

SHEPHERDING TIME

A Pastor's Guide to Time Management

STAFF TEAM DISCUSSION GUIDE

A six-week guide for church leadership teams working through the book together

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shepherdingtime.com

How to Use This Guide

This guide walks a pastoral staff, elder team, or ministry leadership team through *Shepherding Time* over six weeks. The goal isn't just personal reflection but building a shared team culture around how you steward time together.

Format

Assign the week's chapters ahead of time. Plan for a 45–60 minute gathering. Someone should facilitate each week — either the same person throughout, or rotating by week.

Each Week Includes

Open — a short icebreaker and prayer prompt to start the meeting.

Big Idea — a short synthesis of the week's reading.

Discuss — reflection questions pulled directly from the book.

As a Team — a question written specifically for this guide, turning the chapter's individual application toward your team's shared culture.

Act — a team-level commitment adapted from the book's own action step.

Close — a closing prayer prompt.

♦ *Weeks 3 and 6 will surface personal material — guilt, exhaustion, and rest. Set the tone early: this is a room for honesty, not performance review.*

The Six Weeks

Week 1 — Chapters 1–2: The Gift of Time / The Art of Shepherding Time

Week 2 — Chapter 3: Honoring Time Expectations

Week 3 — Chapters 4–5: Engaging Time Guilt / Recognizing Time Thieves

Week 4 — Chapters 6–7: Mastering Time Pivots / Accounting for Your Time

Week 5 — Chapter 8: Planning the Ideal Week

Week 6 — Chapter 9 & Appendix A: The Ultimate End of Time / Practicing Sabbath

The Gift of Time & The Art of Shepherding Time

Read before you meet: Chapters 1–2

Open

When you were first starting in ministry, what did you imagine your weekly schedule would look like? How close was reality?

Big Idea

Chapter 1 makes the case that time is not a resource pastors manage on their own terms — it's a gift entrusted by God, to be stewarded with intentionality, humility, and hope.

Chapter 2 turns from theology to practice: shepherding time is itself a pastoral skill. How a pastor handles Monday through Friday sets the course for how he shepherds souls on Sunday.

♦ *“In Scripture, the goal of time is to do good.” — “How we shepherd time Monday through Friday will set the course for how we shepherd souls on Sunday.”*

Discuss

FROM THE BOOK

1. How do you think focusing on Christ rather than our failures can help us better use our time?
2. As pastors, we see time as a context for worship. How does shepherding time increase worship in the heart of the pastor?
3. As a minister of the gospel, you consider all of life as a context for making and multiplying disciples. What does that look like in your ministry?
4. Where is one area in which you can shepherd your time more intentionally?

AS A TEAM

- + Where do we, as a staff, unintentionally treat time as ours to control rather than a shared trust from Christ? Does our team culture reward busyness over faithfulness?

Act

Individually, begin each day this week with Psalm 90:12 and list three time-uses to treat as precious. At next week's meeting, each person shares one thing they noticed.

Close

Close in prayer, asking God to reshape how your team sees the week ahead — not as hours to survive, but as a gift to steward together.

Honoring Time Expectations

Read before you meet: Chapter 3

Open

What's one expectation on your time that you've simply assumed exists — without ever actually confirming it with anyone?

Big Idea

A healthy church culture around pastoral time doesn't happen by accident — it has to be shaped. And it starts at home: faithful shepherding of the flock begins with faithfully shepherding your own family.

♦ *“Faithful shepherding of God’s flock begins with faithful shepherding at home.” — “Few things can shape the culture of your church like shepherding expectations on your pastoral ministry time.”*

Discuss

FROM THE BOOK

1. Have you unwittingly discovered expectations those in your church have for you (perhaps by failing to meet them and finding out later)? Go ahead and write them down.
2. What are the hardest biblical expectations for you to implement? Why is that?
3. Faithful shepherding of God’s flock begins with faithful shepherding at home. Are you meeting the needs and expectations of your family in this season? If not, consider what might need to change.
4. Few things can shape the culture of your church like shepherding expectations on your pastoral ministry time. What are some active and passive ways you might begin to do this?

AS A TEAM

- + What unspoken expectations does our staff culture place on each other's time — response speed, evening availability, weekend presence? Which of these need to be named out loud and revisited together?

Act

Individually, journal your current perception of time within your role — where it feels abundant, where it feels scarce. Share one honest observation with the team next week.

Close

Pray for each team member's family by name, asking God to help this team protect one another's homes, not just the church's calendar.

Engaging Time Guilt & Recognizing Time Thieves

Read before you meet: Chapters 4–5

Open

On a scale of 1–10, how much guilt did you carry about your calendar this week? What's driving that number?

Big Idea

Chapter 4 draws a sharp line between true guilt (an actual failure of stewardship) and false guilt (the ache of simply being finite) — and insists the gospel answers both differently.

Chapter 5 names the everyday thieves — curiosity, distraction, interruption, small compromises — that quietly drain a pastor's most precious resource before he notices it's gone.

