

PASTOR PRODUCTIVITY MAXIMIZER

The Ultimate Guide To Getting More Done In Less Time



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GET MORE DONE IN LESS TIME

Pastor Productivity Maximizer

Are you one of the millions of people wishing they could get just a few more hours in the day? If you had an extra hour every day, what would you do with it? Sleep? Spend it with family and friends? Invest it back into your ministry? Use it on a hobby? Whatever the answer may be, the aim of this guide is to help you create an hour (or more) of free time for you to use as you wish, by creating a more productive workflow.

While we can't stop your friends and family from interrupting your work hours, we can help you set yourself up for success.

In this book, we'll cover why most pastors struggle to stay productive, how to set up the perfect office atmosphere, and then we'll share our favorite productivity tips to help you make the most the of the time you have.

Why Most Pastors Struggle to Stay Productive

There are two big reasons why pastors struggle to stay productive: miscellaneous distractions and lack of motivation.

Eliminating the Distractions

Write out an exhaustive list of things that distract you while you're at the office. For most of us, this list could include things such as: emails, texts, phone calls, social media, instant messages, and the Internet in general.

Keep the List in Your Workspace

Keeping this list somewhere in your workspace will help you recognize the distractions before they become a problem. For example, when it's time to study, close your inbox, vowing only to check it at predetermined times during the day. Sign out of all instant messengers. Turn your phone on silent. And so on.

When you take these steps, you are consciously making the effort to remove the distractions so that you can focus on more important tasks.

Practice Makes Perfect

Eliminating distractions takes incredible self-discipline. Any skill you obtain will require practice to fine tune. The concept of boosting your productivity is no different. Even the most productive people become distracted on a daily basis. They simply know how to shut it down, so they don't spiral into an hour-long social media binge, for instance.

If you find yourself becoming distracted, take a few minutes to refocus on your commitment to your ministry and your church. Then, get back to work. Eventually, it will become easier for you to focus each time you get distracted, which in turn makes it easier to stay focused.

Finding the Motivational Spark

There's just no way around it. Work will not do itself. Finding your motivation will be easier on some days than others, but the key is to make sure you can get to that motivation when you need it the most.

Maintain a 'Friday Afternoon Crunch Time' Momentum Throughout the Week

If you're like most pastors, there's a sense of urgency that comes on Friday afternoon. You know that if you don't finalize your sermon prep in the next few, fleeting hours, you'll be spending your highly-anticipated weekend studying in your office instead of spending it with your family and friends. The trick to doubling your

productivity on a consistent basis is to instill that “Friday afternoon crunch time” into every task you do, all throughout the week.

Just Sit Down and Do It

No more excuses. Sit down at your desk, and do what needs to be done. Your stress level will instantly decrease, because you’ll be doing the task you are supposed to be doing. If you still find yourself having trouble, think about the reasons why you love your ministry. Even if it’s the most boring text in the world, it has to be done. Search for a reason to love it and focus on that—even if it’s what you can do when it’s done, such as planning your next sermon series.

Now that you know what hinders your productivity and what you can do about it, let’s move on to building the ideal work environment to make you as productive as possible.

Setting Up Your Perfect Work Environment

It does not matter how motivated and focused you are. If your workspace is uninviting, your productivity will suffer. But don’t worry. You don’t have to install expensive equipment into your office to get your productivity flowing. Follow the simple tips below and you’ll be amazed at how much you’ll get done in a day.

Ergonomic Desk, Keyboard and Chair

When you are comfortable, you will be more productive. If you spend a lot of time on the computer, then it would be a worthwhile investment to purchase an ergonomic desk, keyboard, and chair. If you are not comfortable in your chair, you'll waste time adjusting and readjusting yourself, and those are minutes—if not hours—that are meant for productivity.

