A pastor's hours

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When I make a new non-churchy friend, he or she often asks
what exactly I do with my time as a pastor outside Sunday morning.

A lot, actually—often more than my three-quarter-time
position would suggest. I plan for Sunday, prepare sermons, connect with other
pastors, visit the sick and the elderly, plan or attend community events, stay
up on scholarship, teach classes, write articles, pray and work with other
churches in my denomination. And that's only on Monday! My non-church friends
are often surprised by the range of activities, as I expect many members would
be as well.

On a recent trip to Scotland, where I once served as an
assistant minister in the Church of Scotland, I was reminded of the different
expectations of pastors in that country. In the congregation I served, pastors
were expected to visit congregation members for huge portions of their
workweeks.

This emphasis on pastoral visiting did not seem to be unique
to my congregation. As one colleague explained it, in many parishes there's an
expectation that the pastor "bring the church" to people's homes on visits
rather than people regularly going to church themselves on Sunday.

I write this all because as a part-time solo pastor, I'm
hyper-aware of how I spend my time each week. The pastor before me served full
time, and our job descriptions are basically identical—though I have less time
in which to work. So I'm careful with how I spend my 30 hours.

It seems to me, though, that I would work quite differently
than my predecessor even if I were full time. Most pastors have a large amount
of personal choice in how they spend their workweek, and because of the range
of duties, no two pastors will work in the same way. Serving as a pastor,

especially as a solo pastor, involves a lot of self-direction and individual decisions.

In what ways can pastors best balance their own gifts and graces with the needs of their congregations? Is it important for a congregation to know what its pastor is doing at all (or at least most) times?