
Ten Habits of Highly Effective Pastors

We get to work with pastors and church leaders all around the world. Some are members of our coaching community. We get to work with others in workshop settings or through personal consulting.

Here are some habits of pastors and leaders who are extremely effective in their ministry.

#1 – They prioritize their own faith and family.

In pouring your life out for others, it's surprisingly easy to lose track of those closest to you and those who need your attention the most. But the most effective pastors realize they shouldn't lead on empty and they need to care for their own soul first. If you think you need help with this, read [Soul Keeping](#) by John Ortberg.

#2 – They know how to clarify purpose and mission.

I like to say pastors are like the Chief Clarity Officer for the church. And clarifying the purpose and mission for the church is at the top of the list.

It's important to cast a big vision for the future (we call this purpose). You need to be clear about your deep sense of why. Simon Sinek rightfully says you should start with why.

But it's just as important to bring that big purpose into the realm of today. People need to know what matters most right now (we call this mission). The big picture and short term. They both really matter.

#3 – They know how to lead leaders and build teams.

Recruiting volunteers and developing leaders are two very different things. The pastors and leaders who are most effective in ministry work hard to create a leadership culture. It's not just getting people to do stuff; it's finding people to lead ministry.

Great leaders don't do all the work; they build and empower teams to do the work of the ministry. In fact, leadership development is likely your biggest growth opportunity. If you're looking to build a leadership culture in your church, [Designed to Lead](#) by Eric Geiger and Kevin Peck is a great book to help.

#4 – They know how to say “no” to what isn't mission-critical.

There will always be more opportunities for ministry than you can effectively meet, but don't let those opportunities turn into obligations.

A clear mission, vision, and strategy means you actually say no to most opportunities because while they are good, they don't fit. This isn't being cold or calloused, it's being a good steward and focusing where God wants you.

#5 – They create healthy systems.

Anytime you do something more than once, you should create a documented system. Following up with guests, connecting people into groups, recruiting volunteers, and talking about money...each of these needs a proven system to run smoothly.

You don't have to personally love systems to see the benefit, and there are lots of ways that non-systems people can implement healthy systems.

#6 – They have coaches and mentors.

It's important to recognize that most people in your church need and want something from you. They are constantly making withdrawals on your time

and energy. That's why it's so important to intentionally get around people who make deposits into your life.

Our coaching community is a great place to start, but even if we're not the right fit for you, make sure you get these people in your life.

#7 – They love Jesus more than their church.

What would your identity be if you were no longer the pastor or a leader at your church? That's an important question because it gets to the heart of the matter. The most effective church leaders hold their positions, titles and influence loosely, recognizing that a calling to ministry can easily replace a passion for the one calling.

#8 – They are good time managers.

You have exactly as much time as everyone else. How are you using that time? Great leaders plan their day with purpose, making sure they are doing things only they can do, and devoting time to strategic work.

The people you admire most in ministry rarely run to social media to complain about how many meetings they have or how slammed their day is. So don't wear busyness as a badge of honor.

#9 – They operate in their strengths.

You're not a superhero and you can't do everything. So an effective leader takes time to understand his or her strengths and weaknesses. While there will surely be things you have to do that you don't like, you skew your priorities to your gift mix.

You also recognize the strengths and weaknesses in others, helping them align their ministry and compensate for where they need help. If you need help in this, [The Five Voices](#) offers a fresh approach to strength-based teamwork and communication.

#10 – *They know the numbers.*

Great leaders know the most important numbers, often without needing to look them up. While numbers aren't everything, they do paint part of the picture so it's wise to know them. You should see regular reports on the metrics, looking at things like...

- What percentage of students and adults are serving?
- How much of your total giving comes from automated sources?
- How many people are connected in small groups or discipleship environments?
- How many giving units fund the budget?
- How many volunteers do you have and need?

While others should certainly be involved, it's not wise to be hands-off with the numbers.

This list certainly isn't definitive, but these are some of the habits I'm seeing from pastors who are effective.

Guide for Pastors, Breaking Barriers

Feel like your church should be growing, but it's not?

Ultimately, church growth is up to God. Are we being good stewards of what He's given us? Are we doing everything we can to ensure our church is healthy? How do we overcome the barriers we feel are in front of us?

We know you care deeply about leading a healthy growing church because it means leading more people to Jesus. As a result we created a free guide to breaking barriers that will bring clarity and help begin to alleviate your frustrations.

Get your FREE copy of the Senior Pastor's Guide to Breaking Barriers today.

[Download the guide](#)