

# PASTORPEDIA

A FREE RESOURCE FOR PASTORS AND CHURCH LEADERS 

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## Personal Stamina

### **168 divided by 3 equals 56**

This month PastorpediA is about our attitudes and energy and spirit—some rather subjective issues. And some of our personal answers do relate to time.

“Time flies,” we say,  
Alas but no—  
Time stays,  
We go.

And so we must use it carefully, for all of us get the full 168 hours each week. Let’s say we work 56 of those, more or less; and sleep 56 (we want this to be an easy division). Now we each have 56 discretionary hours.

Please think through how you use those as you see and hear us on the video and read us on the script. We are just trying to say some things that help us...in all three of the 56-hour segments!

*Knute, for Jeff and Jim*

## **How do you quench burnout?**

### ***Jeff Bogue***

1. Time with God. Taking time to remember the One for whom you give your life away and the One you serve.
  - Don't be afraid to take that time during sermon prep...our preaching should flow out of our devotional life anyway. I don't want to preach anything that has not first convicted and inspired me personally. Some of my sweetest moments with the Lord have been during this time.
  - Take time alone...sitting in the woods is part of my job! Wow, we have great jobs! My walk with the Lord and personal spiritual health are a part of my ministry. Don't wait until your day off.
  - Take time to pray. Real "pros" pray! ☺ It's never a waste of time!
2. Rest. When I am tired I lose my sense of clarity. Some of my best decisions are reached in the woods or on the beach, when the noise level is lowered and I can just hang out with my Lord. His voice is most clearly heard when I am rested.
3. Reward. Work hard for a season and then reward yourself. Take a rest day or some comp time. There is a reason there are time outs, quarter breaks and halftimes in sports. The same reason there is an off-season...we need a sense of completion.

4. Vacation. Use all of it, get away, and have fun planning it. Anticipation of the vacation is half the fun.
5. Friendship. Meet every week with a friend, and have a long lunch. Enjoy your relationships.
6. Take your kids with you whenever possible. This maximizes your time with your kids and alleviates guilt from being away.

### ***Jim Brown***

1. **Make your day off your day off.** There will always be more work to do. Stay away from your office and let people know it is your day off. Change up your routine on that day. Don't answer phone calls or emails. Pray that God will help you with refreshment! Plus, if guilty thoughts begin to try to creep into your mind, remember they are not from Jesus! I love to run and exercise with my wife on this day, and do life together around the house. I will not go to ministry meetings on this night. I guard this day!
2. **Get fit!** A long time ago a college health professor told me that my heart was a muscle. This hit me like a ton of bricks—if I exercised my heart it would beat less and last longer. That one truth forged a path in my life for the last 35 years to exercise regularly, thus giving me more vibrancy and stamina.

Plus, the living God lives inside of us and we should, without reservation, give Him the fittest, cleanest house to live in! Plus I was deeply convicted by the Holy Spirit while studying at Grace Seminary with this reality: how in the world would I ever gain any credibility in my congregation's eyes if I were imploring them from God's Word to be disciplined in their journeys with Jesus, and I was visibly not doing it myself?

3. **Get away!** I know what it is like to reach the precipice of burnout, so I schedule vacations with family away from the normal routine of ministry, to refuel by getting away from people.

We must know what makes us come alive—for me it's in the mountains with my bride or lounging on the beach, telling each other all the ways God is so good to us. Or a ride on the Harley with my wife. And a hunting excursion! Playing golf with my boys and shooting hoops in the driveway! ATV and attendance at sports games. Don't apologize for having fun on your day off!

4. **Eat right!** If you don't understand that then you are either not eating right or you are letting food fill your emptiness!
5. **Sleep right!** God grants sleep to those He loves. Nothing replaces good sleep and energy drinks are not the answer! I often say to our church, *"I want to be the most alive person in the room because too much is at stake. God has called us to lead the hope of the world, the local church!"*
6. **Create new things.** I love to build, garden, construct, and finish projects around the house. Something good happens in me when I build something and finish it. So I love to work on things that are totally unrelated to ministry.

Way too many pastors don't have a clue what they would do if they had time off. Find ways to explore new things. Creativity refuels your mind! What is the last new thing you built? New things form new channels in our brains and remove ruts from our lives.

