



Greater Sydney SDA Conference

Healthy Pastors

The Best Job on The Planet?

- 45.5% will experience burnout or depression causing them to leave their jobs
- 70% say their self-esteem is lower now than when they started their position
- 2nd highest divorce rate among professionals
- 80% of Pastors say they have insufficient time with spouse and that ministry has a negative effect on their family.
- 40% report a serious conflict with a parishioner once a month.
- 75% report they've had a significant stress-related crisis at least once in their ministry.
- 56% of pastors' wives say they have no close friends.
- 40% of pastors considered leaving the pastorate in the past three months.
- "For every 20 pastors who go into the pastorate, only one (1) retires from the ministry."
- No other profession has a 95% drop-out rate!

(H. B. London, Focus on teh Family Reserach, 2007)

Peter Drucker's Four Hardest Jobs

1. President of the United States
2. A University President
3. Hospital CEO and
4. Pastor

Yet

- **75-80% of pastors say they love their jobs!**

1. Practice Excellent Self-Leadership

The hardest person on the planet to lead is yourself

Self Leadership is **your** responsibility, Lead yourself exceptionally well

- Am I leading out of the overflow of time spent with God?
- Is my calling sure?
- Is my vision clear?
- Is my passion hot?
- Am I developing my gifts?
- Is my character submitted to Christ?
- Is my pride subdued?
- Are interior issues undermining my leadership?
- Is my pace sustainable?
- Is my love for God and people increasing?

Cynicism – Be part of the answer – not just another knocker.

Make Time to Recalibrate:

Take some time to recalibrate your personal life and your ministry. Work through the issues of self leadership and ensure you are in a healthy place spiritually.

- Make time to invest into the people closest to you.
- Try some new spiritual disciplines
- Put a physical exercise plan in place

2. Grow Heart Building Habits

A well-ordered heart will ask questions like:

- How can I fill my daily tasks with a sense of the presence of God?
- How am I involved in Christian community?
- How do the people closest to me experience God working in and through me?
- Am I growing in a love for God and people?
- How will I handle money in a way that draws me closer to God?

Be still and know that I am God Psalm 46:10

Work v Family

“leadership is having those closest to me love and respect me the most”

3. Build Mentoring Relationships

- Seek mentors who you allow to tell you the truth.
- Be willing to mentor others

4. Seek God's Vision

5. Cultivate Community

Pastors need loving relationships too. Too often pastors are lonely people – so many working relationships and so few friends. How can you model community in your congregation? Why do pastors have so few friends and is this healthy?

6. Find Self Value in God

The dangers of being a people pleaser.

7. Lead in Relationship to Church Size

“The most severe and potentially damaging tensions are those caused by pastors and individuals on the leadership team who relate to the church according to the wrong size category.” Michael Fletcher

8. Share Ministry

The dangers of over functioning – the church will cheer you on as you die.

Traps:

The Ministry Treadmills

- We get caught on the ministry treadmill. The sheer immediacy of each next event or ministry demand prevents leaders from taking the time required for discerning the culture and defining the DNA of the church.
- Today's demands can choke out needed dialogue for tomorrow. When this occurs, our multiplied activity prevents us from living with a clearer identity.
- It would be useful for the pastor to find even one day a month to pray and think about the DNA of the church and what it would take to move forward with God-given plan.

Burnout

Ten Factors That Cause Burnout

- Feeling driven instead of called – They feel compelled to the job for God rather than let Him accomplish it through them.
- Failing to pace ourselves – Many pastors have a great pressure in pacing themselves because of the 'urgency' of their ministry.
- Trying to do it all ourselves – high achievers generally have a great need for recognition. Often they feel they have to prove something to themselves or to someone else. Frequently the high achiever wants to do all the work in order to gain recognition or approval
- Excessive contact with people's problems
- Majoring on the minors
- Unrealistic expectations – Most high achievers are not aware of their own limitations – in fact, they usually don't think they have any.
- Developing too many routines – Routines sap the challenge and excitement out of our lives. They destroy our creativity and turn innovation people into robots. People who allow too many routines to develop in their lives have taken the first step toward burnout. They are letting things happen instead of making things happen. They are on the road to apathy, and apathy is a close cousin of burnout. On the other hand routine can be good if it leads to the formation of positive habits that free up our conscious minds to work on more creative endeavors
- An inappropriate view of God's priorities for our lives - Allowing the work of God to create a lack of balance. They justify neglecting their families by the importance of ministry. Their whole lives revolve around 'their' ministries. These people are often self-righteous because of their 'commitment and dedication' to the ministry.
- Poor physical condition
- Because high achievers have lots of drive and energy they must keep their bodies physically fit in order to keep up with the mental and emotional drives.
- Continuous rejection. Too many rejections cause us to develop negative attitudes toward people, our job and ourselves.

Avoiding Burnout

- Make your relationship with God your top priority

- Respect your limitations
- Keep your work in perspective
- Reevaluate goals and priorities regularly
- Take time to experience life – cultivate meaningful leisure time

Recovery

- Make space in life for spiritual recovery
- Plan for rest and relaxation
- Develop a physical fitness program
- Seek help with rebuilding self-confidence

Comeback Leaders:

- Pray Passionately
- Distinguish between obvious symptoms and underlying problems.
- Take the initiative for change
- Challenge Excuses
- Make time to learn
- Model Evangelistic Passion
- Share the ministry
- Spend time with their leaders
- Understand that leadership is more about what you can get done through others than what you can do yourself
- Cast a clear and compelling vision
- Multiply themselves

Comeback pastors and their best leaders needed to focus their time on two groups: leaders and the lost.

Summarised From:

Ed Stetzer and Mike Dodson, *Comeback Churches*, B&H Books, 2007.