

Signal vs. Noise

Signal: The small set of actions that materially move the mission forward.

This is the work that only you can do. Focus on the work that produces the most fruit.

Noise: Anything that consumes our time and attention, but does not advance mission.

This is an activity without getting results. An urgency without importance.

The Problem

We live in a world full of distractions.

In many settings “noise” is often disguised as faithfulness - more meetings, more messages, more activity.

Microsoft recently did a research on employees. The results showed that most employees are interrupted about every 2 minutes by meetings, email, or notifications (roughly 275 interruptions/day).

One report from 2025 says a typical employee spends 392 hours/year in meetings, and 67% of it is considered unproductive; 92% admit multitasking in meetings.

Data compiled by Exploding Topics cites people checking phones roughly 58 times/day, with about 52% of checks during work hours.

The result? A lot of noise

The cost is real: When our attention gets diluted, our mission gets delayed.

And if we don't intentionally protect signal the environment will default us into noise.

The Bible Has a Lot to Say

The Bible teaches that focus is a form of stewardship.

Jesus modeled focused leadership.

He was (and is) intensely focused

Mark 1:35–38 – Jesus withdraws to pray, then returns with clarity: “Let us go... for that is why I came.”

Luke 9:51 – He “set His face” toward Jerusalem (resolve, not drift).

The example of focus by others.

Nehemiah 6:3 – “I am doing a great work and I cannot come down.”

Nehemiah had to protect signal from constant invitation and distraction.

We’re called to steward our time, not just our talent.

Psalms 90:12 – “Teach us to number our days...”

Luke 16:10 – Faithful in little, faithful in much (attention is a “little” that becomes “much”).

Ephesians 5:15–17 – “Make the most of your time... understand what the will of the Lord is.”

Four “High-Signal Disciplines”

1. Decide the signal before the day decides for you.

Daily: choose your “Top 3 signals”

2. Eliminate the things that don’t contribute to the vision.

Identify our mission:

Know God – Find Freedom – Discover Purpose – Make a Difference

Identify the measurables:

Weekend Services – Small Groups – Growth Track – Dream Team

Only do things that contribute and move the needle.

“There is nothing so useless as doing efficiently that which should not be done at all.”

Peter Drucker

3. Protect deep work (un-distracted blocks of time) as a leadership responsibility.

Schedule it first, not last. Treat it as mission-critical, not optional

4. Build systems that reduce recurring noise.

We will start our day with clarity, not scrolling.

We will not attend meetings without purpose, agenda, and outcome.

We will protect blocks of deep work.

We will hand off what others can carry.

We will treat sleep, health, and spiritual rhythm as signal (because depleted leaders create noise).

We will address issues directly instead of managing emotions indefinitely.

Three questions:

1. What is my highest signal contribution?
2. What noise have I normalized that's costing the mission?
3. What is one fix that I can do this week?

Nehemiah 6:3 - "I'm doing a great work, and I cannot come down."

He said this not because people aren't important, but because the mission is!