

## 7 Things Pastors Should be Doing This Summer



Summer is an interesting time for pastors and church leaders.

On one hand, there's a little more time to relax with school out and vacations on the schedule. But some churches actually have more ministry events and many of us worry about the dreaded summer giving slump.

So with all of this in mind, here are some things pastors should do this summer.

### **#1 – Take a vacation and a family trip.**

If you're married, a vacation is for you and your spouse. Family trips are great, but let's be honest, they are often not relaxing. That's why every pastor should take a vacation, even if it's a weekend getaway, with their spouse.

If you've got kids, go ahead and make sure you have a family trip on the schedule, too.

Ed Stetzer put together this list of [Christian Retreat and Conference](#) centers, many of which offer tremendous discounts for pastors and church leaders. For example, Ridgecrest Conference Center, near Asheville, NC, offers a discounted rate for ministers looking to relax with their families.

## **#2 – Invest relationally in leaders and donors.**

Summer is a great time to say thanks.

Thank your leaders, volunteers and donors and invest in them relationally. For example, you could invite a group of leaders and donors over to your house (or a church members house) for a cookout. You don't need to train them and you don't need to lead a Bible study. Just hang out with them.

If the cookout thing isn't your style, invite all of your leaders up to the church for a meeting. Eat, worship with some of the greatest hits, and briefly share what's coming this fall. Go to a Sky Zone, bowling, or somewhere fun. Do something that doesn't feel like a meeting or training session, but a fun thank-you event.

## **#3 – Take time off from preaching.**

If you're the preacher or the main speaker, the summer is when you want to schedule time away from the stage.

Here's my tip: Go ahead and take two weeks off in a row. Not only will you benefit from stepping away, you'll give someone else the chance to speak twice. They will have more time to unpack their teaching and two weeks will give them more time to improve.

When you're off, be away. Use one of the weekends for your vacation and take one of the other weekends to visit another church.

## **#4 – Plan for the fall.**

Summer is a fun season, but fall is also an important season in the life of most churches. It will be here before you know it.

So take some time in the summer to plan for the fall ministry season, when people go back to school (and sometimes, back to church). Here are a few things to plan.

**Plan your preaching calendar.** Hopefully, you've got an annual teaching calendar, but the summer is a great time to review and adjust your fall plan. It's okay to make adjustments to the plan based on what's happening in the church, the community and your own walk with God. If you're looking for a

template to help you with this, you'll find a great one in the [Church Fuel One](#) resource library.

**Plan your fall special events.** Take a look at the ministry and event calendar for the fall and make sure you're doing the right things. It's not too late to pull something OFF of the calendar. And if you have a big event, make sure you've planned when to start planning.

**Plan your end of the year giving campaign.** I know it's only summer and Christmas seems far away, but it will be here before you know it. Go ahead and plan what you're going to do to emphasize generosity at the end of the year. It's the most important giving season in your church. Most special offerings or year end campaigns fail for a lack of planning, not a lack of ideas.

### **#5 – Ask people to automate their giving.**

Make a concerted effort to ask people to give online, particularly during the summer months when they may be out of town and unable to put something in the offering plate. Better yet, ask and teach people how to automate their giving.

They can do this through their bank or your giving software should feature it. If not, upgrade your giving software. A lot of churches find the summer to be a good time to do an “automated giving challenge.”

[Lift Church in Kansas City](#) encourages their congregation to “Automate the Important.”

The Highlands Church does the same thing in the summer months. [Here's a letter](#) from the pastor asking the congregation to consider automating their giving.

### **#6 – Read a book for fun.**

Most pastors and church leaders can become better leaders by reading great books on leadership and personal development.

But it's the summer. Set aside the principles and playbooks and pick up a great work of fiction. At least read something that's not normal for you. Here are some of my favorites: (Many of these are also movies.)

[A Man Called Ove](#)

[A Walk in the Woods](#)

[All the Light We Cannot See](#)

[The Revenge of Analog](#)

[An Inspector Calls](#)

## **#7 – Explore a new hobby.**

Four years ago, we purchased a Big Green Egg. Since then, it's become so much more than a way to cook great dinners for the family. It's become a great hobby.

I love exploring new recipes, trying new seasonings and talking shop with other Big Green Egg owners. Hobbies open up new possibilities and new relationships.

Reverse searing prime New York Strips might not be your hobby of choice, but the summer months are a great time to explore something new. Just for you.

Is there something you've always wanted to try? Have you been thinking about something? You don't have to dive in; just get your toe in the water.