

# Parts of a Pastor's Life That Will Affect Your Ministry Longevity

Mid-State Baptist Association

## Preaching

- Are you planning a sermon series path for several months to a year?
- Are you preparing early in the week or waiting until Saturday night?
- Are you asking church members to read the scripture verses before you preach and giving them discussion questions about the sermon for their family to discuss when they get home?
- Are you preaching through a book of the Bible or trying to come up with new topics?
- Are you preaching one sermon a week or trying to preach two or three a week?
- Are you giving staff members and others a chance to preach regularly or occasionally?
- When you study for a sermon, is it quiet or are you facing multiple interruptions?
- When you preach, are you just giving information or is there a "So what?"
- Will you take a month off every year and let others preach?
- Will you be able to visit other churches occasionally or listen to sermons online?
- Are there ways to use video clips or a live testimony to supplement the message?
- If necessary, can you remove chairs or pews at the back of the church to bring people closer to the front and one another?

## Pastoring/Emotional Intelligence

- In conversation, are you doing most of the talking or do you ask questions and listen?
- Are you teachable? Do you ask questions to gain new understanding and information?
- Are you looking at your phone while you are talking with someone or in a group?
- Do you lose your temper and hold grudges? If someone makes a mistake, are they "dead to you?"
- Do you interrupt others when they are speaking?
- Are you self-aware of how you are acting and treating others?
- Do you feel and display empathy? Can you see things from another's perspective?
- Do you seek first to understand and then to be understood?
- Are you able to encourage others to become leaders or do you have to maintain control?
- Do you have a problem with ego and pride?
- Do you try to encourage, love, accept and support others or do you use them for your goals?

## Administrative Tasks

- Time Management – do you make a list and do the important things first?
- Budgeting – is your budget balanced to reflect all kinds of ministry? Are you overspending?
- Calendaring – do you help the church to calendar at least a year in advance?
- Planning – is your team pre-planning all the details or winging it?
- Evaluation – do you evaluate every week and try to make next week better?
- Goals – can you break big goals down into baby steps that can be achieved and celebrated?
- Creating Effective Teams – effective ministry usually can't be done well by just one person, it takes a team. Are you creating good teams who are really passionate about the goals they are working toward whether it is Greeting, Teaching, Visitation, Building and Grounds, Children's ministry or Student ministry.

## Leadership Dynamics

- Training, Coaching, Mentoring – are you helping your Student Pastor learn to someday be a Senior Pastor? Are you helping the staff of a small church learn the skills to work at a larger church or to lead your church when it grows larger?
- Hiring – Are you trying to hire people better than you? Are you patient or desperate in hiring?
- Firing – Are you patient with mistakes when people don't have a lot of experience? If you warn them about bad performance, do you help them understand how to correct it?
- Staff Meetings – Do you evaluate the worship service or a recent event? Do you let others talk? Do you learn from one another? Do you do ongoing training? Do you read books together? Do you plan ahead of time to reduce stress? So you share credit and celebrate?

## Understanding Small Group Dynamics

- Possible vs Intentional – do you hope good things happen or work to create good things?
- Are you learning to facilitate good discussion with a group of 4 to 8 people?
- Are you creating fellowship and outreach activities?
- Do you create a culture where people can ask for prayer and be prayed for?
- Do you plan for your group to plant a new group every year?
- Do you have 2 or 3 group members you are grooming for leadership?
- Are you transparent about your mistakes and the things you are learning?
- Is your group mostly lecture or mostly discussion?
- Do you share leadership every week when your group meets?
- Are you sitting in rows or a circle? Are you close together or across the room?
- If possible, are you all sitting, or are you standing looking down on them?
- Is the room orderly or dirty, cluttered and out of date?
- Is your small group planning several service projects every year?
- Are you asking group members to prepare for class by at least reading the verses and being ready to share what they learned when they arrive at their small group meeting?

## Discipleship Strategies

- Do you understand that people learn by high engagement, high expectations, high support?
- Is your church creating small groups of all sizes – two, three, six to ten?
- If a class is huge (10 to 100), are they breaking down into small discussion and prayer groups during the hour they meet?
- Do you have goals and plans for each age group – what you want them to learn and do? (Elementary, Middle School, High School, College, Young adult, Olders adults)

## Personal Spiritual Growth

- Are there certain things that you want every church member to know how to do?
  - Read the Bible on their own, be able to share their testimony, be able to explain the gospel, be able to lead a discussion group, be able to disciple someone else, know 10 key Bible verses by memory?

## Strongholds of Sin/Destructive Habits

- Are there struggles you have had for a long time and find it difficult to overcome?
- A bad diet, lack of exercise, bitterness, selfishness, pornography, procrastination?
- Lack of financial discipline?

### Being a Lifelong Learner

- Are you reading a book little by little every week?
- Do you watch Zoom training events by the Assoc., GBMB and NAMB and take notes?
- Do you attend conferences and make a do-list of ideas to implement?
- Do you interview people who are already doing what you want to do better?
- Do you evaluate things you do every week and try to improve next time?

### Strategic Partnerships

- Baptist Association, State Convention, IMB, NAMB, others like BCM, FCA, Young Life, etc.

### Meaningful Friendships

- Who do you talk with and meet with regularly to laugh with and have fun?
- Do you have a group you play tennis, pickleball, basketball, softball or golf with?
- If you only see someone at church, they are probably just acquaintances, not friends.
- If you were depressed or feeling burned out, who would you call?

### Marriage Health

- Do you take vacations every year? Do you see kids and grandchildren? Do you have a date night? Do you take work home when you didn't need to?
- Does your spouse feel burdened by church responsibilities they didn't seek out?
- Is your time at church meetings interfering with your time with family?

### Parenting Health

- Are your kids being affected by church problems?
- Are evenings and weekends your time with family?

### Physical Health

- Diet, Sleep, Exercise, Stress, other.

### Personal Finances

- Have you got debt from medical, school loans, credit cards, cars and weddings to pay off?
- Are you making regular retirement contributions?
- Do you need to cut back expenses or increase income?

### Fun

- Fulfilling hobbies, sports, games, and people to do them with? People who make you laugh?

### Full-Time or Bi-vocational

- Is being full-time too stressful and it would be better to be part-time?
- Is being part-time too stressful and it would be better to be full-time?
- Some pastors say they are glad they are bi-vocational and it removes some of the stress and fear of being abused by church members.

### Preventing Burnout

- All of the 17 things above can help contribute to burnout. Talk with someone and get help. Maintaining work/life balance and putting God and family first helps increase longevity.