

How do you guard your preparation time?

Scripture: Ephesians 4:11–16

Code: QA94

I use a system I call "planned neglect"—I plan to neglect everything else until my studying is done. I set aside Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday to prepare for my Sunday messages. Not until I have accomplished what I need to on those days do I then stop and care for other matters. I have an assistant and two secretaries who help shield me from the affairs of a large ministry that would deluge me and rob me of my study time. Of course, I am available when I need to be.

I realize all pastors do not have a personal assistant or a large staff to share the responsibilities of their ministry. Neither did I in the early years of my ministry. But my commitment to studying the Word has never changed. If other details take my time, I simply put in longer hours that week. Our goal as pastors is not to do all the work of the ministry ourselves, but to equip our people for ministry (cf. Eph. 4:11-16). We can only accomplish this effectively through preaching based on thorough study. So I know that time spent in preparation will result in more sharing of my load by a maturing church.

For a insider's look into John's pastoral heart, consider the audio series [*Insight into a Pastor's Heart*](#), a rare opportunity to hear what makes him tick.

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