♦ *“The value of pastors is not in what they do but who they are in Christ.” — “Once time is stolen, we can never get it back.”*

Discuss

FROM THE BOOK

1. Can you identify a recent experience of true guilt — an actual failure in your stewardship of time or your calling? How did you respond to it?
2. Can you identify a recent experience of false guilt — a feeling of failure that was not rooted in actual sin? Where did it come from?
3. How does the gospel bring a strong sense of freedom from guilt to your ministry?
4. What time thief has stolen the most of your time?
5. Think about practical steps you can take to guard against distractions. What are one or two things you can put in place right away?

AS A TEAM

- + Do we, as a staff, give each other room to name true guilt honestly — without turning every mistake into false guilt? What time thief shows up most often in our shared calendar (unclear roles, unnecessary meetings, other)?

Act

Individually, name three things you feel guilty about this week and sort each as true or false guilt, with one gospel truth that answers it. Pair up with one teammate this week to share your list.

Close

Pray specifically against false guilt on this team — that grace, not performance, would define how you speak to one another this season.

Mastering Time Pivots & Accounting for Your Time

Read before you meet: Chapters 6–7

Open

Tell the group about the fastest, most jarring pivot you had to make this week — from what, to what?

Big Idea

Chapter 6 explores the pastor's constant need to pivot between roles — family, church, community — without losing sight of the gospel purpose underneath each one.

Chapter 7 turns to honest accounting: using the parable of the talents as the lens for asking what you're actually doing with the time entrusted to you.

♦ *“Every pastor possesses a unique and dangerous skill set: the ability to pivot in time.” — “The parable of the talents raises the question: What are you doing while you wait on Christ?”*

Discuss

FROM THE BOOK

1. How do you currently recognize and respond to the different roles you inhabit throughout your day? Where might you be unintentionally neglecting the gospel purpose of your time?
2. Who are the trusted individuals in your life who can help you maintain awareness of your roles, responsibilities, and relational contexts?
3. How does your view of God — his character, generosity, and joy — shape the way you invest the “talents” he has entrusted to you in pastoral ministry?
4. What specific areas of ministry require your best “kind” of time, and how can you deliberately align your strongest hours with the most spiritually weighty responsibilities?

AS A TEAM

- +. How well do we help each other pivot between roles — do we protect each other's family time, or does every text and email get treated as needing an instant pivot?

Act

Individually, establish a morning and evening routine for the week and track its effect on your productivity and peace of mind. Report back briefly next week.

Close

Pray for wisdom to recognize the roles God has actually called each team member to this season — and the discernment to let go of the ones he hasn't.

Planning the Ideal Week

Read before you meet: Chapter 8

Open

If you built your calendar purely around your energy instead of your inbox, what's the first thing that would change?

Big Idea

Chapter 8 lays out a three-level method for building an ideal week: pre-visualizing the shape of your week, building a daily rhythm around your energy, and finally assigning specific tasks into that structure.

This is the chapter behind the companion Ideal Week Worksheet. If your team hasn't used it yet, this is the week — have each person fill it out before you meet, and bring it to discuss.

Discuss

FROM THE BOOK

1. How does remembering that time belongs to Christ reshape the way you plan your week?
2. Which parts of your current rhythm reveal areas where your heart still resists his ownership?
3. Which priorities in your calling consistently get overshadowed by urgency or distraction, and how might pre-visualizing or time blocking help you steward those responsibilities with greater faithfulness?
4. As you consider your natural weekly energy curve, what specific changes could help you match your deepest work with your highest focus?

AS A TEAM

- +. Where do our individual ideal weeks collide with each other — whose planned deep-work block gets interrupted by someone else's need for a quick answer? What could this team agree to protect on each other's behalf?

Act

Each team member brings a completed Ideal Week Worksheet to this meeting. As a group, identify one block per person the whole team commits to protecting (e.g., no staff meetings during anyone's identified Deep Work time).

Close

Pray that this team would have the courage to actually protect what you agree to protect today — not just on paper, but on the calendar.

The Ultimate End of Time & Practicing Sabbath

Read before you meet: Chapter 9 & Appendix A

Open

When's the last time you rested without feeling guilty about it?

Big Idea

Chapter 9 zooms out to eternity: time is stewarded imperfectly now, but there is a day coming when it will be perfectly shepherded by Christ himself.

Appendix A grounds that hope in a weekly practice — Sabbath is not a diversion from ministry but a countercultural act of trust that the world, and the church, continues without you.

♦ *“There is a day coming when all time will be perfectly shepherded by the Great Shepherd, Jesus Christ.” — “Sabbath interrupts the lie that everything depends on our effort.”*

Discuss

FROM THE BOOK

1. How does seeing time as seasonal help with the different ways to shepherd time?
2. How do the promises of God at the end of time shape how we pursue shepherding time?
3. What are some ways you can cultivate an eternal perspective in your daily time management?
4. Sabbath carries a communal dimension — it bears more fruit when a community understands and supports it. How could this team actively support each other's Sabbath, rather than unintentionally undermining it?

AS A TEAM

- + Does everyone on this team actually know each other's Sabbath day? Do we protect it for one another, or does ministry “urgency” regularly bleed into it?

Act

Individually, create your own Eternal Perspective List this week. As a team, name your Sabbath days out loud to each other and agree on how you'll guard them for one another going forward. Revisit this commitment in three months.

Close

Close this six-week study by thanking God together — not for finishing a book, but for the Great Shepherd who holds all of your time, even the parts you never got around to fixing.