
Balancing Life, Work, and Ministry: 6 Issue for the Bivocational Pastor

For the last three years, I've served as a bivocational pastor with [The Fellowship](#). Over a year ago, I also joined our body of Elders to serve alongside the men who give strategic and missional leadership to our church family. In comparison to the first twenty-two years of ministry, it has been a significant adjustment. I am constantly looking for the **proper balance in life, work, and professional ministry**. As I have thought through it all, for my own sanity, I decided to make a quick list of the top issues I am working through as a bivocational pastor.

1. Relationships. It is so tempting for me to expend all of my emotional energy on my full-time job at LifeWay first, put the church in second place, and then allow my family to fall to third. It is tempting and it is wrong. Having two jobs requires extra diligence for me to show preference to Angie, Andrew, and Chris.

2. Rest. Admittedly, I have (or have learned to have) a driven personality. My preference is to be productive. I know I need to rest but often feel guilty for doing it. There is always more work to be done, something to read, an email that needs a response, a plan that needs refining, and a sermon that needs writing. On top of it all, I love to write. But it is an emotionally taxing process. So, I'm trying to learn to not feel guilty for simply taking a day (or half of a day) to just sit down and relax.

3. Study time. All bivocational ministers struggle with this one. We just need to find ways to study well; both efficiently and effectively. Every sermon still demands copious amounts of study and prayer. I'm blessed to serve with two other teaching pastors and we share the load of sermon preparation.

4. Faith. Did I mention that I'm a driven person? Faith sometimes gets run over by the "I've got this" attitude. Faith often requires you to wait. It always requires that you surrender control. By nature, I'm not good at either waiting or surrendering. It is a good thing that the Lord is so patient and the Spirit is such a wonderful instructor.

5. Emotional frustration. Being in ministry as your full-time vocational work, it affords you the chance to connect with the church family on a deep level. As a bivocational pastor, I do not have all of the opportunities to emotionally connect with members of our church. At times, I am emotionally frustrated that I cannot be present, connected, and deeply embedded into everyone's life. So, I have to remember that I am simply one of the under-shepherds. The Lord has not lost control of caring for His people.

6. Vision capacity. Having multiple responsibilities for leadership means that my capacity for visioning is spread over multiple disciplines. I am a leader at church, a director of publishing at work, an author, and also travel to speak in various conferences and churches. Just doing the first two require discipline to lean into the Word and prayer in order to stay in tune with God's will. Returning to point number one, all of this must be subservient to living better as a husband and father. It is so apparent to me that I need to lean more heavily into the work of leading my

wife and sons better.

It all stands as a key reminder for all of us. **There's only one God and I'm not Him.** Thank goodness for that fact. Every bivocational pastor I meet loves the work that God has entrusted into their hands. We hope to be found faithful in our professional and ministerial work. Oftentimes, we long for the day that we only had one of the two. And you can well imagine which one we'd most likely choose.

So, for my merry band of bivocational pastors out there in the trenches today, take heart. The church is still led by the Chief Shepherd and you are deeply loved by the King of Glory.

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