

stuff you wish they taught in seminary



Thanks!

7 People

***EVERY EXECUTIVE PASTOR SHOULD
THANK BEFORE NEW YEAR'S EVE***

RICH BIRCH



As the year winds down, it's time for executive pastors to reflect on the past year of ministry. A growing church requires a tremendous amount of effort from a wide variety of people, groups, and communities, and the year's end offers an opportunity to acknowledge the people who make our churches and ministries possible.

Below is a list of seven groups of people whose background roles are an integral part of making any church happen. Remember and honor these folks with a card, a small gift, or another way to recognize the contribution they made to your church this year.

Team Spouses

This might be the most overlooked group of people who help make your ministry possible.

Many members of your team go home to spouses who support them throughout the year; that kind of support empowers your staff to engage in ministry at a profound level. **Expressing your thanks and appreciation to the spouses of your team is well-received any time of the year but especially during the holidays.**

Key Donors

Many churches participate in a year-end giving campaign, so December can often be a time when we overlook those who give faithfully throughout the year.

Remember your faithful givers this December – review your financial data, find the top fifty financial contributors, and thank them. Reaching out to these donors can heighten the sense of community for those people who might wish they could do more at the holidays but decide to give all year long instead.

Community Leaders

Our churches serve within a web of community leaders who make a difference every day, from the mayor and town council to the fire chief, police chief, and other various community leaders.

This is a good time of year to reach out on behalf of the church and thank these leaders for their partnership. **Maybe you had a council member who helped you with a particularly prickly neighbor earlier in the year, or maybe the police chief visited your student program and helped them with a special event.** As you look back over the year, remember to recognize the great work that these folks do to increase the safety and quality of life in our communities.

Core Vendors

Every church relies on a series of vendors to perform specific tasks throughout the year.

Why not thank them for the way they have enabled your ministry to take place? **Ask your finance people to identify the top**

ten organizations that invoiced you this past year, and reach out to thank your sales or customer service contacts at those companies who provided vital support and services to your church.

Facility Teams

There is always a group of volunteers (and maybe a staff member or two) who help manage your church's facilities. **These individuals work overtime at Christmas; however, they tended your facility all year long, from the chaos of summer camp to clearing snow in winter.**



This group of people usually prefers to stay out of the limelight; still, they deserve recognition and thanks. If you rent a facility such as a school, YMCA gym, or movie theater, be extra certain to thank the facility team. This group makes a significant difference to the operation of your campuses and acknowledging their service can help reinforce solid relationships as you head into a long winter ahead.

Professional Help

It's highly likely that you engaged the services of a lawyer, accountant, or auditor over the course of the year. While these professional services may not represent a large portion of your budget, they do perform an important function by providing a layer of protection that helps your church function in a legal, ethical, and professional manner. **Reaching out and thanking those professionals at this time of year is a wise move, and it will be remembered in the new year when you need to call upon them again.**

Your Lead Pastor

Executive pastors work closely with the lead pastor; the pair can be as close as siblings due to all the time they spend working together.

You share the weight of the leadership load; however, at the end of the day, lead pastors carry a tremendous amount of responsibility in the management and leadership of the church. **While you're in this mode of thankfulness, remember to slow down and thank your lead pastor.** Take time to speak specifically about two or three things that made a real difference both in the life of the ministry and to you personally this year. Thank your lead pastor for their consistent commitment to speaking, casting vision, and leading within the staff team. Acknowledge the sacrifices that they've made to serve the church with such excellence.

At this time of year, lead pastors receive tons of cards and maybe even little gifts, but taking a moment to offer your own sincere thanks will go a long way to continuing to build a healthy relationship with your lead pastor for the coming year.

How do you thank the people that make your ministry possible? Leave a comment [here](#) on how you like to acknowledge the people in your community that are making a difference.

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An advertisement for Design Pickle. It features a black background with a green diagonal stripe. The text "UNLIMITED GRAPHIC DESIGN HELP for only \$370 per month." is written in large, bold, green and white letters. Below this, it says "Can someone say Amen?" in white. At the bottom, there is a call to action: "LEARN MORE @ designpickle.com" in white, and the Design Pickle logo (a white circle with a black pickaxe) and the text "DESIGN PICKLE" in white.