

Claude

Exceptional for long documents, structured formatting, and nuanced writing.

The Problem

When ChatGPT Isn't Enough

Where ChatGPT Struggles — Where Claude Excels

ChatGPT limitations

- ✗ Can drift or repeat itself in documents over 800 words
- ✗ Formatted outputs sometimes lose structure midway
- ✗ Pastoral letters can feel slightly mechanical in tone
- ✗ Can be verbose when you need precision

Where Claude is stronger

- ✓ Holds coherence in long documents — 2,000+ words without drift
- ✓ Produces clean, consistent formatting throughout
- ✓ Default tone is warm, measured, and careful — ideal for pastoral writing
- ✓ Strong at trimming to a specific length on request

↑ Both tools are excellent. The choice depends on the task.

The Concept

What Makes Claude Different

Built for Nuance — The Mental Model

- ◆ Claude is trained with a strong emphasis on being helpful, harmless, and honest
- ◆ Its default tone is more measured and careful than ChatGPT — useful for pastoral contexts
- ◆ It excels at long, structured tasks: series study guides, pastoral letters, policy documents
- ◆ The extraction principle: when you tell Claude not to add content beyond the source, it respects that boundary reliably
- ◆ Think of it as your most careful editor — precise, warm, and thorough

Demo 1 of 3

Long Document — Maintaining Coherence

Demo 1 — Formatting a Cell Group Leader's Guide

YOUR PROMPT

Task: As an experienced small group curriculum writer, format the following structured content into a clean, complete cell group leader's guide for a 60-minute session.

Include: a welcome and icebreaker (5 min), passage introduction (10 min), three discussion questions with facilitator notes (25 min), application challenge (10 min), prayer focus (5 min), and closing notes for the leader.

Context: Charismatic church in London. Session 2 of a Palm Sunday series — The King Is Coming. Previous session covered Zechariah 9:9.

References: Warm and accessible. Leader's guide format — not a study handout. Each facilitator note should give the leader something to say if the group falls silent.

[Paste your structured content here]

Watch for

Check whether the facilitator notes are specific and genuinely useful — not just 'encourage discussion'. Claude should give the leader actual content, not prompts.

Demo 2 of 3

Pastoral Letter — Tone That Feels Human

Demo 2 — A Pastoral Letter That Sounds Like Your Pastor

YOUR PROMPT

Task: As an experienced pastoral communications writer, draft a pastoral letter from our pastor to the congregation for Palm Sunday. 300-350 words. Three paragraphs.

Context: Charismatic church in London. Theme: The King Is Coming — Zechariah 9:9. Mixed congregation — long-standing members and newer believers. The pastor's tone is warm, direct, and pastorally attentive. He opens letters by acknowledging where the congregation is, not by announcing the theme.

References: Personal and direct — like the pastor is writing to individuals, not addressing a crowd. Avoids church jargon. Ends with something that stays with you.

Watch for

Does it open with the congregation — not the theme? Read it aloud. Does it sound like a person — or a template?

Demo 3 of 3

Iteration — Trimming Without Losing Quality

Demo 3 — Trimming a Long Output to a Specific Length

ITERATE PROMPT — paste in the same chat

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This is too long — it reads slowly in places and loses focus in the second paragraph. Trim it to 280 words maximum. Keep the opening sentence and the closing sentence exactly as they are. Tighten the middle paragraph — it is carrying too many ideas.
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Watch for

Claude trims precisely and keeps your anchors. This is one of its strongest skills — ask it to trim to a specific word count and it usually lands within 10 words.

The Extraction Principle — Why Claude is Safe for Sermon Content

- ✦ When you tell Claude to only use the source material you provide, it respects that instruction reliably
- ✦ This matters for sermon preparation — you want content grounded in what your pastor actually said
- ✦ Prompt it explicitly: 'Do not add content that is not in the source material I have provided'
- ✦ Claude will tell you when it cannot answer from the source — that honesty is more valuable than a confident wrong answer

The Most Common Mistake

✗ Hitting the limit and stopping

Claude's free plan resets every few hours. Most people hit the limit mid-session and give up. The fix is simple: switch to ChatGPT for the same task. Both tools produce good long-form output — ChatGPT has higher limits on free. Use Claude when you have capacity; use ChatGPT when you need to finish. They are interchangeable for most tasks.

✓ Fix: Bookmark both. Use whichever is available. The quality difference is smaller than the cost of stopping.

What Claude Cannot Do

- ⚠️ Claude does not generate images — use Canva AI or similar for visual content
- ⚠️ Claude does not browse the internet by default — it works from what you give it and its training data
- ⚠️ Like all AI, Claude can produce confident-sounding wrong information — verify scripture references independently
- ⚠️ Claude cannot know the specific person receiving your pastoral communication — its tone is excellent, but you must personalise
- ⚠️ Claude's training has a knowledge cutoff — current events and recent publications may not be in its knowledge base

Rule: Claude is your most capable writing assistant. It is not a fact-checker, a researcher, or a pastoral substitute.

Which Claude Plan Do You Need?

Free

✓ Learning the tool, occasional long-document drafting, testing capability

Usage resets every few hours. Start here to understand the tool.

X Regular intensive sessions — you will hit limits at the worst moment

Pro (~\$20/month, ~£16+VAT)

✓ Regular ministry use — pastoral letters, series guides, weekly content creation

5x more usage than free. Most church users will never need more.

X Ultra-heavy multi-user production — consider Max tiers then

Max (\$100-200/month)

✓ Heavy daily professional writing at scale

Two tiers. Effectively unlimited. Most churches will not need this.

X Almost all church use cases — this is significant overkill

DO THIS NOW

Turn a set of rough sermon notes into a formatted cell group guide

- 1 Open claude.ai in a new tab. Start a new conversation.
- 2 Paste the Demo 1 prompt from this session — adapt the context for your church
- 3 Below the prompt, paste 200-300 words of rough notes from a recent sermon
- 4 Read the output — check: are the facilitator notes specific or generic?
- 5 Try one trim request: 'The opening section is too long — cut it by a third'

If you only try Claude once, try it on something long. That is where it earns its place.

What Good Claude Output Looks Like

- ✓ The formatting is consistent throughout — headings at the same level, bullets the same style
- ✓ The tone is warm but not saccharine — measured, not gushing
- ✓ Long documents do not lose focus or repeat themselves midway
- ✓ The output respects word-count instructions precisely
- ✓ Pastoral letters sound like a person wrote them — not a committee
- ✓ Facilitator notes give the leader something real to say, not just 'encourage discussion'

Use Claude when the task is long, nuanced, or pastoral. Use ChatGPT when you need speed and higher limits.

Also worth exploring:

- Prompts 2, 3, 6, 8 in the Student Prompt Library are optimised for Claude
- Tutorial 05 (NotebookLM) — for research that must stay inside your source material