

THE BASICS OF THE MARK DEVRIES RHYTHMIC WEEK

More than 20 years ago, Ministry Architects founder and veteran ministry leader Mark DeVries introduced what he called the “rhythmic week.” He specifically wrote about the concept in the context of youth ministry, but it also has wide-ranging — and timeless — implications for senior leaders.

Here are the basics: Each day is divided into three time slots: **MORNING, AFTERNOON, AND EVENING.** When designing a rhythmic week for yourself, follow the following steps.

1. Start by carving out your Sabbath, which should account for three slots.
2. Next, carve out at least six slots with your loved ones for personal time. Three of these six might also be in your Sabbath slots.
3. Then carve out one full slot for "balcony time." Ideally, this is an uninterrupted period of 3-4 hours once a week.
4. Next, add the regular meetings and events you must attend: staff meeting, worship, Sunday School, committee meetings, etc. This should be anything that occurs regularly.
5. Lastly, add the tasks that are essential to your ministry but are the things you like to do least. For some leaders this might be staff check-ins, follow-up calls, emails, etc. It might be Bible study prep or sermon writing time. Every leader has routine tasks they tend to put off because they dread them. So, pick a slot(s) each week that you can put all these undesirable tasks into when you're at your best and have the most energy to tackle them. Then after this slot, plan a weekly reward of some type: Perhaps schedule lunch with a friend, leave the office early, or take a few hours on this day to engage in a hobby.

DESIGNING YOUR OWN RHYTHMIC WEEK

Using the example on page 2 and the template on page 3, create a Rhythmic Week that incorporates elements of your own schedule and best fits your needs. Commit to following the schedule for at least three weeks and let your colleagues know that you're implementing a new pattern for how you spend your time. Then after running the experiment, take some time to reflect on what you noticed about your mental health, productivity, and joy in your work. 1



Example of a Pastor's Rhythmic Week

	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
MORNING	9:00 a.m. Sunday School & Worship	9:00-1:30 Office Time, Calls, Emails	10:00-1:30 Office Time	8:00-12:00 Balcony Time	9:00-3:00 Office Time	Sabbath	Personal Time
AFTERNOON	Personal Time	Office Time/ Worship Prep	Office Time/ Worship Prep	Pastoral Care Visits	Office Time/ Worship Prep	Sabbath	Personal Time
EVENING/ NIGHT	5:30 p.m. Youth Group	1:30 p.m. Staff Meeting	Pastoral Care Visits	5:30 p.m. Wed. Night Dinner & Classes 7:00 p.m. Committee Meeting 1/mo	Personal Time	Sabbath	Personal Time

LEGEND:

- Recurring Meetings
- Office Time
- Pastoral Care Visits
- Balcony Time
- Personal
- Sabbath



Rhythmic Week Template

	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
MORNING							
AFTERNOON							
EVENING/ NIGHT							