The Ministry Benefits of Weekly Downtime

"Why do you take a day-off during the week? The devil doesn't take a day off!" said one cranky old man to a young pastor.

"Because I am not trying to be like the devil" quipped the pastor.

Well done, pastor. Well done.

Ministry leaders must take a day off each week or they lack the moral authority to encourage those they serve to rest. Ministry leaders must take a day off each week for the sake of their own health, both physical and spiritual health. Without a time to rest, leaders will burn out or implode. Churches that make it difficult for church leaders to take a day off are harming the leaders and the church. Thankfully I have always served in churches that value the ministry leaders having time to rest. Thankfully the people who thought negatively about "days off" for ministry leaders weren't in positions of decision-making.

If you are one of those people who think ministry leaders only work on Sundays, God loves you in the midst of your foolishness. But you are really, really foolish.

I had always taken Fridays as my "day off" before leaving the local church and serving as senior vice-president at LifeWay Christian Resources. Other friends of mine took Mondays off. Those seem to be the most common days off for ministry leaders. When I left local church ministry to serve at LifeWay, I learned what an actual weekend was. I had no idea what that word "weekend" really meant till *not* being on staff at a local church. Now that I have gone back to the local church, my current "day off" is Monday but I am going to experiment with Friday again too.

I have asked others which day is the best "day off" for ministry leaders and here are the best arguments I have heard for each day:

Take Mondays off:

- Sunday is the end of your week. Take Sunday night and Monday off and rest before you start a new week.
- The "Monday blues" can be real for ministry leaders. You are more susceptible to making bad decisions and express frustration to others. Take off and come back in a better place. You will have fewer regrets for your decisions and your interactions with others.
- If you take Fridays off, you will be tired the entire week in the office. Rest up on Monday and you will enjoy the week more. And you will be more productive.

Take Fridays off:

- On Mondays, you will not be able to resist problem solving from the weekend services,

so you won't really mentally be "off" on Mondays. On Friday, there is a better chance your task list is more complete

- You put yourself behind on sermon prep if you take Mondays off.
- You are exhausted on Mondays. Don't give that time to your family. Give them Friday.

Which day is best? I recently polled church leaders on Twitter and 70% of those who responded chose Fridays over Mondays. It likely depends on the rhythm and the personality of the leader. You can experiment and see which works best for you. Or you can stick with what you have always known. The most important thing is that you are actually taking your day off.

> [Read more from Eric](#).