

stuff you wish they taught in seminary

A photograph of four hands stacked on top of each other, palm down, on a rustic wooden surface. The hands are of different skin tones, suggesting diversity. The wood has a prominent grain and some darker staining. The hands are positioned in the center of the frame, with the fingers pointing towards the bottom corners.

--- **SIX** --- **PASTORAL TIPS FOR NON-PASTORAL TYPES** ---

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6 PASTORAL TIPS FOR NON-PASTORAL TYPES

Church leaders come in all shapes and sizes. Some of us are strategic thinkers ... some aren't. You might be called to teach the Bible ... while others don't have that same burning drive. Some of us love being around and helping other people ... while others don't. Does not being "pastoral" let you off the hook for some basic pastoral care disciplines? I've heard some church leaders twist the idea of gifting so they feel totally freed from caring for the people in their church. That seems like a misapplication of Paul's teaching on how we function as a community of Christ. [\[ref\]](#) Even if we aren't in a primarily "caring" role, we need to care for people. Here are six simple tips for folks (like me!) to whom all this "people stuff" doesn't come naturally:

• **Use Names** // Dale Carnegie said a person's name is to him or her "the sweetest and most important sound in any language." People want to be known. The first step to knowing someone is to acknowledge his or her name. It is okay to say, "Your name is Mike, right?" He will appreciate it if it isn't ... and be flattered if it is. Use their names every time you see people. Repeating their names in every situation helps you to remember them. On the phone, ask for a name early, write it down, and then continue to use it during the conversation. Use [name tags in your church](#) to help people learn others' names.

• **Look People in the Eye** // Focus on who you're talking to and ignore the rest of the world around you. This is a sure-fire way to draw people to your leadership. When you're standing in your church foyer talking with someone, tune out everything else. If someone walks up to you to ask a question, stay focused on the person you are talking to. It shows a deep sense of care and concern for people.

• **Remind Yourself of People's Needs** // Every weekend dozens of people will give you hints to needs in their lives ... some of them small and some of them big! You need a way to jot down these items quickly. I [recommend a pocket briefcase](#) rather than your phone because pulling out a phone is the universal sign of disconnect from the people around you. At the end of the weekend, transfer those prayer needs or follow-up items to your calendar. Is Tara going in for surgery on Thursday? Drop that in your calendar for that morning as a reminder to pray and phone her on your way into the office. Is Fred heading south for a month's vacation? Drop a reminder in your calendar to call him and ask him how it was after he returns.

• **Use Your Database** // Chances are you have some sort of [church management system](#) that collects all kinds of information about people. It'll tell you about their families, what groups and classes they've participated in, their birthdays, etc. Use this information to care for people! Before you make phone calls, open up people's profiles to remind yourself of their kids' names. When you are heading into a team meeting, look through the profiles of the leaders to find "shareable" information on each of them as conversation starters.

• **Do Social Media Strategically** // Set aside 10-15 minutes a day and dig into people's lives. You'll learn a lot about what is important to your team by seeing what they are talking about. Use this information as you interact with the people in your church. Dump it into the notes in your church management system or as reminders for future "check ins" with your community in your calendar. Resist the temptation to keep scrolling. Instead, mine information you can use to connect with people. Don't just comment on Facebook when it reminds you of someone's birthday ... pick up the phone for a quick 2-minute call. When you see a milestone in a family's life (e.g., graduations, vacations, weddings, etc.) write a quick card to them and pop it in the mail.

• **Use These 7 Powerful Words Every Weekend** // "Can I pray for you, right now?" Don't wait. Pray for people right there and then. If you tell them you'll pray later, you're generating a guilt point for you because you probably won't, plus you missed an opportunity to express immediate concern. Be bold and take the initiative to pray for them in the moment. People will appreciate the care and concern, plus it will alleviate you needing to loop back in the future [unseminary](#).

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