Typing, whether people realize it or not, is hard on the hands and wrists. When you don't use the proper posture, which is easy to forget, you run the risk of creating repetitive motion injuries, causing pain in the fingers, hands, and wrists. You pay for these in the long run, even though they sound trivial now. If you let this go for too long, you could end up with Carpal Tunnel Syndrome, something that, in most cases, requires surgery.

If you don't like the design of the ergonomic keyboards (they can take a while to get used to) then you should at least consider using a wrist pad while typing or using a mouse. Many mouse pads come with gel rests attached to them.

Your desk should allow for your chair to be at the proper height, and for your monitor to be at the proper distance from your face. If your desk doesn't have enough room to properly address this, you'll find yourself in an awkward position, which will lead to pain.

Designing your office with ergonomics in mind isn't always the most cost effective option, but if you must cut corners to save money, get the bare minimum to get

yourself started, and upgrade everything one piece at a time until your work area is as comfortable as you can possibly make it. Your body will thank you and your productivity will increase.

Proper Lighting

Proper lighting is key to your productivity. If you work with dim lighting, you will strain your eyes. Straining your eyes leads to headaches and feeling tired. If you're working in an environment that is too dark, your energy levels will be down, which is a big factor contributing to lack of productivity.

The best situation is one that uses a combination of natural light and artificial light. Natural light will help you improve your mood, and it can also help save the church on energy bills. If possible, set up your office in an area where a lot of natural light comes through the majority of the day, and lean on artificial light as a secondary option for when it's dark or overcast outside.

Choose a brightness that enhances your mood. Too bright and you'll hate it. But if it's too dark, you'll feel gloomy. Compact fluorescent light bulbs produce a nice white light at a fraction of the wattage of traditional light bulbs.

It's a good idea to have an overhead light, but if this isn't possible, at least have a lamp on your desk or nearby. If you work at night, don't rely solely on the light from your monitor, as this will cause eye strain.

Quiet Room/Corner

Try to make your office quiet. When the environment around you is quiet, you will be able to focus wholly on your sermon prep, rather than the loud construction work outside.

Headset

If you need to block out noise of any kind, a headset is an absolute lifesaver. You can turn on white noise from SimplyNoise.com to block out the noisy distractions, or music of your choice, so long as it doesn't distract you. If you have small children around for a day camp, opt for using your headphones in one ear so you can still hear what you need to.

If you're not much of a typist, you can also use the microphone on the headset for dictation purposes, using a program to type as you talk.

Organization Matters

Being organized will also help keep you productive. When everything has a place, you won't waste valuable time looking for something. How you set up your office is up to you. An organizational system that works for one pastor may not work for you. Here are a few basic tips to get you started:

Keep a Pen and Paper on Your Desk

Regardless of how digital your workspace is (i.e. Kindle, iPod, iPhone, laptop, etc.), it's always a good idea to have a pen and paper nearby to jot down notes as needed.

This is especially helpful if you have a meeting with a church member and want to take notes on what was discussed. You can type them up and organize them later if it helps you. Also, it's a good idea to email them to the member to ensure you are both on the same page.

Organize Your Inbox

It's easy to get inundated with emails. If you use Gmail, you can label everything accordingly, and even set up filters to automatically label emails with names or ministries. For instance, if a church member's name is Frank Johnson, you can create an email filter so that all the emails that Frank sends you will be labeled *Frank*. Then, if you ever need to reread an email that Frank sent you, you can simply click on the label *Frank*. Emails can have multiple labels if you'd like, too. For instance, let's say you created a *Marriage* label and Frank happens to always ask you for marriage advice, you can label Frank's emails both *Frank* and *Marriage*.

While it may take a considerable amount of time to set up the initial label structure and filters, you'll save yourself a lot of time in the long run, because you'll be able to find specific emails at the click of a button. You can even use filters to automatically label junk mail, so

you don't have to waste time reading things that aren't valuable to you.

