

# 10 Minutes with a Pastor



A candid interview reveals the struggles, the joys, and the opportunities for service that are part of the job description of a Pastor

## What does a pastor do?

We spoke to Rob, a pastor at a Lutheran congregation in a small town in Nebraska about what it's like to be a pastor.

Here's what he shared:

### 1 What are your primary tasks as a pastor?

My primary task as a pastor is to share the life-giving message of salvation through Jesus Christ.

This is carried out through serving the congregation in worship services and leading various Bible studies and education classes, visiting the sick and shut-in, and equipping the members of the congregation to share their faith in their own lives. Confirmation class is the highlight of my week although I also love being able to proclaim the love of God to so many through preaching.

### 2 Describe your typical work day.

I have now found that there is really no such thing as a typical day in the life of a pastor. After a few weeks of getting into a nice routine with which I am comfortable, I will spend two weeks traveling the state making hospital calls, going to conventions, attending meetings, or driving tractors.

These little “interruptions” in the routine tend to throw the typical day out the window. But that is the joy of being a pastor. Each day brings new adventures and joys, different challenges and obstacles.

My days do have a basic pattern, though. I begin each day with a devotion, which includes a variety of Bible readings and an extended time of prayer and closes with a hymn. It takes twenty to thirty minutes daily to sort through and take care of the mail. I try to spend two hours preparing for each of the classes I teach.

Sermon preparation receives fifteen to twenty hours each week. Visiting members, shut-ins, making evangelism calls and other visits, and preparing for worship services require a varying amount of time. And of course there are meetings and other church activities which help to fill out the “typical” schedule.

### 3 What is the greatest challenge of your profession?

The greatest challenge is finding out how to connect with people who do not know Christ as their Savior and help them to see their need for forgiveness and salvation.

In a nation and time when most people have what they need physically, it is difficult to convince them that what they really need is spiritual wholeness which comes only through knowing Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Resistance to the Word of God and my attempts to reach them can become discouraging.

### 4 What is the greatest reward of your profession?

The greatest reward is knowing that people are growing deeper in their relationship with Jesus Christ and their understanding of what He has done to save them.

“The greatest reward is knowing that people are growing deeper in their relationship with Jesus Christ . . .”

A student in Confirmation class recently gave me great joy as she came to the realization that God blamed Jesus for all the things she had done wrong, and that when Jesus suffered and died on the cross it was in her place. Did she believe Jesus was her Savior before this moment? Yes. Does she understand it and appreciate it more now? Most certainly. That is my reward.

### 5 What kind of training does it take to become a pastor?

The clinical answer: an undergraduate degree from basically any college, and then four years of study and practice at one of the seminaries of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. The real answer is: a lot of valuable time studying the Scriptures and applying them to life.

The four years of undergraduate school are time for growing up and for growing in one's relationship with Jesus Christ. I was also fortunate enough to study at one of the Synod's universities, Concordia University Wisconsin, where I received excellent preparation in the biblical languages. This familiarity with the languages was a tremendous blessing at the seminary and continues to be as I serve as a pastor.

The training I received at the seminary is invaluable. My professors, friends, and mentors all have helped to prepare me for the ministry. And now, as a pastor, I am receiving the ultimate training from the members of the church and community I serve.

## 6 What is the average starting salary for a pastor?

How much does a pastor earn? No one could ever pay enough . . . but no amount of monetary payment would ever matter. I am paid according to the salary guidelines for my district. I receive close to the average starting salary for a pastor, which is \$26,000 a year, plus a home to live in, along with full health insurance and retirement benefits through Concordia Health Plan.

**“No secular profession, no matter how skilled or highly paid, offers eternal life.”**

## 7 How many hours do you work during a typical week?

On average, I work approximately 50 hours each week. This varies depending on the season of the church year (Lent and Advent are busier times), the health of the members, and the activities relating to the church.

I try to keep regular office hours for the sake of order. However, as the only full-time worker in a rural congregation, my schedule has a lot of flexibility.

## 8 How does your job affect your family life?

I suppose the effect of one's profession on family life is unique for a pastor. In most other professions, spouses and children do not often see their husband and father at work. But as a pastor, I am also my family's pastor, preaching to and teaching them on Sunday mornings and in Bible classes.

My place of employment is across the driveway from our home. Sometimes that's too close, but because of the proximity, I also eat every meal with my family and can

come home immediately if there is a problem. My schedule allows me to take time for my family, which is a great blessing.

Because of the nature of the relationship between a pastor and congregation members, at times my wife becomes my sounding block. She is also my greatest source of comfort, encouragement, and strength as I serve the Lord and His people.

## 9 In what ways are you able to help others as a pastor?

A pastor is called to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ. No secular profession, no matter how skilled or highly paid, offers eternal life. In the Gospel of Jesus Christ those who suffer find comfort, those who are discouraged receive hope, the weak are made strong, the dying receive life.

I have the opportunity to sit at bedsides in hospitals, cheer on athletes from the stands, encourage couples in their marriage, reach out to the homeless and hungry, bury parents and children, be with people at all points of life.

In all of these situations I get to tell people about Jesus Christ, crucified and risen for them. That message is the wisdom of God and the power of God for the salvation of all who believe. Now that is help!

## 10 And now a question for you...

Have you considered that God might be calling you to serve the church as a pastor?

Here are some steps you might take to help you answer that question.

- Talk to your congregation's pastor. He's there to give you the guidance and support that you need.
- Call the admissions offices at one of the colleges, universities or seminaries of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod for more information about the training it takes to be a pastor.
- Send an e-mail to Rob at <Romans15-6@Navix.net>.
- Ask God to grant you guidance as you consider ways in which you can serve His church.

“Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I, send me.” ~ Isaiah 6:8