

8 Resolutions Every Pastor Should Have for 2014

Many people make—and break—New Year's resolutions. Here are eight possible ones that pastors should consider for the upcoming year:

1. Let influence be the theme of your leadership. I often hear pastors complaining (especially young pastors) about their frustration when they don't have control over a particular situation. My advice would be this: When you don't have control, don't worry. You still have influence.

Influence is built when you have great character, follow-through on what you say you're going to do, and genuinely love people. Allow influence to be the theme of your leadership.

2. Don't bend to critics. The critics can be so loud at times; it feels overwhelming. No matter the season of the year, there are disappointed expectations, and therefore people from all over the map who want you to do things their way.

This year, don't bend to the critics. Listen to the spirit. Don't allow the critics to define you, or what you do. Let Jesus do that.

3. Be transparent. Being transparent doesn't mean you push your problems or your emotions onto other people. It simply means being honest and inviting others into your space in an appropriate way.

This year, be transparent with your staff, with your congregation, with those you lead, and with your family. When we are humbly transparent we invite the Holy Spirit in to do his transforming work.

4. Speak with your actions. You've heard it said that actions

speak louder than words. Nowhere is that more true than in church leadership. If you say one thing, and do another, people will lose respect for you. Worse than that, they'll actually start doing as you *do*, rather than as you *say*.

Don't forget. Actions speak louder than words. Let your actions speak loud in 2014.

5. Choose people over performance. As a pastor, it's easy to get caught up in the frenzy of performance. There's so much to do, and the work feels important. You want to do as much as possible in as little time as possible. The pressure continues to grow and grow.

But this year, and always, choose people over performance. Those who have been entrusted to your care need love far more than they need a perfect Easter service.

6. Don't neglect vision. Proverbs 29:18 says, "Where there is no vision, the people perish" and I've seen this to be true in my many years ministry. When you take the time to create a vision that is both simple and meaningful, it is truly life-giving to your staff and congregation.

Don't neglect creating a vision in pursuit of "getting started" with this next year. A little planning goes a long way.

7. Take care of yourself. This is one of the hardest things for pastors to do. Often we work ourselves to the point of exhaustion, telling ourselves it's "for the Kingdom," and justifying our sin. God doesn't need you to kill yourself. He already died. It is already finished.

If you find yourself losing your temper, losing touch with your family, suffering in your marriage, or growing an addiction to certain foods or coffee—chances are you aren't resting enough. Take these as a warning sign.

8. Seek balance. God doesn't need you to kill yourself, but He does want you to bring your whole self to the table. I don't believe God is pleased when we play games on our smartphones, or check our Facebook status a million times, when we could be working.

It's important to seek balance in all areas of your life—work, family, friendships, social life, health, etc. Finding this balance is a lifelong journey, but it's more than worth it.

What are your resolutions for 2014?

*With more than a dozen years of local church ministry, **Justin Lathrop** has spent the last several years starting businesses and ministries that partner with pastors and churches to advance the kingdom. He is the founder of (now Vanderbloemen Search), Oaks School of Leadership, and all while staying involved in the local church. He blogs regularly about what he has learned from making connection at .*

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