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# Annual Sermon Planning Calendar

*A full-year sermon planning framework covering liturgical seasons, thematic series, biblical book series, and special emphases -- everything the preaching pastor needs for a year of excellent teaching*

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*Equipping pastors and leaders to serve with excellence, integrity, and lasting Kingdom impact.*



# The Architecture of an Annual Preaching Plan

The preacher who plans a year in advance preaches from a position of extraordinary freedom. When you know in January where you will be preaching in October, the intervening months of reading, pastoral observation, and prayerful reflection all unconsciously orient themselves toward the work ahead. Ideas accumulate. Illustrations surface. Pastoral encounters inform the text. The sermon that is lived with for months before it is preached is a qualitatively different sermon than the one assembled in a week.

## The Architecture of an Annual Preaching Plan

An effective annual preaching calendar has several structural components: (1) The Christian year -- Advent (4 weeks), Christmas/Epiphany (2-3 weeks), Lent (6 weeks), Holy Week, Easter, Pentecost. These seasonal emphases provide a narrative framework for the year and ensure the congregation journeys through the full arc of redemption annually. (2) Extended book series -- one or two sustained journeys through a single biblical book (8-20 weeks). These form the theological backbone of the year and develop congregational biblical literacy in ways that topical preaching cannot. (3) Thematic series -- two to four shorter series (4-6 weeks each) addressing specific theological themes, congregational needs, or cultural questions. (4) Special occasions -- Mother's Day, Father's Day, community events, congregational milestones that require pastoral address. (5) Margin -- 3-5 Sundays per year held in intentional reserve for responses to significant events, pastoral urgencies, or Spirit-led adjustments.

### Practical Application Framework

The planning process begins with prayer. Before opening a calendar or a commentary, spend an extended time asking God: What does this congregation need to hear in the coming year? What is the most important theological foundation to strengthen? What specific challenges or opportunities do you see in the congregation's life that the year's preaching should address? The answers will shape the calendar in ways that no purely programmatic process can produce.

When the year's architecture is in place, develop working outlines for each series and rough notes for each sermon. These notes will evolve significantly by the time you preach them, but they give you a starting point that accumulates depth month by month. The preacher with a year's plan and twelve months of unconscious preparation will stand in the pulpit with a depth of insight and illustration that the preacher who prepared this week's sermon only this week simply cannot match.

### How to Get the Most From This Resource

This resource is designed to be worked, not just read. The difference between reading a planning template and actually planning, between reading an assessment tool and actually assessing, is the difference between information and transformation. Block specific time in your calendar this week to work through this resource. Bring your leadership team into the process where appropriate. Share what you discover with your accountability partner or spiritual director. Act on what you find.

#### KEY PRINCIPLE

The best ministry resources are the ones that produce changed behavior, not just increased knowledge. Decide before you finish this document what one specific change you will make as a result of engaging it.

## Reflection Questions

1. What is the most important thing this resource is revealing about your current practice? What does honest engagement with it require of you?
2. What one change, if made consistently for 90 days, would produce the greatest improvement in the area this resource addresses?
3. Who in your leadership team or accountability network needs to engage with this material alongside you?
4. What structures of accountability will you put in place to ensure that the commitments you make here are actually kept?

*Pastoral excellence is not a gift reserved for the extraordinarily talented. It is the fruit of ordinary faithfulness -- the steady, unsensational work of showing up, preparing well, praying hard, and trusting God with what only he can do. Do the work. Trust the God. Watch what grows.*

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