

Practical Problems of Preachers

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Preaching the gospel in a community, working with a local church, has its problems. If there are still any people so naïve as to think that preachers "have it made" since "they only have to work three hours a week and can do what they want to the rest of the time," maybe I can help bring you along to reality. While I will be writing only from my own experience, I doubt that mine is much different from that of most other preachers.

Here are some of my daily problems:

1. **Choosing what to preach when.** Usually, the greatest number of visiting non-members is present on Sunday mornings. This makes me want to preach on a theme that will at least include enough "first principles" material to allow them to know what to do to be saved when they leave our building. It is also true that the largest number of members is present on Sunday morning (only about 60 percent of the morning crowd returns in the evening). This makes me want to preach to the vital needs of the members. To further complicate the matter, there are people at all levels of spiritual maturity in every assembly. Trying to speak to all of these is no small task.
2. **Choosing what to do when.** Perhaps only elders, church secretaries, and preachers' wives have any idea of how many different people suggest things for the preacher to do. Various people want me to work with the young people, sparkplug the personal work program, help sing for shut-ins after speaking three or four times on Sunday, attend all of the zone meetings, visit their prospects, visit their friends in the hospital, et al. In a church of 400 members, it is easy to forget that 399 others want the preacher to do something, too. (Demands upon the preacher's wife are sometimes just as unrealistic.) Obviously, some things have to go undone — a hard choice.
3. **Reserving adequate study time.** Some preachers seem to be "30-day wonders" who can get by with little or no study. I'm not one of those. It is very tempting to let other things interfere when they shouldn't. You suffer when I do that.
4. Given these pressures, it is difficult **to be the husband and father I should be.**

I don't mean to complain. I just want to help you help me to be a better preacher.

[**Note:** I wrote this article for and it was published in the September 18, 1973, edition of *Sentinel*, weekly bulletin of the Sunset Church of Christ, Carlsbad, New Mexico, of which I was editor.

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