Use an Online File Back Up Service

Computer crashes happen all the time. Even if your hard drive is salvageable, you never know when a virus may render your main computer useless. Having an online back up means you can access files and other important information whenever you need to, from any computer. Some options include:

- Amazon Cloud
- DropBox
- Google Drive
- Carbonite

All of these platforms allow for data access from your computer or smartphone, so it's also an excellent way to back up your phone data.

Now that we've covered the basics of setting up your office for success, we'll share our best productivity secrets with you!

Productivity Secrets

Implementing just one of the tactics in this book will help add more time to your day. Implementing all of these tips will maximize the amount of time you have to get things done. You'll either get more accomplished every day, or reach the end of your to-do list with time to

spare. You'll find yourself much less stressed and that much more invigorated to tackle your Kingdom work, which is the most important work of all!

Nightly To-Do List

At the end of your day, write a to-do list for the next day. This will help you focus your attention on the most pertinent tasks the moment you arrive at your office. Also, making a to-do list helps clear your mind so you can get a deeper, more restful sleep, which will give you the energy you need to tackle your list the next day.

Prioritize

First, complete the tasks you dread the most. With those out of the way, you'll feel more accomplished. Then, as you move through your day, the rest of your tasks will be easier to tick off. This tip is definitely challenging, but so worth it.

Make Deadlines

Make specific and detailed deadlines. Be strict with yourself. Tell yourself you will finish a certain project at a certain time, not just "sometime before Sunday morning." This will allow more flexibility in your schedule. If the sermon is due on Sunday, give yourself a Thursday deadline. Having it completed early is better than having something unexpected happen on Thursday

or Friday that will inevitably prolong your sermon prep into the weekend.

When it comes to things you need to do annually for your ministry, make your own early deadlines. For example, if you want to prayerfully map out your next sermon series, set a deadline to have the outline finished a month before you're ready to start preaching, and work toward that goal. Deadlines are never a popular idea, yet they are a very rewarding productivity tactic.

Don't Overload Yourself

Ministry work never stops, and it's easy to overload yourself. Whether it's because you're understaffed, or because you underestimate the time it takes to complete ministry projects, or because you have a needy congregation, you are probably overwhelmed with the responsibilities of being a pastor.

Remember, you're only one person. As a minister of the gospel, you are already playing several roles. You should not be doing the work of 20.

Sure, you're bound to overload yourself from time to time. There is nothing wrong with working hard to get everything done to reach deadlines—as long as it doesn't become the norm.

If you are constantly overloaded—both mentally and emotionally—you're going to burn out. It's not an "if", it's a "when". If you find yourself overloaded, slowly cut back what you're doing. Schedule more time for ministry projects. It's okay to let things "slide." It's not a failure if you're reenergizing to do the Lord's work.

Clear Boundaries

During times of busyness, it's tempting to work straight through weekends and holidays. This intense schedule may be necessary on occasion, but it should never be a regular habit. Weekends and holidays should be reserved for family time.

Set 'Work Hours'

While you *do* have the freedom to make your own schedule depending on your current ministry load, try to set regular work hours for yourself. Once you settle on your schedule, refrain from running errands during work hours. Errands can wait until after you've checked off your to-do list.

Refrain from Email and Social Media

For most pastors, email and social media are critical parts of ministry. But if you're not careful, they can be tremendous time wasters. Set aside a specific time to read and reply to your messages—maybe during your morning coffee—then close all email and social media tabs when it's time to work on your sermon or ministry project.

Of course, there are exceptions. If you *must* have social media open while working on a project, turn off your chat functions, so that you won't get sidetracked by an online conversation.

Commit to checking your email and social media only at predetermined times on your schedule. Save all personal social media activities for your when you're "off the clock." I know it's difficult to separate work and play when it comes to social media, but it must be done to help you focus during work hours.

Outsource

If there's a task you need done that's outside your skill level—or you simply don't have time to finish it before the deadline—don't be afraid to outsource it. For example, if you're trying to set up your church website, but don't know the first thing about graphic design, seek help from a web designer in your church.

