



Foundation Stone #5: Re-Creation November 2006

Attention Ministers! Ready-Made Excuses for Ignoring Re-Creation

“I Just Don’t Have Enough Time!” (A Problem with Stewardship)

Each minister is given the same amount of time by God – but some are better stewards of it than others. Like the man who out-worked his buddy with less effort by periodically sharpening his axe, good stewardship of your body and your time won’t always mean exerting more energy. In recognition of your limitations, establish a schedule that optimizes your unique rhythm and resources – body, mind, and spirit. Include some “axe-sharpening” re-creation into your routine.

“I Have Other ‘More Important’ Things to Do!” (A Problem with Prioritizing)

While all ministry obligations (phone calls, meetings, speaking engagements, pastoral care, etc.) are important, this excuse reflects a *scheduling* issue. Purposefully build time for re-creation into your planner *at the beginning of your week* (or month) to ensure it’s available when you need it. As a busy ministry professional, you simply won’t take time for re-creation unless you schedule it as a priority item. If you don’t consider it a priority, no one else will, either. You will also be modeling the importance of self-care to those you lead.

“I Have Too Many Responsibilities to Deal With!” (A Problem with Delegating)

Ministers wear any number of hats on a daily basis. To prevent feeling overwhelmed, learn to delegate. It’s O.K. to equip others to do ministry where you serve – or to even let some ministry go undone (Gasp! Did we just say that?). While this isn’t always popular, we sometimes wonder whether God really is in a particular program if no one else rises to the occasion to make it happen. Just because it’s a worthy project doesn’t necessarily mean God is in it. Additionally, some ministers micromanage their paid and/or volunteer staff and effectively prevent them from reaching their full potential in ministry. This can sometimes be traced back to an issue of mistrust (failing to believing another will do a good job – or at least not your way or to your standard), control (they won’t do it the exact way you would do it), or even pride (believe it or not, they may actually do a *better* job at it – if only you will give them the authority and resources to get it done).

“People Expect Me to be There All the Time!” (A Problem with Approval Seeking)

You simply can’t be everything to everybody or be at every ministry function. *If we’re really honest, much of our striving to meet others’ expectations is an unhealthy and ungodly internal drive to avoid the disapproval of another.* We want them to like us! This has nothing to do with ministry and everything to do with our own fragile ego. This must be seen for what it is and dealt with on our knees. Our people may need to grow up a bit and understand that the minister doesn’t have to *personally* hold the hand of every congregant. It’s really O.K. for an elder or deacon or other lay leader to do this – or even for someone to occasionally sit in a hospital waiting room alone.

“I Don’t Really Feel Like I Need a Break!” (A Problem with Denial)

Workaholic-types find enjoyment in their work *to the detriment of the rest of their lives.* “I don’t need any breaks. Wasting time on a hobby is for those who can’t handle the demands of ministry.” This is not only bad theology but a very destructive practice. The blessing of the Sabbath was God’s demonstration about our need for rest – and to provide us needed opportunity for reflection on who we are, what we are doing, and (perhaps most importantly) *why* we are doing it.

Thoughts to Ponder:

- What are my excuses for *avoiding* re-creation? What *practical change* can I make to correct this?

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