



Time Management
—— for ——
Effective Ministry

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Introduction

A common misperception among seminary students and laypeople is that ministry is all about ministering. But if you are in ministry, you probably are familiar with how much time is spent on both ministerial and administrative duties. Some days you may feel that you're not doing either one well because of the time required in each area.

In this eBook, we offer some constructive ideas to spend less time administering and more time ministering as well as actionable steps to help you along the way.

Let's get started.



CUT MEETING MINUTES

“ Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity. ”

Ephesians 5:15–16 (NIV)

01

Cut Meeting Minutes

Ephesians 5:15–16 (NIV) suggests that time is not our friend and instructs us to make the most of it. So, make time work for you instead of giving it power over you. This may mean that you need to change your approach to meetings altogether, and everyone may not embrace that (especially those who like to dominate your time). Here are some suggestions to cut down on time spent in meetings:

Don't schedule meetings during your most productive times.

If you work on your ministry activities better in the morning, schedule your meetings for a different time of the day. Plan for emergency pastoral needs to be covered by someone else (if possible) during these hours, and publicize your available hours in the bulletin so people are more likely to try to schedule time with you when they know you are open.

Assess your regularly scheduled meetings.

Are there any meetings that could be scheduled back to back? Are there any that could be combined?
Are there any that are truly unnecessary?

Have an agenda for every meeting and stick to it.

Every meeting should have clear issues to be addressed and a desired outcome. If these things can't be defined in an agenda, it's possible that the meeting is not necessary. If items come up that are not on the agenda, place them on the next meeting's agenda.



Stick to the allotted time.

Make sure every meeting has a definitive start and stop time. Gently remind attendees when it's time to wrap up and agree to continue the conversation at a later time as the meeting time is nearing its end. This will allow you time to address other pressing issues that won't take much time. (See number five.)

Avoid “extra” meetings.

When you're asked if you'll have time for a meeting later in the week to discuss an issue, it may be better to say, “I have twenty minutes right now. What's on your mind?” Scheduling another meeting means creating another agenda, plus the time to get to the meeting and get it started. If an issue is brought to your attention that truly deserves a sit-down meeting, see if you can add it to the agenda of a meeting that's already scheduled.

OUTSOURCE SOME TASKS

“

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 6:3–4 (NIV)

02 Outsource Some Tasks

Outsourcing in the Christian church is not a new concept. In **Acts 6**, because the disciples' ministry of spreading the Word was growing quickly, they needed to outsource the duty of feeding widows. They selected people who were well qualified to do the task, so they could focus on prayer and ministering. Find economies of scale that can reduce the time you spend on certain tasks, and outsource them. Some areas that lend themselves to outsourcing are:

Administrative

Consider utilizing a bulletin subscription service that you'll only have to renew annually. There are many designs and themes to choose from, and all you'll need to do is merge in your church-specific information each week.

Bookkeeping

Look for a bookkeeping service that understands the special needs of a church. Regardless of your church size, outsourcing your bookkeeping is often much less expensive than hiring another staff member.

Online scheduling software system (aka a virtual assistant).

If you have a large staff and complex scheduling, consider using an online scheduling system. It can save you from re-entering or rewriting data on a weekly or monthly basis. And if you are a smaller church, having a virtual assistant to complete some of your administrative tasks can be a lot less expensive and more time saving than you might think.

Marketing

Like browsing the internet, marketing can make you feel like you are in a time warp. Time flies when you are perfecting your message and aesthetic. And, there are so many places to upkeep information that it can be a little dizzying. Try to outsource these areas of your marketing:

- Social media posting
- Email marketing
- Website content
- PowerPoint presentations
- Print ads

ELIMINATE DISTRACTIONS

“ Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up with it and choked the plants. ”

Luke 8:7 (NIV)

03

Eliminate Distractions

Distractions are the seeds that can choke out your ministry. According to professor and author of *Deep Work*, Cal Newport, “Deep work is the ability to focus without distraction on a cognitively demanding task. It’s a skill that allows you to quickly master complicated information and produce better results in less time.” Ministering requires deep work whereas administering does not. Here are some steps to eliminate distractions so you can do deep work:

Turn off device notifications.

When you are preparing for a sermon or Bible study, make sure notifications from your phone and computer are not on. These alerts bait you into distraction. Schedule time to intentionally be on your phone and computer so that you are retraining your brain to associate specific times for these specific activities.

Minimize your digital ministry time.

Managing your ministry on social media can be incredibly time consuming. You personally don’t have to respond to every social media post/comment/like that you receive. However, if you feel strongly about answering every post, outsource or choose another trusted individual in your church to manage your social media.

Minimize the time you spend driving and maximize what you get out of it.

Simply preparing yourself to get out the door and travel takes more time out of your week than you may realize. If possible, consolidate time/days spent on hospital or in-home visits. And maximize your time spent traveling by listening to books you haven’t had time to read or podcasts that will educate and inspire your ministry.

DELEGATE AND ELEVATE



Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms.



1 Peter 4:10 (NIV)

04

Delegate and Elevate

You shouldn't try to accomplish everything all alone. If you do, you're likely to burn out. Delegation is not a weakness. By not reaching out for help, you may be taking away an opportunity for someone else to find his/her purpose. Your ministry can also gain momentum by using the talents of other individuals in the church. Here is what you need to do to delegate and elevate:

Ask and receive.

Embrace the gifts that your church's servant leaders have to offer. It takes humility to admit that you're only one person, and you can't do it all. Prepare your mind to ask for and accept help.

Make a plan.

Start by creating a list of tasks that you can delegate and include the details required to complete each task. Then, think (pray) about who may have a gift that can be used for each task. Finally, make an appointment with each person whom the Spirit placed upon your heart and ask for help.

Show and tell.

After you have decided who will take over what, take some time to show him/her how to complete the task. Let your volunteers see you do the task. Teach them, then watch them do it. By watching them, you will be available for any questions, and you will gain confidence that you can safely hand off the task.

“ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age. ”

Matthew 28:19–20



ABOUT US

Warner Press is located in Anderson, Indiana, and operates as a not-for-profit organization. We publish and distribute Christian products worldwide, including ministry resources, church supplies and bulletins, kids' books and greeting cards. We also own and produce artwork by the artist Warner Sallman, which includes some of the most recognizable images of Christ known throughout the world.

Warner Press has been serving the church community since 1906. We've evolved and grown over the years, but we have always been 100% focused on the mission of helping church leaders do the most and best they can with the resources they have available.