are to love Christ, not our pastor; rather, we respect them, for they are to lead us!
- Unhealthy churches consider their pastors and staff as farm hands to do all of the work of ministry. Healthy churches respect their pastors as equippers of the ministry.
- Pastors must realize they will not please everyone. Some people will not like you. That's ok. Seek to please Christ, and the rest will sort out.
- Pastors need to fight personal apathy, doubt, depression, pessimism, and bitterness.
- Workaholism is the enemy to the church and to the pastor's home; do not allow it!
- If a seminary is going to be issuing Divinity degrees to people to be ministers of a church, they must actually impart and equip their students with actual real-world education that is relevant and as a church needs.
- The pastor is not to be the primary caregiver. They are to equip the people to recruit, train, and empower volunteers and small group leaders to do the lion's share of the ministry and pastoral care.
- Unless the pastor is a trained and licensed counselor, refer people out. Only give spiritual advice, encouragement and light practical counseling.
- In the eyes of many people, you will never be good enough. Keep your focus on pleasing Christ, not people.
- Spiritual Warfare is real. The enemy will attack the pastor first, then the church!
- People will compare your ministry to other churches. Do not compare; only seek God's special call on you.
- Pastors, find the joy in your calling and your church and your family. This stems from your contentment in the lord.
- People will expect the pastor to be available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The elders need to have their back and give clear office hours. Others need to fill that 'availability,' not just the pastor.
- Pastors need to let go of responsibilities and concentrate on the equipping.
- For optimal church health and growth, have a vision! This is to be biblical that clearly and simply states God's call, your mission, and what and how you will do it. This is your strategy. When there are disagreements, point people to God's Word and the church's mission, as that is what we will be about. Put in lots of prayer and input.
- Last, but most important, being a pastor is a special calling, and it is worth it, if you keep the main thing the Main Thing--glorifying Christ as LORD!

What needs to be worked on is how pastors delegate and train lay people and staff to share the workload. The pastor becomes the main trainer and equipper for the church ministry. In addition, church boards need to understand the Biblical role of a minister of God and make an effort to work with them.

We have over one thousand well-researched, Biblical, tried, and true practical resources to help pastors and lay leader's grow your personal lives, build your ministry, and lead and manage your church, including how to handle critics and how to recruit volunteers.

Curriculum's for pastors, lay ministers, elders and church leaders to guide them in the process of developing a leadership plan and how to implement it.

<http://www.churchleadership.org/pages.asp?pageid=66935>

Articles to help Build our Pastoral Heart and Personal lives for God's Glory:

<http://www.intothyword.org/pages.asp?pageid=56843>

Biblical and Practical Resources for Leading a Church:

<http://www.churchleadership.org/pages.asp?pageid=66926>

Because of God's call and Schaeffer's influence, we desire to see a church committed to His purpose and poured out to His ways. Then we will see revival through real prayer and devotion to His Lordship. For thirty years we sought "True Truth!" This is what we found, and it is not pretty: our churches are not glorifying Christ because we are failing at knowing and growing in Him personally. We are not able to teach others when we are failing at following His Word and Christ alone! Remember, it is His Church and we are the caretakers of it. Thus, we must act according to our call and His precepts.

May the Lord bless you and your church!

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