Feedback Survey Results

This survey was conducted with PulpitTalk subscribers. The top responses are listed just below, while the entire list of responses can be found further down. We hope that the ideas from fellow pastors will stimulate your thinking and practice of feedback and feed-forward.

1. Do you purposefully seek feedback in your preaching? How? From Whom?

Spouse 27%

Pastoral Colleagues 16%

Not regularly 15%

Fellow pastor 10%

Elders 7%

Other 25%

<u>All Responses to Question 1</u>

A. Spouse (26)

B. Pastoral Colleagues (15)

i. Meet every Tuesday with staff to go over entire service.

C. Not on a regular basis. (14)

D. Invited fellow pastor to evaluate him (9)

E. Elders (7)

i. Focus is on the content, more than the delivery style.

F. Talk with people after the service. (6)

F. Use a form and survey a cross-section of the congregation. (6)

G. Children- they are very honest. (3)

H. Get together periodically with group of focused listeners. (2)

I. Spoke at another church and had host pastor give feedback.

I. Reading people's faces and response.

I. Woman's perspective

I. Some on my leadership team discouraged me from asking individuals.

I. Emails throughout the following week of the message.

I. Visitors. We regularly seek their input on the church.

I. Another staff member hands out four cards to random people to fill out and return in each service. These cards seek feedback on rating the sermon, what was good, what could be improved, any distractions, and rating the clarity of the sermon.

I. Give out response cards to various leaders each week.

2. Do you purposefully get input from others before you preach? From Whom?

Staff 22%

Spouse 19%

No 16%

Planning Committee 12%

Elders, Lay Leaders 10%

Other 21%

<u>All Responses to Question 2</u>

A. Staff (17)

i. We talk about the upcoming sermon each staff meeting. (7)

ii. By talking with another pastor, my hope is that they will learn how to preach better themselves.a. Bulletin inserts on topics people want to hear a sermon about. (2)

B. Spouse (15)

C. No (12)

D. Periodical committee that meets for sermon planning (9)

i. Focus groups, made up lay people, that meet for 2 hours once a month to discuss two upcoming sermons.

ii. Plan the entire service together, including music, multimedia, sermon, drama, etc. (2)

E. Ask elders or lay leaders for topic ideas (8)

F. Email (6)

i. I get emails from people in my church who are reading the same passages as the upcoming message. They offer material, impressions, and questions based on the passage.

G. Start a few weeks beforehand and have conversations with various people about the passage, interpretations, and possible applications. (4)

H. Listen to people during visitations and hospital visits. Helps identify their problems and needs. (2)

H. The subject is discussed at small groups the week before the sermon. (2)

3. In terms of feedback, what have you found helpful to grow in your preaching?

Specific and honest 38%

Listen, watch my sermons 15%

Professional critique from a pastor 11%

Confirm what people heard me say 11%

Spouse removes unclear material 8%

Listen to bad stuff, not only good 8%

Other 9%

<u>All Responses to Question 3</u>

A. Honest and specific feedback from trusted people in the church. (20)

B. Listen or watch my own messages. (8)

C. Professional evaluation from pastor friend. (6)

C. Listen to people and hear if what they heard was what I thought I said. (6)

D. Spouse helps remove unclear or unnecessary material. (4)

D. Listening to the bad stuff, not just good things. (4)

E. Reviewing the feedback cards from people in the church. (3)

F. Feedback that focused more on content than delivery or style. (2)

4. As for self-evaluation, how do you know if you are improving in your preaching skills?

Listen, watch my sermons 25%

Feedback from church, spouse 15%

Response of audience- who apply it 12%

Set goals and meet them 9%

Don't know 7%

Difficult to Measure 7%

Other 25%

All Responses to Question 4

A. I listen and watch my sermons. I look for improvement in repeated words, flow of the message, and connecting points and ideas. (17)

B. Feedback from congregation and spouse. (10)

C. The response of the audience. If they are receiving, applying, and living out the message, then that helps me a great deal. (8)

D. Set goals and meet them (6)

i. Try to commit more of the sermon to memory. (2)

ii. Try different styles of preaching.

iii. Work on one particular area of improvement at a time. (4)

E. I don't know. (5)

E. Difficult to measure. (5)

F. Tough to say. It seems very subjective. (4)

F. When people talk to me about the message during the week. It shows that it caused them to think about something differently or do something about it. (4)

G. I look over a personal preaching checklist as I prepare to make sure I am staying attentive to various areas. (3)

G. I feel that if I am continually growing and learning from books, relationships, experiences, and my walk with God, I will as a result grow in my preaching. (3)

H. Larger attendance is one way, but not always a true indicator. (2)

5. If you could offer advice to other pastors in regard to receiving insight or feedback on their messages, what would that be?

Seek it out 21%

Listen, watch your message 15%

Don't let fear hold you back 9%

Ask for audience critique 7%

Be life learner in preaching 7%

Don't be defensive 7%

Other 34%

<u>All Responses to Question 5</u>

A. Seek it out. (14)

i. Seek out the negative

ii. Don't just ask anybody. Find someone thoughtful, caring, yet helpfully honest. (7)

B. Listen or watch your own messages. (10)

C. Fear often holds us back. Public speaking is a vulnerable act. We all need to improve, so let's not be afraid and acknowledge the need for feedback. (6)

D. Don't be defensive, but be open to what others have to say. (5)

D. Ask church members to occasionally offer tips and critique. (5)

D. Be a life learner in preaching. (5)

i. Listen to great preachers of the past and present. (4)

ii. Take classes or training in preaching. (2)

E. Pre-sermon focus groups can greatly impact your preaching. (4)

F. Subscribe to PulpitTalk. (3)

G. The lack of positive remarks does not necessarily mean it was a bad sermon. Some great messages might not be popular, but truth is needed even if it not well-received. (2)

G. Write out areas needing improvement and have church member comment on these areas as they listen to your message. (2)

G. Talk with your leadership team about the effects of your preaching and if it is producing the effects you desire. (2)

G. It is helpful to talk about your sermon the week before with staff and get their feedback. They understand different age groups and provide good insights. (2)

G. Talk to the youth. (2)

H. Interact and receive feedback from a wide range of people in your church, in terms of spiritual maturity, age, gender, race, etc.

H. Focus not just on "what they need to do" but on "how they can do it."

H. Find your passion and bring that into your communication.

H. Stay humble and be open to constructive evaluation. Your effectiveness is related to your willingness to listen and learn from your listeners.

H. Ask for tips from fellow pastors. Email manuscript, notes, have him listen to message, etc.

H. Make it easy to give feedback. Don't debate it, but take it humbly. Also, ask for specific examples.