



Time Management for Effective Leaders

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Accomplishing goals are difficult enough without adding the additional workload of being a spiritual leader into the mix. Time management often proves a daunting task for many leaders around the world both secular and religious. It is a focal stress for people and if properly miss-managed can create harmful stress on the individual, his/her family and those in which they lead. Yet what can be discovered in light of this to help a leader overcome the rigors of time management and become successful? To find such answers the following areas are explored:

1. The Leader and Time Management
2. Stress and Time Management
3. Time Management Tips
4. Getting Things Done Diagram

Further discovery into these four areas will be the main focus to give insight into and practical helps for proper and effective time management.

The Leader and Time Management

To be a pastor, or any spiritual leader, is to be called of God to “preach the Gospel” to the entire world. In short the title description alone seems overwhelming. Daily a pastor’s life consists of praying, studying, counseling, preaching, teaching, networking and more, as well as being a father, husband, and overall family man. How does one effectively manage such a rigorous schedule? According to Gangel in *Feeding and Leading* the number one time waster is “personal disorganization”. It stands to reason that in order for a pastor (leader) to manage their time wisely they first must be organized on multiple levels. He suggests many ways to do this:

1. Control your telephone.
2. Learn when to say no.
3. Organize your work area.

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4. Use proper equipment.
5. Order a large wastebasket.
6. File properly.
7. Handle mail adequately.
8. Delegate whenever possible.

Delegation

Proper time management in leadership revolves around the concept of delegation and the leader's ability to do so. Figure-1 below will help create a process of when it is appropriate to delegate; however, it is imperative that the leader understand their ability to delegate and find ways in which to improve that process.

Gangel also noted "every time you do a job that someone else can do, you sacrifice work that only you can do. Delegation does not call us to do everything we can and then give away the overload, but to hand out everything we possibly can and only retain what we absolutely must do".

Time for You

David K. Bernard in *Growing a Church* discusses many techniques for the leader's ability to effectively manage their time. An important idea to note is that one must always take time out for oneself or they will burnout. Bernard stated that he takes Monday's for himself and family, counting it a success if he can keep [his schedule] at least seventy-five percent of the time (three out of four days)". It is not enough to say you will take time with your family, or alone time for yourself, because you will never have enough time in your day if it is not first planned out and then a concerted effort to do so is made. Burnout can become a time-waster as it wears on the body mentally and physically.

Stress and Time Management

According to Alix Kirsta in her book *The Book of Stress Survival*, "stress is the state of arousal with which the body responds to...the demands [of challenges]"; be it challenges at work, play, or anything "out-of-the-ordinary" that would impose stress on the mind and body. Kirsta believes that our responses to these stresses have and will always be primitive, thus the more modern our stresses (challenges) become the less likely we will be to overcome them lest we deal with everything upfront, coupled with finding the sources of it. Two of the factors brought up in her book that are major stress points for people are that of change and performance, directly related to the management of time. It is our "inflexible attitudes" and "fear of the unknown" which causes direct, undue physical or emotional stress on a person.

Leaders are continually dealing with the stress of needed change and pressure to perform, yet if we are to take small steps in change as Gangel suggests it suddenly does

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not appear so overwhelming. The same goes with the management of time, taking it in small steps and setting priorities. You will see in figure-1 with the “Getting Things Done” diagram how to more effectively set priority and manage time.

How do the two converge that we can properly overcome stress? Kirsta firmly states that stress is what we perceive it to be. We must allow the overwhelming aspects of schedule, pressure to perform, priority, need and more to be something within the mind that can be accomplished if properly prioritized and organized. Once it is learned how to effectively manage time our perception of stress dramatically decreases and thus actual physical and emotional stress decreases. Let’s take a look at a few tips for time management.

Time Management Tips

Pareto’s Law.

The first portion of advice that can be given that will give a leader proper perspective on the management of time and work load is that “Twenty percent of what you do produces 80 percent of the results; conversely, 80 percent of what you do produces only 20 percent of the results” according to Pareto’s Law, after Vilfredo Pareto, an Italian sociologist. This means that in the management of time one must concert greater effort towards a smaller portion of action that will in turn produce quantified results.

Lakein’s Question.

“Lakein’s Question” seeks to ask, “What is the best use of my time now”? This will also be shown in greater detail in figure-1; however, in the management of time anything that is presently being done should always be the best use of time. If we are going by Pareto’s Law this is also an essential question to ask. If time were always being utilized for the best purpose then it would make sense that one will always yield greater results by doing so. Placing notes or signs to remind oneself of this is a great way to prevent time miss-management.

Time Wasting.

While trying to identify the many ways in which leaders, businessmen, and pastors manage their time, Gangel presents several areas in which are prominently recorded time wasters. They include lack of planning, lack of prioritizing, crisis management, over-commitment, undue haste, paperwork and reading, interruptions by phone or in person, meetings, indecision, and failure to delegate. A leader should make themselves aware of these areas and try and improve upon them.