Yes, it requires asking for help, but that's what the church is about—we are the body! In the time you would have spent working on the website, you could easily move on to another important part of your day and save yourself hours of frustration in the process.

Bonus: Browser Add-Ons

Set yourself up for success while browsing the Internet for research with browser add-ons. Options vary depending on browser, so we'll cover the two most popular ones: Google Chrome and Mozilla Firefox.

Google Chrome Add-Ons

StayFocusd

This allows you to limit the time you spend on certain websites. Is Facebook killing your productivity? Add it to the list on this add-on, and you'll be kicked off the site once you've hit your time limit. If you really need to buckle down, use the "Nuclear Option" to block time-wasting websites altogether, limiting your browsing capacity only to the websites you need.

Cool Clock

This handy browser add-on gives you a clock, calendar, hourly desktop time notifications, an alarm, and a timer. Find out how long it takes you to do a certain task. Remind yourself when it's time to move on to the next item on your to-do list. The more productive you are when you don't need to be, the more ready you'll be for drop-ins and emergency-situation ministries.

Todo.ly

This is a task management tool. Use this to make your nightly to-do list, and manage it online from anywhere. Need to work on the go? Forgot your to-do list? Computer crash? No problem! Simply log in to your account and your to-do list will be safe.

Mozilla Firefox Add-Ons

Idderall

This is the same thing as StayFocusd for Chrome. It will help you block time-wasting websites, so you can focus on getting your tasks accomplished.

Simple Timer

Simple Timer tracks how long you're spending on various tasks every day. It'll help you see how you're managing your time (i.e. how long you're perusing Facebook, Twitter, blogs, etc.). It could also be useful in calculating the amount of time you are spending on sermon prep and other parts of your ministry.

Prevent Tab Overflow

If you're doing anything online that requires multiple tabs open, it can be time consuming to constantly bounce back and forth trying to find the tab you need. With this add-on, all of your tabs will stay visible, so you do not have to waste time scrolling through everything. Keep in mind, however, the more tabs you have open, the slower your computer/browser typically runs. You are usually better off with fewer tabs open.

Conclusion

You're ready to go implement these tactics and make yourself a more productive pastor! By making just a few changes to your office and the way you organize your day, you will save countless precious hours, minimize stress, and lead a rich, fulfilling pastoral ministry. Your family and congregation will reap the benefits too.

Before you get started becoming a more productive pastor, here's an important tip. Multi-tasking, though it sounds great and may make you feel like you are getting more accomplished, is actually counterproductive.

Have you ever tried to talk on the phone and write an email at the same time? You either end up missing what the person is saying or you begin typing the wrong words into your draft.

While you think you're accomplishing two things at once, you're actually sacrificing speed and accuracy. Research shows that when the brain multi-tasks, less attention is spread to the individual tasks, making it easier to get distracted and make mistakes.

So, instead of trying to do many things at once, choose one task at a time until you're finished with your list. Also, try to clump similar tasks together. When you constantly switch back and forth between unrelated tasks, your brain has a hard time adjusting.

35 Tips To Make Your Time More Productive

1. **You must realize that time management is a myth.** Many pastors want to accomplish a ton each day, and that's a noble goal, but it's just not realistic. So, remember, not everything can be completed in a day. That's what tomorrow is for.
2. **Find out where you're wasting time.** Conduct a complete time examination. Walk through your day in 15-minute intervals, writing down what you are doing and for how long.
3. **Create time management goals.** Having clear goals will guide you through the process of getting control of your time. The best way to start is by figuring out what you'd like to do *more* of in your day.
4. **Use time management tools.** There are thousands of time management tools available today, including the ones we listed earlier. Try some and see which ones work best for you.
5. **Prioritize ruthlessly.** Learn to cut out what is not important. Make a list of all the things

that you need to get done, then think through each one and decide if it is worth your time or not. If not, cut it from the list.

