

Ten Time Management Ideas for Leaders

Several months ago we ran a blog survey seeking to understand those who read the blog on a regular basis and what would be helpful to them in future posts. Many people asked about managing schedules and getting the most out of time. It is wise to ask the question because desiring to steward time well is an act of wisdom. For example, Moses prayed, "Teach us to number our days carefully so that we may develop *wisdom* in our hearts" (Psalm 90:12). Likewise, the apostle Paul challenged us to walk wisely and make the most of the time (Ephesians 5:15-16). While we are incapable of creating more time, we can get more out of the limited time we have. Here are ten ways I work to get the most out of my time:

1. View time as a precious resource.

Some abhor the thought of wasting money yet squander immense amounts of time. Wise people recognize the brevity of this life and steward their time well.

2. Wake up early.

If you want to have more time in your day, you really only have two options: stay up later or wake up earlier. The wisdom writer scolded: "How long will you stay in bed, you slacker? When will you get up from your sleep?" (Proverbs 6:9).

3. Exercise

When you are busy, exercise can feel counterintuitive. After all, you are not doing something else that needs to be done so you can exercise. But exercise makes you more productive by helping you sleep better, fight stress, and fuel mental energy.

4. Find a repeatable rhythm in your schedule.

As quickly as you can, discover when the best time is to execute important tasks. And repeat over and over. Some have asked how I prepare sermons while serving as a vice president of LifeWay. The bulk of my sermon prep is every Monday night from 7pm-1am. Which brings me to the next point...

5. Choose a work night.

Kaye and I choose a "work night" each week (sometimes twice a week) where each of us knocks out work. Because we are both working during the evening, neither feels neglected. I use that night for message preparation, reading, or writing.

6. Keep a "stop doing" list.

Peter Drucker said, "There is nothing so useless as doing efficiently that which should not be

done at all.” At key pause times in a year, reflect on your leadership and life and create a “stop doing” list. Steal energy and thinking from the things that are not as important and give energy and thinking to what is most important.

7. Develop and trust others.

One way to squander your time is to micromanage. When you have capable men and women of character around you, trust them. While developing others requires time, when people are developed, your time is multiplied.

8. Schedule meetings back to back.

If you have a meeting that ends at 9am and another one starts at 9:30, typically those 30 minutes in between are not very productive. Much better is to stack meetings back to back and create larger blocks of time not in meetings.

9. Block off large sections of time.

To engage in deep preparation, planning, creative work, or strategic thinking, large blocks of time really work best. Schedule and guard those well.

10. Don't let email own you.

Don't let email own you, especially when in those large blocks of creative or planning time. If emails in your inbox drive you mad, you can move non-urgent emails to a follow-up folder and deal with them in a time you regularly set aside for emails.

> [Read more from Eric.](#)