What to some is necessary in every situation, many soon realize that perfectionism creates added stress when imposed on every level; “Perfectionism is a waste of time”. Simply put if you spend all of your time perfecting one or two tasks, you will never have

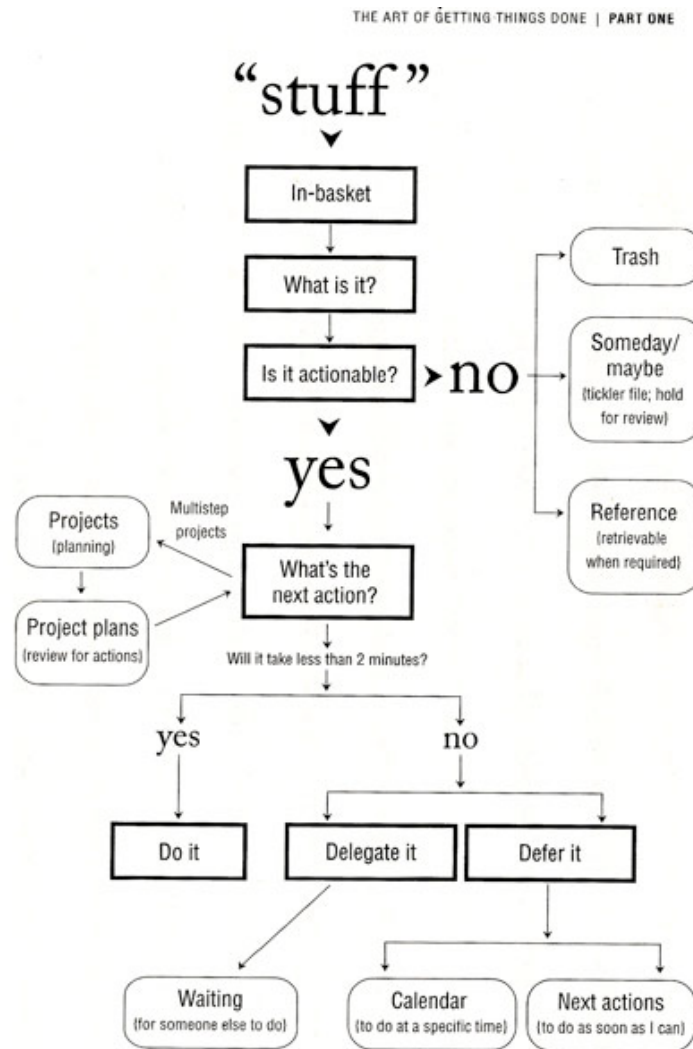
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the time needed to complete the others. This is not to say you should not do your best in everything you set to accomplish, but that every minor detail shouldn't be considered to your personal standards in order to properly manage your time for other tasks. An example to this would be taking an extra twenty minutes to try and iron every wrinkle out of a shirt when another pertinent task is before you.

Getting Things Done Diagram

Below presents a diagram entitled "Getting Things Done", which is a great practical help in the process of time management. In order to get things done you must have great control and perspective, of which is accomplished by concentration on the right things. Accordingly, your ability to be effective is directly proportional to our ability to concentrate. Perspective enables an individual to have a clearer direction and thus gives the ability to accomplish goals.

Figure-1



WORKFLOW DIAGRAM—PROCESSING

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Understanding the Process.

The process begins with the determination of whether an item is either actionable or not. If it is not actionable then you make an assessment if this non-actionable item should be trashed, filed away for another possible date “someday”, or simply used as a reference for the future. If it was actionable then you ask yourself, “Will it take less than two minutes?” If you can answer yes to this question then immediately complete the task. Otherwise, if it is outside of that, then you need to either defer the task or delegate it. Delegation requires future follow-up in the assumption the person will complete the task outside of you. With deferment the task is placed on a calendar or listed as your next action that should be completed as soon as possible.

Benefits of GTD.

Baumeister presents many benefits to the “Getting Things Done” diagram, which include taking the stress off the individual “by removing the “to do” list from your head”, gives the ability to be “on top of the multitude of projects and activities you are involved in” and also gives greater “control over...time and energy”. Further, it helps prevent chaos and produces greater clarity; with the combined, the leader is able to gain perspective and thus effectively manage their time.

Conclusion

To be effective as a leader, even throughout everyday life one must learn to properly manage their time and prioritize their efforts; in doing so it will not only reduce stress yet also help quantify a person’s output. From personal organization to proper delegation, to understanding how to effectively manage your time by the Getting Things Done diagram; everything works together to reduce stress and accomplish every task both large and small for effective leadership. Unless the leader is effectively managing their time they are hindering potential output and simply wasting time and potential.