**Knute Larson**

1. Live by a “master schedule,” a planned attack on each week that includes the essentials for good health spiritually, emotionally, physically, and with family and vocation. Otherwise the week attacks you and the urgent needs win.
2. Do not skip one vacation day.
3. Mix fun with work. Enjoy staff. Do not take yourself so seriously or always have to win (unless it is basketball).
4. Have a really good marriage, and a very good friend or two or three, and an accountability group where you can be honest, and a relationship with Christ that enjoys grace rather than duty first.
5. Do not do so much of things you are not good at—at church, hire to your weaknesses and get good administrative assistance; at home, bring in a plumber or an electrician, or marry one.

## **How do you guard your attitude against cynicism?**

### ***Jeff Bogue***

1. Work at gratitude. Don't forget that everything we do as pastors is a complete privilege and honor. Most of our colleagues across the globe have the same calling and responsibilities but do not receive a paycheck for their labor. It's all a privilege!
2. Find new ideas. Nothing is more invigorating than one new idea. They don't even need to be big game-changers. Remember, ideas are different than solutions or vision. Solutions and vision are harder to construct and need to be approached with more thoughtfulness. Ideas are just fun, and they very well may turn into something bigger...or not.

3. Listen to stories of life-change, some within your own church. Save encouraging notes and reread them when you're discouraged.
4. Attend other churches and allow yourself to worship and be led by another. This is very energizing. We have many pastors who attend Saturday night services at Grace, just for the opportunity to be together with their families.
5. Rest. Make sure you exercise the Sabbath principle. Don't take your day off and then just work at home.
6. Make hard decisions. When you're facing a set of problems, those problems should never be exactly the same from year to year. Make the hard decisions; tackle your problems. This gets them off your mind and out of your way. If you're going to go through difficult water, at least get to where you really want to be in the long run.

### ***Jim Brown***

1. **Put on the armor of God.** I can't overemphasize this discipline. This practice will change how you handle everything in your life each day because you are properly equipping yourself for the battle.

We get dressed every day physically, and we are all grateful for that! Yet how many Christ-followers get dressed spiritually every day? I often say that it's like our walking into a war zone in a Speedo if we don't put on the armor of God.

I also pray each day that I would not be led into temptation, as Jesus said. I also pray for His protection, favor, and blessing on me and my marriage and family and church.

"We have not because we ask not." These disciplines protect my attitude and responses to the challenges around me every day.

2. **I often tell myself, "I am getting paid to tell people about Jesus!"** Seriously, the God of the universe could have called anyone to pastor His church, yet He called me, so He must think that with Him I have what it takes to lead His bride!

The thought floors me regularly that Jesus believes in me to be the shepherd of His bride for whom He died. He has equipped and called me, and now I get paid to tell others about the most amazing, sovereign God of the universe. If that doesn't get you out of bed in the morning then what will?

Plus, no matter what I encounter or face in ministry, God promises never to leave me. Wowsers!

3. **You are the sole owner of your attitude.** How can a redeemed blood-bought child of God complain about anything? We take God's Word seriously. "*Do everything without complaining or arguing*"—Phil. 2:14. "*In everything give thanks*"—I Thes. 5:18.

When I take time to remind myself what I have been saved from, and saved to, I am overcome with joy and thanksgiving. Why would any lost person ever desire to hear the message of salvation and how Christ has changed our lives if we live grumpy, grouchy, ungrateful lives?

4. **If you are not getting criticized then you are not doing anything!** That simple truth keeps my head above the chaos of cynicism, hatred, unrighteous anger, and resentment. You will be misunderstood and criticized if you are advancing the kingdom of God.

I have faced the full gamut of criticism and full brunt of hatred. So I pull away and ask the Spirit to help me see the fault in my way and do whatever I can to make it right, if I am at fault. But if there is no truth to the criticism, I give them over to God and ask Him to deal with them. Then I pray a prayer of blessing over their lives. I cannot express how powerful it is to pray a prayer of blessing over your critic or enemy. Wow!

Plus, bitterness kills us and has no ill effect on the person we feel it towards. I also have other pastors to talk to that can mentor me through the trenches of criticism.

5. **Talk it out.** I am a choleric by personality profile, so I use that for good and have a direct conversation with those around me when something starts to come between us. I do not let unresolved issues linger. Each day I pray Isaiah 30:21, *"Whether I turn to my right or left my ears will hear a voice behind me saying, this is the way, walk in it."* The Spirit always speaks and longs for us to live in unity and not let something come between us and others. I also have come to understand many of the devil's schemes and when they usually appear. Daily confession of my sin is a must, as is daily time in His Word. I spend time each morning reading through the Bible and have found that God's Word washes over me and helps me to be more patient and sensitive to the Spirit's leading.