6. **Learn to delegate.** Look at your to-do list and see what can be handed off to other people, (i.e. a spouse, a coworker or a friend).
7. **Establish routines and stick to them.** Find your rhythm in ministry. Learn what time you need to go to bed and what time is best to wake up. Find specific times to do daily tasks, such as checking email, meeting with church members, preparing sermons, and so on.
8. **Set time limits for tasks.** Time can get away from you very quickly if you do not have a set amount of time allotted for a task.
9. **Organize your systems.** Do you use several email addresses? Several online programs? Bookmark often-visited websites or put them on your explorer tool bar. This will save you time searching for them.
10. **Don't waste time waiting.** If you find yourself waiting for things to get done, bring work along with you, or even a good book that you have been wanting to read. Getting

an oil change? Answer emails on your phone while you wait.

11. **Get a planner.** There are many types of planners available, some of the better ones outline each day of the week in 15-minute intervals and include a full-page monthly calendar. Once you find one you like, stick to it.
12. **Learn to say no.** This is your greatest ally. Practice saying no in polite but firm ways. Not always, of course. Your ministry includes a lot of service and spontaneity. But there *are* times you must decline requests.
13. **Learn what causes procrastination.** Examine the times you find yourself procrastinating. Is it because of the task, the time of day, or your overall mood? Adjust your schedule accordingly.
14. **Put things into perspective.** Take a moment each day to step back and talk with God about being still, being productive, and being His child.
15. **As much as possible, respond to emails the moment you read them.** Most people have to read an email at least twice—once when it arrives, then again whenever they get around

to replying to it. To avoid reading it twice, respond when it's fresh on your mind.

16. **Avoid multitasking.** Studies have shown that multitasking actually inhibits productivity. The best thing to do is take on one task at a time, stay focused, and finish it before you begin another one.
17. **Use keyboard shortcuts as much as possible.** Changing from keyboard to mouse can slow you down. Many programs have customizable keyboard shortcuts.
18. **Break large projects into smaller ones.** Take a mountain and make it a molehill. It will seem much less daunting.
19. **Know when to take your time with a task.** Rushing through a project can actually cost you time in the long run. Know when you need to slow down. Make sure you get it right the first time.
20. **Reward yourself.** Take time to reinforce success. Work for an hour, then take a ten-minute break. This will keep you going when the going gets tough.
21. **As much as you can, create work/home boundaries.** For the most part, the rule of

thumb is to leave work stuff at work and home stuff at home. Of course, ministry can blur these lines. So do your best to keep your home a place of rest and relaxation away from work.

22. **Rest.** This means getting enough sleep and taking breaks during the day. You need some fresh air and a glass of water every now and then. Self-care is vital to productivity.
23. **Eat well.** A good breakfast will help you stay alert for the morning time. A light lunch filled with fruits and veggies won't weigh you down through the afternoon. It's hard to concentrate when your stomach is growling.
24. **Get an accountability partner.** Tell a friend the things you need to accomplish. Ask them to inquire about your progress periodically.
25. **Forgo perfectionism.** There are some tasks that require perfection, but most tasks just require completion. Know your ministry and identify which tasks can be done without sweating every detail.
26. **Visualize your long-term ministry.** Don't get caught up in the small things of today.

27. **Separate your to-do list into priorities A, B, C.** The A tasks need to be done that day. The B tasks should be done by the end of the week. And the C tasks can wait until later, but still need to get done.
28. **Plan for emergencies.** If you need to make a million copies for a class, plan time for a possible paper jam. Printer meltdowns are classic and common. Plan extra time and save yourself a lot of stress later on.
29. **Keep a firm yet flexible schedule.** Things happen in ministry. Schedule in some flextime. For example, schedule 45 minutes for every hour, leaving 15 minutes of flextime. This will account for the friend that just had to tell you something or the coffee you spilled on your briefcase.
30. **Exercise.** Exercise actually energizes your body and protects you from illness. It also releases neurotransmitters that fight against stress and depression. Exercise really is the miracle drug.
31. **Know your limits.** Know when you just need to shut it off for the day. When your mind is drained and your body is tired, it's time to take off for the day. Work done when you are exhausted will most often have to be redone

later.

