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[5 Reasons Why Every Pastor Should Journal](#)

[Barnabas Piper](#)



Do you journal? Here's why you should. (Lightstock)

I don't think everyone needs to journal. But I have a hard time thinking of any legitimate reason why someone wouldn't.

Some might think it is girly. Some might think it is time consuming. Some might just hate to write. Here are my five best reasons—especially pastors and ministerial leaders—why you should take up, or keep up, journaling:

1. It is not a logbook or a daily diary. I think one of the biggest obstacles to journaling is the perception that it has to be done daily and you have to record everything. That's not journaling. That's a waste of time.

A journal might be a place to record memories, but really it's more of a place to process thoughts or experiences. You can journal weekly, daily, every couple of weeks, whatever. Try to do it regularly, but don't be burdened by it. It should *unburden* you.

2. Journaling is a dumping ground for all the stuff you aren't sure you should say or write elsewhere.

Anger, pain, venting, fears—they're all scary and/or hurtful to offer publicly. So start in a journal. As you write, you might see that, yes, you really ought to keep that to yourself; it's that bad. But you might find an idea developing that is beneficial to share with others.

Journaling is what got me started as a writer. As I worked through different ideas, some of them coalesced into something worth sharing (or at least I thought so). Regardless, you will find yourself free of some of the burden of those confusing, scary, hurtful thoughts because you dumped them in a journal.

3. It's the easiest way to pray. You know what's really doggone stinking hard? Sitting down, closing your eyes and praying in any sort of focused coherent way for longer than about 18 seconds. You forget what you were going to pray for. You get distracted by everything including the mere thought of being distracted. You slip into "prayer language" and don't quite feel free to really say what you're really thinking and feeling.

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You know what fixes all that? Writing it down. It automatically takes focus. It slows you down. It is easier to write sensitive things than speak them. And it is between you and God, almost like a letter.

4. It connects you to your past and points your way forward. Your journal is a photo album of your state of mind. As you look back, you'll see where you've been, how you've progressed or matured. Or maybe you'll be reminded of a better place, a time when you were on more solid ground and can find some encouragement in it. In either instance, it gives you a means to look ahead. So does using the journal for prayer. They show trajectory and correctives. They offer hope. They remind you of obstacles to avoid and paths to retread.

5. Writing begets writing. Not everyone will care about this, but for those who want to make writing a habit or who want to develop as writers, journaling is a wonderful way to do so. At the simplest, it is regular practice and makes a habit of composing. On the creative side, it allows you to explore ideas all the way past their limits, jot down all your crazy, push the limits of what works.

In the process, you figure out what you should write and gain new ideas you would have never thought of otherwise. Journaling will make your writing richer, more honest, more refined and more creative.

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