Plus, people are created in the image of God and the Son died for them, so I need to value them way more than the flesh says I should!

### **Knute Larson**

1. Decide early on what I wrote in my "journal" 40 years ago: "Everybody does exactly what he or she wants to do." Do not

take the blame for someone's lack of growth, or terrible spirit, if you have tried to help.

2. Relax about progress if you are working hard and to glorify Christ and to do your best (using a master schedule☺). "It is amazing how little you can do in one year and how much you can do in five years.
3. Take medicine for cynicism. So many people lie to pastors, or fib; so many say what you thought you said in confidence; so many expect perfection; some are nice because they want a favor; so many of our own words come because we are in the pulpit and can't say what we really think. And the only medicine I know is Jesus and staying clean with Him.
4. "Preach the gospel to yourself every day," as Psalm 42:5 implies, and either Augustine or Martin Luther must have started. But I remind myself that I am a sinner—co-chief of sinners with the Apostle Paul—and certainly need God's mercy and patience as others need mine.
5. Have people around you by marriage and staffing and lay leadership who will tag you out because you have asked for that and act like you want it. (See "The Emperor's New Clothes.")

## **Why do I love pastoring?**

### ***Jeff Bogue***

1. I get to serve Jesus without distraction. It's a pure privilege.
2. Everything I like and love to do, I get to do as a part of serving people and spreading the gospel.

3. No day is a waste of time, whether my plans were wrecked or not. If I am investing in the Lord, and investing in His people, the day is always well spent.
4. I get the opportunity to go the distance with people. I love being in their snapshots from cradle to the grave and journeying through life with them.
5. I'm serving the supernatural, seeing answered prayer, seeing realized dreams, and seeing changed lives. These are all the work of God.

### ***Jim Brown***

1. **God believes in me.** The mere fact that God thought before the foundation of the world that I could do this and He has given me a chance to lead His bride humbles and compels me at the same time.
2. **First hand witness to changed lives.** Where else can you go to see radical life-change day after day, email after email, prayer after prayer?
3. **We get to give the best news ever week after week.** People actually show up to listen to you talk about Jesus, week after week. Seriously, if that doesn't juice you, what will?
4. **The joys of learning from concentrated studying.** The extra nuggets of truth that come from God while you are all alone in your study or driving after spending time in His Word!
5. **The chance to lead a dangerous quest.** I get to lead people to the gates of hell to push back darkness. That is just stinkin' awesome!

6. **A chance to help others live to their redemptive potential.** I get to help people get to the level God created them to live.
7. **I can't imagine doing anything else!** This is what makes me tick and fires me up!
8. **It stretches my faith!** I am able to face daunting challenges that some think will never be surmounted, and then stand back and watch God blow us away because we trusted in Him.
9. **The pure blessing and deep satisfaction that fills my heart!** If you cut me open and look at my heart, it bleeds gratitude!

### ***Knute Larson***

1. Because Jesus wants me to. Serious. He clearly wants pastors and He wants all of us to totally love our people and others, and to do what we do with gusto and grace. And everything in my experience looked like our sovereign God wanted me to love people as one of His pastors. I was so glad to choose that way.
2. Because I get paid to spend about a third of my time with eternal truths and God, and a third with people, and a third with getting the two together—a much better way to look at administration and leadership. But what a triangle of work assignments!
3. Because I like grace, and get to share it all the time.
4. Because it is good to be part of something that lasts forever—and I know that includes everyone in the church; and like you, I get to have a small part in their being a small part of something that is so significant forever. What a privilege.

5. Because there was not one work day in 43 years of pastoring that I watched the clock because I wanted to get out of there. I am grateful.

*Pastorpedia is produced monthly by three experienced pastors: Jeff Bogue, of [Grace Church](#), in several locations in the Bath-Norton-Medina areas of Ohio; Jim Brown, of [Grace Community Church](#) in Goshen, Indiana, a church known for its strong growth, family and men's ministries, and community response teams; and [Knute Larson](#), a coach of pastors, who previously led The Chapel in Akron for 26 years. Pastorpedia is brought to you by [CE National](#). Visit [cenational.org/pastorpedia](http://cenational.org/pastorpedia) for more issues and to read the bios of our contributors.*