4 Ways to Overcome Office Fatigue

A lot of ministry work is done in the background. Every worship service or church event requires hours of preparation and administrative work to pull off. Much of this work takes place behind a computer in an office.

Even though ministry also includes substantial contact with people, in a digital age like ours a lot of that contact is now handled remotely. That means pastors and other ministry leaders spend more time in their offices now than they might have a decade or two ago. So, what can you do when you’ve had enough of the office?

If you are like me, some days you are super productive while sitting behind a desk. Other days it feels like the hours are dragging by and you aren’t getting much done. I fall right in the middle of the introvert/extrovert scale (I’m an ENFJ), which means I’m most energized when I balance my time between solitude and being with people.

Unless you are a classic introvert, who gets energized by being alone, chances are you will eventually experience what I like to call office fatigue. That moment when you just can’t stand being cooped up any longer.

But just because you want out of the office, that doesn’t mean your office tasks have gone away or don’t matter. So, what do you do when you are experiencing office fatigue, but still need to get your work done? Here are four suggestions that have helped me stay on task, when I have had enough of the
1. **Change your scenery.** Sometimes the best thing you can do to shake off the weariness of being in an office is to change your location. With modern technology, it has become super easy to work remotely. Even if there are tasks that you must do in your brick-and-mortar office, my guess is you can do 85 percent from anywhere with an internet connection.

Try packing up the essentials and heading out to a new spot to work for a bit. I work very well in public places. I am most productive when I am working alone in a crowd. So, I like to frequent coffee shops and restaurants. If you prefer quieter locations you might try the local library or a park.

2. **Take a break.** I am surprised at how often my office fatigue is the result of simply needing to take a break. You might feel like you don’t have time for a break. But taking time to stand up and walk around for a bit or allowing yourself five minutes to visit with a co-worker can have huge benefits for your energy levels and focus. The myth that we tell ourselves – that we don’t have time for breaks – is just that, a myth.

3. **Get outside.** I’m not what you would call an outdoorsy kind of guy. I mean, I enjoy activities like gardening and hunting, but I don’t look for ways to be outside. Still, during one of the most stressful periods of last year, when I was finishing a PhD thesis, pastoring full-time, and embarking on a chaplaincy program, I started taking time in the afternoons for a long walk. Those
walks gave me a break from my routine, allowed space for my brain to work creatively, and increased me sense of wellbeing. Even a short excursion outside can help you overcome office fatigue for an entire day.

4. **Remember that you minister to people.** If you are overwhelmed with ministry work that requires being in the office, maybe you need a reminder of why you do it all. Ministry is work dedicated to God in service to people. In the hustle and bustle I sometimes forget that important truth. Some great remedies for this are to meet a church member or ministry colleague for lunch, to take time to visit someone who is homebound, sick in the hospital, or incarcerated, to make a phone call to someone you haven’t talked to in a while, or to volunteer with an outreach program in the community.

These strategies have helped me overcome office fatigue as a ministry leader. In a world where the margins between work and play have become thin and the expectation to produce results has become so overwhelming, office fatigue has become another thing that people just deal with.

But you don’t have to just deal. It is possible to both be productive and maintain your sanity. It just takes some intentionality.

*Do you experience office fatigue in your work? What strategies do you have for overcoming it and staying productive?*