
GROWTH POINTS

With Gary L. McIntosh, D.Min., Ph.D.

Face Your Fears: 2

Pastors do have fears (see last issue), so let's get right to it. How may pastors redeem their fears. Here are a few ideas.

Lead yourself.

It's axiomatic. If you can't lead yourself, you can't lead others. Start with asking God to transform you. Read books, interview effective pastors, take classes on leadership, and lead your own church right now. Start where you are and notch up your skills a little every year. In five years, you'll be five years older no matter what you do. By investing in yourself today, you'll be better in five years.

Focus on your strengths.

You may improve your weaknesses, but you'll never be as good in your weakness as you are in your strengths. A pastor quipped,

"You may teach a dog to ride a horse, but he'll never win a rodeo." Solo pastors must work from weakness, but it's best to recognize your strengths, and stick with them as closely as reasonable.

Practice biblical humility.

Humility is not self-doubt or false modesty. It's being clear about your own strengths and weaknesses, while understanding that you need others to help you succeed. Do what you can to bless others. Don't fear gifted people in your church, draw them into ministry with you. Don't criticize pastors of larger churches, bless them remembering that you'll both stand before God to account for your own labors.

Pay the rent.

If you've ever played organized sports, you know that there are basics that form the foundation of all good play. The same is true in

pastoral ministry, the basics form a foundation for fruitful work. The basics of pastoral ministry remain the same: preach, teach, lead, care, oversee, love, etc. Doing the basics well provides courage to innovate and move toward a new future.

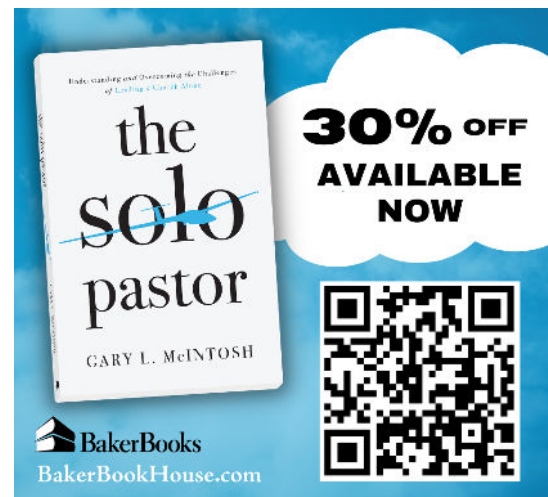
Maximize your leadership.

Churches need strong leadership. In fact, the decline of churches indicates they aren't being led very well. The problem is two-fold. On one side you have people who try to bridle the pastor to keep them under control. Driven by fear, some churches set up internal structures that stop the pastor from leading. On the other side, pastors fail to step forward to provide directive leadership. Driven by fear they recoil from leading as they might. Sadly, both add to the creation of anemic leadership. The Apostle Paul combats leadership fears by challenging leaders to lead with "diligence" (Romans 12:8).

Get in the back of the boat.

Right before Jesus calmed the storm (Mark 4:35-41), he was in the back of the boat—sleeping. It's a part of the story often missed, but Jesus wasn't preaching, teaching, or healing. He was sleeping! He needed the break from ministering to and with people. Like him, solo pastors need a break from ministry activities. It's necessary to take a break to remember why we're in ministry, whom we serve, and that we are valuable for who we are, not just what we do.

Adapted from Dr McIntosh's new book, *The Solo Pastor*. Order today!



Growth Points is published twelve times a year. Subscription price is \$29 (US Funds) per year. Permission is granted for use in a local church. For other reprint usage, advance permission must be obtained.

Copyrighted 2023 ISSN 1520-5096