

How do you make Sundays go smoothly?

By [Adam J. Copeland](#)

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A couple weeks ago, Sunday morning didn't quite go as planned.

As usual I was the first to arrive at church. I unlocked the door and stepped over the threshold, and then things fell apart. Due to a miscommunication, nobody had set up for communion. We didn't have any bread or grape juice, and the store didn't open until half an hour before the service. Also, our dutiful deacon got confused about her duty dates, so we didn't have coffee for a while. Soon I realized I had overlooked at least three typos in the bulletin, and more significantly, completely left out the Lord's Prayer and the Prayers of the People.

When I finally secluded myself in my study for a moment to type and print out the

eucharistic prayer for World Communion Sunday, I found that the copy of the prayer had been thrown away. Fine, I thought. I can write a prayer. It wasn't until I was passing the communion elements to the elder that I realized I left out the epiclesis. I mumbled a sort of prayer under my breath. (Sorry, Holy Spirit, totally my bad.)

When

I walked into the service, I was already a few minutes late but had to speak to several folks I had asked to serve communion just a few minutes earlier. It turned out they didn't need to serve after all—the original communion setup person had asked three other servers at the last minute.

We

then had 20 minutes of announcements, all of which were important and well delivered but which threw me off my game for the entire service. Mid-service I realized that I had forgotten to print out the Prayer of the Day, so our liturgist was left helplessly shuffling her papers at the pulpit in search of the nonexistent prayer. I ended up turning on my portable microphone and leading it from my spot in the front pew.

Those

of you who are pastors, I could use your help. Is this just a fact of life in a small church—from time to time the announcements will go long, and the communion preparer will forget, and typos will hide until Sunday, and your mind will be on ten distracting details? Is this inevitable from time to time, or am I just a bad pastor?

What

strategies do you employ to make Sunday morning go smoothly? Do you, like me, prefer to write the Prayers of the People on the day of worship so that they're current? Do you put your foot down after three announcements? Please, can you help a brother out?