

# LIFT

## Ministry Group December Resource

### Get your joy back!

Carey Nieuwhof in his blog, “5 Tips To Help Ministry Leaders Get Their Joy Back At Christmas”, states that many ministry leaders lose their joy at Christmas because they are so busy helping others celebrate that they lose any sense of celebration themselves. In his blog, Nieuwhof shares five ways to maintain joy in the midst of the busyness of Christmas.

#### 1. Protect your quiet time.

Don't neglect your quiet time with God, especially during the holidays. Daily devotions keep us focused.

#### 2. Add a private family celebration.

Do things as a family: Read the Christmas story together, attend a Christmas Service at a neighboring church, or attend a Christmas concert with your family.

#### 3. Be off when you're off.

Shut off the stuff that drains you. Don't feel guilty about taking and protecting your days off.

#### 4. Don't over schedule

Keep lots of white space on your calendar. If you are not careful, you can run yourself ragged with parties and family commitments

#### 5. Do something fun!

Make time to do the things that bring you joy.

<https://careynieuwhof.com/5-tips-help-ministry-leaders-get-joy-back-christmas/>



### Shop Talk: Meaningful vs. Memorable

**Discuss: Do you, as a pastor or ministry leader, look forward to Christmas?**

Christmas, next to Easter, is one of the most well attended church services of the year. Although there is the potential to see many souls come into the Kingdom, the harsh reality is, many pastors are exhausted and uninspired by the season.

For years, we've looked at Christmas and Easter as Super Bowls on our church planning calendars. We coordinate, resource, promote, and hype up these services to stir up interest and attendance. We pour ourselves into making those services memorable, in hopes that those visitors will return the next week.

However, making things memorable can be exhausting. The time, energy (physical & emotional), and finances it takes to leave a lasting impression can take a heavy toll on pastors, missionaries, and ministry staff. In fact, it can rob us of the joy that should accompany the season.

Add to this, the stress of finding new ways to preach the birth of Jesus each year and the pressure of making Christmas memorable for new attenders while still engaging long-term members and you have a recipe for discouragement and disappointment.

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## Christmas Stressors

Pastoring is hard, pastoring through the holidays can be even more difficult. There is an entirely new host of stressors that pastors must navigate:

1. We must minister to people who are especially hurting during the holiday season.
2. The expectations are higher for you to attend, plan, or host holiday get-togethers.
3. Finding balance between time spent with your church and extended family.
4. It's tough to come up with new Christmas sermons. Finding a new approach to an old story seems daunting.
5. Christmas attendance is a roller coaster depending on where families choose to worship around Christmas.
6. Poverty and need become more visible during the holidays.
7. Some of us are hurting, too.

You can deal with many of these stressors by simply letting your leadership team, ministry group or spouse know where you are struggling, can use some help, or need encouragement.

<https://churchleaders.com/pastors/pastor-articles/338142-10-reasons-the-christmas-season-can-be-hard-for-pastors.html/2>

## Credential Renewal

**We want to encourage you to go online today and renew your credentials.**

<https://ministerrenewal.ag.org/Home/Renew>

**The deadline to submit is December 31, 2023, 11:59pm CST.**

## Meaningful vs. Memorable

### Discuss: How do we keep ministry from draining the joy out of our Christmas?

One thing that may help is to focus on making Christmas at your church more meaningful than memorable.

One of the most meaningful things we did each year was to set up a remembrance tree. This was a Christmas tree set up to honor loved ones who had recently passed away. We made ornaments available that family members could use to put a picture of their love one inside and then display in a special time of remembrance. It was one way we helped people cope with loss during the holidays. It was a small gesture that was extremely meaningful and people looked forward to each year.

Christmas doesn't have to be a production. It can be impactful by being intentionally meaningful.

This past year, at our Christmas Day service, I invited all the kids to join me around the altar where I read to them a Christian version of "The Night Before Christmas." The kids all packed in around me as I shared with them the message of Jesus. It was a meaningful moment for parents and kids, alike, to have their pastor take time to sow into them.

### How might you make things more meaningful this year?



**Christmas around the world doesn't carry with it the same connotations as it does in the states.**

What does 'Christmas' mean to those in your ministry context?

Were there Christmas traditions that you had difficulty replicating in your ministry context? What new ones did you create?

How do you handle navigating being away from family during the holidays?

Take some time to discuss the tension between trying to raise a budget while being generous towards others.

How do you slow down for Christmas and get out of support raising mode during the holidays when you feel the pressure of raising your budget every day?