

stuff you wish they taught in seminary



5 Reasons

**WHY NON-TEACHING PASTORS SHOULD WANT
GREAT TEACHING AT THEIR CHURCHES**

RICH BIRCH



One of the privileges I have had in ministry is walking alongside some incredible teaching pastors. Seeing these individuals hone their craft week in and week out has been one of the highlights of my ministry career, and I have seen the impact that great teaching can have on a growing church.

[Bruxy Cavey](#) from The Meeting House in Toronto, Canada has an amazing ability to take complex theological and academic ideas and apply them in an accessible and thought-provoking manner. I love that every weekend he opens himself up to an open forum Q&A for his audience to ask questions. It was amazing to watch the preparation process up close as he prepared both the weekend's message and the answers to any questions that might be raised by his listeners.

[Carey Nieuwhof](#) is a student of effective communication. I love his drive for communicating with unchurched people. Seeing him try to develop his abilities on a regular basis was a good reminder for me to continually step up my own leadership game.

[Tim Lucas](#) from Liquid Church in New Jersey is inventing a brand-new way to communicate. His focus on being true to the text while remaining engaging at the same time is virtually unparalleled by any other communicators across the country. I love getting an up-close look at how he crafts his messages and then rolls them out in community.

Over the years, I've found myself talking to other staff pastors in churches and realized that my view on the importance of teaching is not a universal one. In fact, it's almost like some non-teaching pastors look down on what's happening during that portion of Sunday morning teaching, as if they believe what they're doing is so much more important than those 35 minutes dedicated to the sermon.

The truth is this: whether you work for a church today or whether you're involved in leadership as a volunteer, you should want great, relevant, Bible-based teaching to take place week in and week out at your church.

I believe there is possibly no greater factor that will determine whether your ministry will thrive than the teaching on Sunday mornings—even if you are not the teaching pastor. Here's why:

Teaching is the reason why people show up

At a very basic level, people come to your church because of what happens behind the pulpit on Sunday morning. In fact, a recent Gallup poll **found that three-quarters of people** attend church because of the teaching on a Sunday morning. [\[ref\]](#)

This might be humbling to us if we are in a non-teaching role, but we need to realize that the teaching is at the very center of what drives a growing and thriving church. **We are in our roles at our churches because people are coming to hear the teaching on a Sunday morning, and**

the other ministries are there to support that central ministry. At its core, churches are teaching organizations.

Teaching leads the conversation

In healthy and growing churches, it's usually the teaching that people are talking about on a regular basis. **Whatever is being taught on a Sunday morning is likely setting the temperature for the conversations that the church is having outside the weekend.**



Your church is talking about and wrestling through the issues and topics that are being taught on Sunday mornings. If you want to be aware of what your people are discussing, then you need to understand what's happening on a Sunday morning at your church.

Teaching shapes the culture

Beyond the influence that teaching has on your congregation's conversations, churches are subcultures that reflect the teaching that takes place on a given weekend. The ideas that are lifted up and highlighted as important during the weekend on a regular basis become the kind of things that are important to the church. Ideally, there's a strong alignment between what the church does and what the church says on a Sunday morning. **What the church talks about on a Sunday morning becomes the actions of the broader church.**

Here's an important tip if you're in a non-teaching pastoral or leadership role at your church: **be wise and align your ministry area to the direction set on a Sunday morning at your church.** I've seen too many support leaders try to develop an alternate vision to what's happening on Sunday mornings to their own detriment and ultimately to their ministry's downfall.

Teaching has the biggest audience

Regardless of the size of your church – whether you're a few dozen in a new church plant or part of one of the largest megachurches in the country – the biggest audience that your church connects with on a regular basis is in the weekend teaching environment. It's the time and place where messages are communicated and transferred to the broader community. It is the largest platform from which to communicate with the church as a whole. Although there may be lots of people in small groups or in other sub-ministries, Sunday morning (or whenever you have your weekend service) is still the time when people are the most dialed in and focused. This is important to understand as a staff leader within the broader church.

Knowing that the weekend service is the prime time for audiences to tune in, why not try to feed the teaching pastor at your church helpful illustrations or examples of what they're teaching on from your ministry area? The profile that's generated through a Sunday morning can have a greater impact than any sort of internal communication piece from within your ministry area. **Now, you don't want to try to hijack the teaching pastor's time by getting them to focus on your area.** Instead, look to support what's happening from the pulpit by providing extra resources to the teaching pastors. It's a win-win scenario, helping the teaching pastor with new resources but also helping your area gain a broader audience.

Teaching points to the future



When change comes about in a church, it starts with the teaching pastor's Sunday message which then reverberates out to the entire church. This is an important dynamic to understand as a leader within a church. The nuanced changes that take place within the teaching on a Sunday morning will ultimately lead the church in a brand-new direction. In a very real way, teaching pastors speak the reality of the future into existence. First, they draw us back to scripture and help us understand how that scripture applies today in

the church. Then the broader church comes in alignment with that teaching, and the church moves in a new direction. **If you're not connected to the teaching of the church, then you're not connected to the direction of the church.**

A personal note to non-teaching pastors and leaders

If you are a non-teaching pastor or other leader who isn't hearing the weekend's teaching, you are missing out. Far too frequently I have seen staff pastors who are so busy with their area of ministry that they can't get into the main service and listen to what is being taught.

This seems justifiable because you're caring for and concerned about your area. However, if this goes on too long, your area will begin to drift out of touch with the broader church. **If you're unable to get into the weekend teaching environment, you need to go out of your way to work with your supervisor to ensure that you can gain access to it.** If resources such as podcasts and video replays are available to you, then there's no excuse. With those resources, you can stay aligned even if you're unable to attend a service on a weekend, but I would strongly recommend that you sit in on the weekend service, listen to the teaching, and ask how the teaching impacts your ministry area.

Ask yourself how you can support the teaching ministry of the church as you look to the future. Teaching is critically important for your church. I would encourage you to find a way to support it and align your ministry around it.

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