



# THE PASTOR'S PEN

Volume 44, No. 09

July 09, 2014

## At Your Request

While I was talking to a church member recently the conversation turned to one of my previous newsletter articles about sermon preparation and the value of preaching. He then suggested that I rerun that article so he could have a copy and to remind to folk at church how important it is to attend each week and listen to the sermon. So, at your request, here is that article from September 9, 2009.

### *“32,580 Sermons Later”*

Each week I call upon the members and guests of our congregation to see how they are doing and to discuss the life of the church. Different questions and items come up in our conversations, but quite often I am asked; “What does a preacher do all week?” For many people, especially those who have not been active in a church, they see the minister as someone who just gets into the pulpit on Sunday morning. They see me take part in the service, preach a message from the Bible and then go home. If it were only that simple!

Aside from my more public role on Sunday mornings, I have a full week of study, counseling, prayer, visitation, evangelism, programming, planning, meetings and a dozen other tasks. As you can see, each week is quite hectic and full. On average, I will spend between 55 to 60 houses every week in service to God and to our congregation. Of that time, about 15 to 20 hours goes into sermon preparation and review.

I mention this especially because of a recent discussion. One of my fellow ministers in the county commented that he only spends an hour or two for his sermon preparation each week. He wondered why I put so much time into mine. He reasoned that no one really pays much attention to the message and rarely does anyone remember what is said from one week to the next. So he asked, “Why spend more time in sermon preparation?”

His question caused me to recall this letter to the editor in a Tennessee newspaper from a few years back. I shared it with him and now with you. I hope you will enjoy it as much as he did.

Letter from the Editor

“Dear Sir:

It seems ministers feel their sermons are very important and spend a great deal of time preparing them. I have been attending a church quite regularly for the past 30 years and I have probable heard 3,000 or more messages preached at me. To my consternation, I discovered that I cannot remember a single one. I wonder if a minister’s time might be more profitably spent on something else?

Sincerely....”

For weeks a real storm of editorial responses ensued. The uproar finally was ended by this letter:

“Dear Sir:

I have been married for 30 years. During that time I have eaten, 32,580 meals – mostly of my wife’s cooking. Suddenly, I have discovered that I can not remember the menu of a single meal. And yet, I have received nourishment from every single one of them. I have the distinct impression that without them, I would have starved to death long ago.

Sincerely....”

Just as a good meal requires careful planning and time to prepare, so does a good sermon. A turkey supper cannot be done in only one hour, nor can a full meal for the soul. A part of my time is spent each week trying to fix a well balanced spiritual diet for everyone. So come to the service, enjoy and be filled. If you can not remember what was said last month, don’t worry. The time is not wasted. You have received nourishment for your spirit and that is one of the important parts of our worship time together. Until your next spiritual feast, where some real “soul food” will be served, I remain at my desk, whipping up a special treat just for you.

Cooking up something special,

*James*