32. **Keep your daily to-do list small and manageable.** Keep it to 5 items or less. A massive to-do list will only overwhelm you. Do not borrow tomorrow's worries (or work).
33. **Think in terms of benefits.** When you think about saving time, try to visualize the benefits that will come from that. How will it make you feel? How will it improve your ministry? How will it free your schedule?
34. **Get to know yourself better.** Over time, you will not only know what makes you fail, but how to overcome it.
35. **Think about your strengths.** Think about how you can use them to your advantage, no matter what position you find yourself in.



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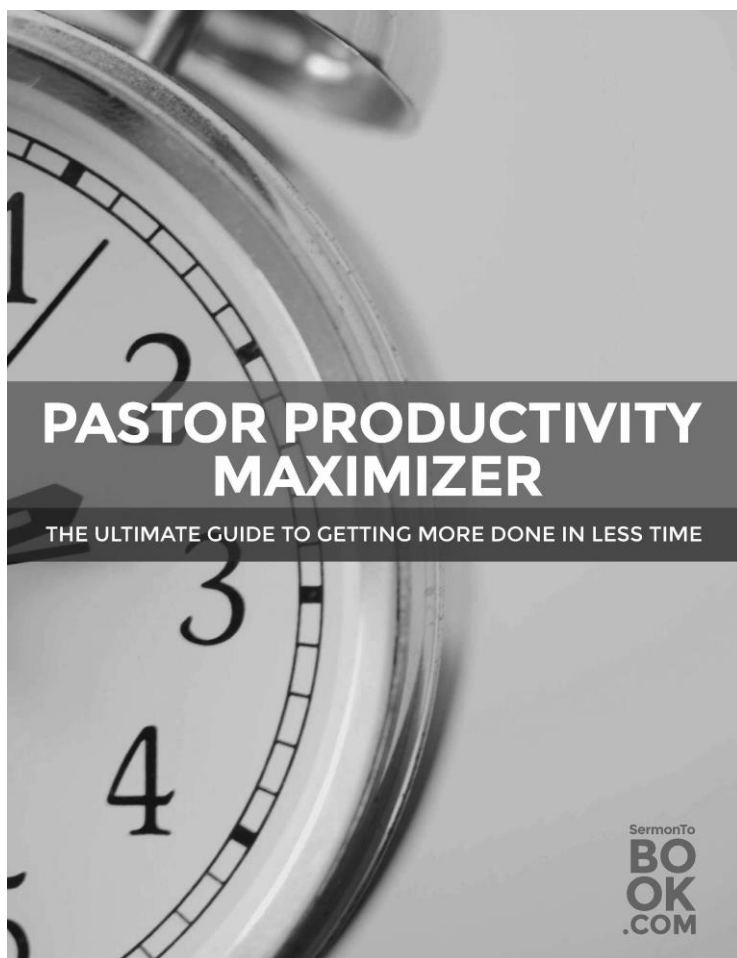


