

Ten reasons why being a pastor is the best job ever

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In the blog-o-sphere, pastors like to complain. Mainly, because this is a good space for it. Where else can church leaders vent? Also, it's good to strategize here. But I also love to remember just how good I've got it. I know some of these sound trite. I know they sound silly. But they are the things that make me really happy and fulfilled.

1) Life of the mind. Writing sermons can be an intellectually demanding endeavor. Each week, you're doing research and crafting words. Because of that, you're always studying, writing, and editing, which is incredibly rewarding for the life of the mind.

2) Witness to life's most important moments. Birth. Baptism. Marriage. Death. Divorce. Depression. Celebration. You are there for the most crucial events in people's lives. Whether they are holidays or funerals, you're part of it. Often, you're responsible for orchestrating those moments into something meaningful.

3) Writing. Pastors often tell me, "I want to be a writer."

I tell them, "You are." If you write a manuscript, you write at least 5 pages a week. Multiply that by 50, and you've written the equivalent of a 250-page book. Every year. You don't have to stress about royalties, agents, or editors. You can just write. And you get paid for it.

4) Holy moments. On Demand. If you wear a collar or introduce yourself with "Rev." or use some other identifier, then people will often ask you for things. Beautiful things. A pregnant woman will come up to you and ask, "Will you bless my child?" And you stand there, in the hotel lobby, with one hand on her belly and the other one stretched up to God, asking for health and wellness.

5) Crisis counseling. On demand. A stranger will ask you for prayer. When you pray for them, then they swear that God sent you. And, who knows? Maybe God did.

6) Relating to anyone. You can easily become the confidante or counselor of anyone, at any strata of society. From CEOs to sex workers, people trust you.

7) Flowers. When people take apart the flowers from Sunday, they will often leave one on your desk. It's the best gift.

8) Variety. Whether you are interested in plumbing or preaching, there is a huge diversity of skills needed on the job. You are a counselor, a community organizer, an activist, an agitator, an administrator, a building expert, a speaker—the list is endless. Even though this can make us feel incompetent, it's also rewarding to have new challenges every day.

9) Flexible time. You have to work hardest during the times when the rest of the world is having fun—Christmas, Easter, and not to mention *every single weekend*. You are "on call" a lot of the time, in order to run to the hospital to pray over someone who is dying. But this does come with a trade-off. When you need to pick your kid up from school, you can. In fact, during my years as a pastor, I've usually been able to be home when my daughter gets home from school. If you're in a denominational church, you can usually get four weeks

of vacations and two weeks of study leave. Increasingly, churches have found sabbaticals to be beneficial for pastors. And that's amazing.

10) Colleagues. After going to a gathering at my house, a friend was startled, "You hang out with the most interesting people!" I smiled. It's true. My friends are brilliant, creative and they all want to save the world. I would have never had such amazing colleagues if I weren't a minister.

I could go on... and on... (educational opportunities, scholarships, travel, mentors...) but I'll stop there. Just know that my heart bursts with gratitude every time I think about it.