



2026 PASTOR LEADERSHIP RETREAT

Abide in Me

*I am the vine, you are the branches.
Whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit,
because without me you can do nothing.*

John 15:5



Leadership Soundtracks Exercise

Retire: Write down one or more of the negative soundtracks you fall prey to.

↳ Reflect on each one and ask, “Is it true? Is it helpful? Is it kind?”

Replace: Write down a new soundtrack to replace each old one with.

Repeat: Write down the specific ways you plan to remind yourself to repeat these when old soundtracks start playing.

To lead like Jesus, we must ruthlessly eliminate hurry from our lives.

4 Practices of an Unhurried Pastor

Every leader is called to practice all three forms of courage.

1) Silence & Solitude

- Daily time alone with God, free from noise and distraction.
- Cultivate a practice of abiding in the Lord throughout the day.

2) Sabbath

- A weekly day to stop, rest, delight, and worship.
- Trust God to carry the parish while you rest in Him.

3) Simplicity

- Declutter possessions, commitments, and calendars.
- Focus on what bears fruit, prune the rest.

4) Slowing Down

- Practice simple guidelines that help you move through your day at a slower pace (such as setting clear times and limits for phone usage, email, and social media).
- Take regular retreat days and times for reflection

Reflection Questions

When I am transferred from this parish, people will say, 'He was a pastor who...'

What would they say now? What do I want them to say?

What shift must I make to embody the leader I long to be?

My Next Step

Rank yourself from strongest to weakest in practicing these four habits. Over the next 30 days, determine how you will practice your weakest area.

- ↳ Silence & Solitude:
- ↳ Sabbath:
- ↳ Simplicity:
- ↳ Slowing Down:

Pray over your Calendar

God, you know what's on my calendar. You know I have more 'to dos' than I have slots in my day. I am not sure what needs to be set aside, but something has to go. I need your guidance to help me set priorities. You tell me in John 15 that you want my life to be fruitful, full of rich abundance, that multiplies into the lives of others. But you also warn me that fruitfulness means pruning.

A branch on a vine that bears no fruit is lopped off. And a branch that does produce is snipped back so that the energy flowing through it will be directed to fruitfulness and not merely greenery. Prune my life, Father, great and wise gardener that you are. Help me now to cut back what might be good, but not best, what takes more energy than it produces, impressive as it might seem.

This is a discipline, a discipline of focus. I am often so greedy to pack my life with more, to 'have it all.' I have to choose the right from among all the good. Give me direction by giving me peace in one direction. I give you my calendar and the priorities it represents. I give you rights to my priorities. I will audit and you will help me choose, realistically what is and is not intended by your will. Thank you for the pruning! In Jesus, **Amen.**

Calendar Reflection Exercise

Use the sample calendar provided at your table to reflect on the following:

- ↳ What activities would give you life?

- ↳ What would you find draining or difficult?

- ↳ What values or priorities seem to shape this calendar?

Rule of Life Exercise

Identify 1-2 rhythms that help you will remain in Christ and lead from that place.

- 1) Prayer & Spiritual Life:** Remain rooted in Christ through daily and weekly spiritual practices. (daily prayer and holy hour, spiritual direction, spiritual reading)
- 2) Pastoral Presence:** Be truly present with your people, not just administratively responsible for them. (visits, conversations, confessions, direction)
- 3) Rest & Renewal:** Take intentional time for rest that restores you for ministry. (hobbies, exercise, solitude, unhurried sabbath)
- 4) Leadership & Stewardship:** Leading intentionally, not reactively. (planning, vision casting, empowering staff, key decisions)
- 5) Family & Friendship:** Invest in relationships that restore you as a man. (close friends, spiritual director, priest fraternity, time with family)

SESSION 5

How a Great Pastor Spends his Time

Rule of Life Exercise

	START	STOP	CONTINUE
Prayer & Spiritual Life			
Pastoral Presence			
Rest & Renewal			
Leadership & Stewardship			
Family & Friendship			

The fruitfulness of your parish is tied not only to your prayer and discipleship, but also to your courage as a leader.

The Three Types of Courage

Every leader is called to practice all three forms of courage.

1) Personal Courage: Facing the truth about yourself as a leader.

- Seeing your weaknesses honestly.
- Naming the behaviors or blind spots that limit your leadership.
- Asking for feedback, even when it stings.

2) Interpersonal Courage: Speaking truth with love to others.

- Addressing underperformance.
- Having hard conversations you've avoided.
- Guiding or correcting those you lead

3) Public Courage: Taking a stand and risking failure publicly.

- Preaching difficult truths.
- Leading bold initiatives.
- Making decisions that carry risk for the sake of the Gospel.

Reflection Questions

Where do I need to be more honest with myself?

↳ I will seek feedback this month from: _____

What conversation have I been avoiding that God is asking me to have?

↳ I will speak with _____ by (date) _____.

Where am I playing it too safe in my leadership? List these areas out. Where is Jesus calling me and my parish to “put out into the deep?”

↳ I will take a courageous step in _____ by (date) _____.

Examination of Fruitfulness

Pray: Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal where fruit is growing — and where it is missing — both in you and in those you are called to serve (not in programs, but in people).

“It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit that will remain.”

John 15:16

- ↳ Where is the Lord calling you to bear more fruit?
- ↳ Who specifically is the Lord calling you to invest in more deeply?
- ↳ How is the Lord calling you to die to yourself so you may bear even more fruit?

Pray: Reflect on the parable of the sower.

“But as for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty.”

Matthew 13:23

- ↳ What kind of soil are you cultivating in your parish?
- ↳ How can you be more intentional about creating conditions for fruit to be manifest in others?