

1) Pray

I will spend Monday - Friday from 8:00 a.m. - 9:30 a.m. in prayer, contemplation, and prayerful work: listening to, reading, or writing things to support my life of faith (not be related to sermon preparation).

I will spend the last ~30 minutes of each day practicing the Examen as a review of the day and closing prayer.

2) Engage Scripture

Using something from that time, I will write/journal/sketch/doodle/mindmap whatever has caught my attention that morning.

3) Cultivate Wonder, Curiosity, Awe, and Gratitude

Journal gratitude on a daily basis. Actively seek out new information from the sciences about things we are learning about the universe, the human mind, life, etc. Try to find out things that I didn't even know I didn't know.

Find art and poetry which I can appreciate and which speak to me and inspire me.

4) Seek Respite in Sermon Prep

Begin sermon prep no later than Monday of each week and spread work out over the entire week, so that by the end of the week the sermon is 'finished' on Friday and can be 'mulled over' and polished on Saturday as needed.

5) Trust You're Loved

Continue to work on accepting the grace, forgiveness, and love that I preach about to others. Find a spiritual director and therapist who can help me navigate the rocky shorelines of my own spiritual life and emotional/mental health.

6) Craft Effective Sermons

Listen to good sermons at least twice a month. Use the grid and the appraisal form as guides to help me evaluate sermons before and after preaching them. Ask for specific feedback from specific people on a regular basis. Read at least 2-3 books on preaching each year. Look for a group which wants to do peer appraisals.

7) Proclaim the Gospel No Matter What

Accept the prophetic role when called upon. I will not force pet issues or personal issues into the pulpit, but I will not shy away from issues of injustice, even if they may make people uncomfortable or unhappy. I commit to preaching what I believe I am called to preach, not just rant about whatever topic has recently been through the news cycle.

8) Preach Ethically

I pledge to investigate claims and issues well enough to trust what I will say to be accurate to the best of my knowledge and ability. I will not simply react to things seen in passing without careful examination and consideration. I will avoid manipulation and any kind of 'spiritual bullying'. I will also preach what I am prepared to say rather than going 'off the cuff' about some issue where the chances of getting facts wrong is greater. I will remember that if a message is true, it will likely be true *next* Sunday too, and will take appropriate time to prepare a word from the Lord, rather than a word from me.

9) Keep Learning

Continually seek ways to improve my ability to communicate, not just in the pulpit but especially in the pulpit. Read about preaching, public speaking, and communicating in general. Try new/different (to me!) ways of preaching so that sermons are not always of the same kind or type. Experiment and allow the Spirit to blow where it will, even when it makes me uncomfortable.

10) Be Accountable

Carefully review this Trust every September 20th, the anniversary of my ordination.

I will share it with my spiritual directory and Backstory preaching colleagues, as well as tracking it in my journal.