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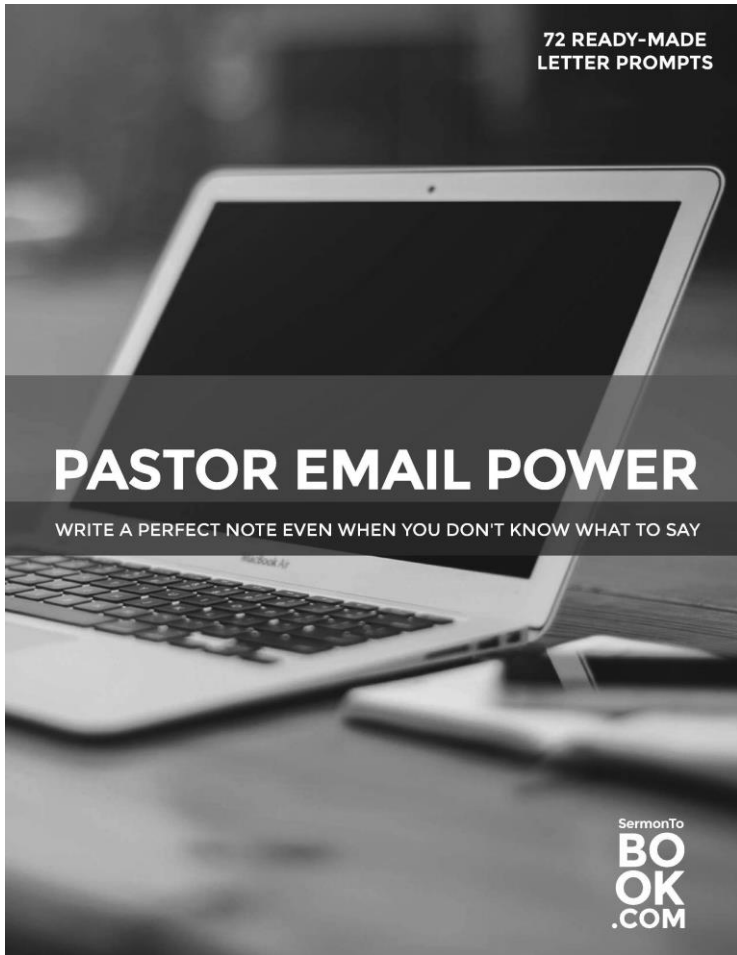
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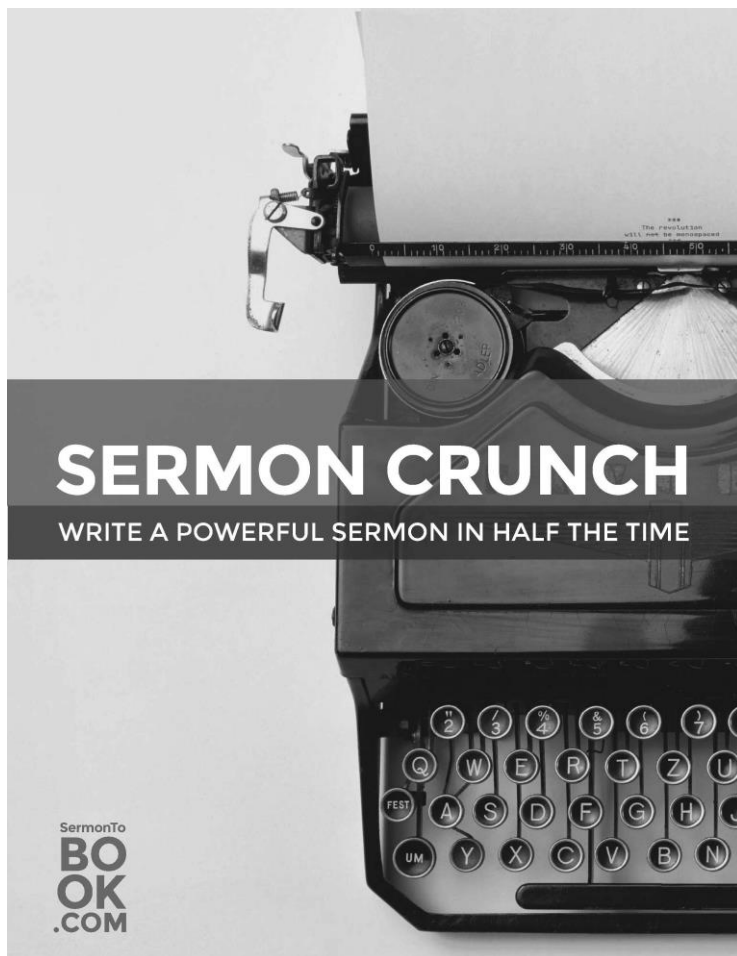


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