



DHF Connection

LATE SUMMER 2022

Get Some Rest

It had been an incredibly busy season for Jesus and the Twelve. People suffering from demonic oppression and chronic illness had to be seen. A grieving parent needed pastoral care, and a brief trip back home ended in disappointment. Jesus was still processing his cousin John's execution as the Twelve returned with reports for their staff meeting (Mark 5:1 - 6:30). People from all over came to Jesus, so much so that Mark records "they didn't even have a chance to eat."

Sounds a lot like an average day of pastoral ministry. Pastors learn quickly what it is like to end the day knowing not all tasks were completed, meaning each new day will start with a feeling of being behind. Over time, that can lead to feelings of burnout and depression. The Barna research group has written that 50 percent of American pastors suffer from, and are being treated for, various forms of depression.

Perhaps it is because we have overlooked Jesus' invitation to the Twelve, "Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest" (Mark 6:31).

Jesus said
to them, **"Come with
me by yourselves
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get some rest."**
MARK 6:31

A growing number of churches recognize the need to create seasons of rest for their pastors. This often comes in the form of a sabbatical policy. If your church does not have such a policy,

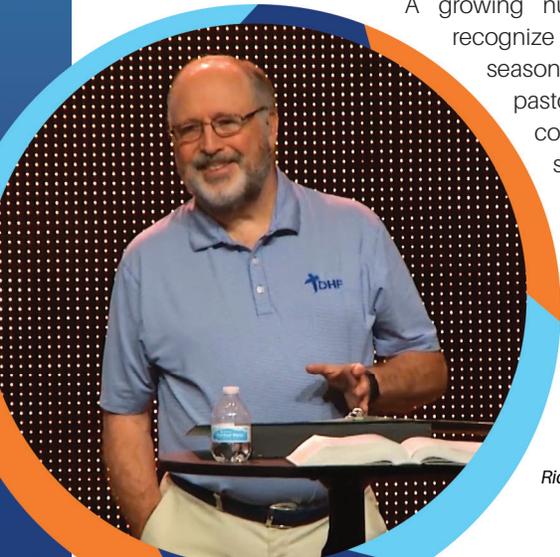
I encourage you to consider one. Investing in the emotional and mental health of your pastor will pay long-term benefits for both your pastor and your church.

In my role with Disciple Heritage Fellowship, I am regularly involved in the life of churches across the country. During one consultation with a pastoral search team, I asked how they cared for their pastors. I was met with blank stares until the chairman spoke up and jokingly said they normally just drained everything they could out of a pastor, kicked them to the curb, and went out to find a new one. Unfortunately, this sad reality happens far too often.

Our next DHF Leadership Conversation, set for Tuesday, September 6, will feature elders and pastors who have crafted sabbatical policies for their church. I encourage you to be part of that conversation. See page 3 for details.

Contact me, Rick Grace, at rgrace@discipleheritage.org or call (217) 875-3350 if DHF can serve you or your church. Our goal is to encourage you to "fulfill Christ's mission" for your church. Let's partner together and watch God expand his kingdom as we learn to care better for his servant-leaders.

Rick



Rick Grace | rgrace@discipleheritage.org

Rick is the DHF Church Liaison. He and his wife, Nancy, have served in pastoral ministry for more than 45 years. Rick earned his doctorate from the University of Dubuque Theological Seminary.

Rick Grace preaches at First Christian Church in Decatur, IL in July 2022

Self-Care

If I asked, "Do you know the story of the feeding of the 5,000?", your answer would probably be "Yes." If I asked what happened just before that story in the Book of Mark, would you be able to tell me?

Take time to read Mark 6:30-46. Jesus and the disciples had been so busy serving and teaching, they had not even eaten. By the time they reached the shore and faced the crowd of 5,000, the disciples had reached their limits. They told Jesus to send the people away. As we know, that didn't go over so well (even if it did lead to the fishes and loaves miracle).

What caused the disciples to reach their breaking point? The same thing that causes many pastors and lay leaders to reach their breaking points — they neglected self-care.

The disciples had been so wrapped up in ministering that they had neglected to care for themselves. And then, in the thick of ministering to their 5,000 closest friends, they became cranky and stressed and lost their patience.

And this is understandable.

When we are constantly rushing around caring for others, we often neglect ourselves — spiritually, mentally, and physically. We justify our "busyness" by saying things like, "After I do this



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- KIM HOLLEY -

one thing, I'll take a break." Or "This person really needs me right now so I'll care for myself later." Or the one I'm famous for using: "I can sleep when I die." (I'm pretty sure that last one isn't theologically sound so I wouldn't recommend using it.)

To best care for others, we must first care for ourselves. We do this by doing what Jesus and the disciples did in verses 45-46.

The disciples had to get away from the crowd to have some time for themselves. They needed to rest, eat, and absorb what they had been taught by Christ. Even Jesus needed to reconnect with His

Father after pouring out so much of Himself to others. While there were many more people who needed to be healed, Jesus and the disciples needed to care for themselves first.

The disciples and Jesus had to intentionally neglect the needs of the people to provide for their own needs. In our lives, we need to schedule some "planned neglect" for ourselves.

We will have days like the disciples... days we are so busy we miss a meal to care for an individual having surgery, minister to a broken family, be at the board meeting, or feed the proverbial 5,000 people.

We cannot let this become "the norm." Planned neglect is required if we are going to be healthy enough to care for others.

Kim



Kim Holley

Kim is the DHF Chairperson. She is the pastor of La Grange Christian Church in La Grange, NC. Kim earned her master's degree from Campbell University Divinity School.

CREATING A SABBATICAL POLICY FOR YOUR CHURCH

Disciple Heritage Fellowship churches are a diverse lot! We have churches in our network that are rural and churches that are urban; churches that are small and churches that are quite large. We have churches that are elder-led and churches that are board-led; churches that are contemporary and churches that are traditional. But in almost all cases, they are pastored by men and women who are tired, discouraged, and in need of rest.

The Barna research group has identified the three top reasons why pastors are leaving the ministry in record numbers. They are (1) a deep sense of discouragement, (2) feelings of isolation, and (3) a sense of being overwhelmed by the tasks before them. As you might imagine, the pandemic has only made all three of these worse.

This has caused churches across the country to take a fresh look at the ways they care for their pastor(s) and for the growth opportunities provided for them. One thing that keeps surfacing in our network of churches is the need to create a sabbatical policy for the church and to work that policy into pastoral contracts and/or letters of calling.

DHF periodically hosts Leadership Conversations designed to bring people together from across the country to talk about issues in the local church. And few issues are more pressing than the emotional and spiritual health of our pastors. This is why the next Leadership Conversation might be one of our most important yet.

On Tuesday, September 6 at 7pm CST, our next DHF Leadership Conversation via Zoom will center on crafting a sabbatical policy for your church. We will have a pastor and an elder representing two churches to help facilitate the discussion. Pictured below from left are David Hedgepeth and Jeffrey Taylor from Marana, AZ and Michael Ten Eyck and N.D. Harrison from Pittsfield, IL. We will end our evening with a time of Q&A.

This Zoom-based event is **FREE**, but advanced registration is needed. **Email Rick Grace at rgrace@discipleheritage.org to request the link.** Please consider joining in this important conversation. If you do not currently have a sabbatical policy for your church, this could help in getting one started. The benefits could bless your pastor and your church for years to come.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 6, 2022 AT 7PM (CST)



JOIN US ON

zoom





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DHF is now on YouTube!

Be sure to **subscribe** to our all new YouTube channel where you'll find many great resources such as...

- Leadership Conversations
- Main speaker sessions from conference
- Breakout sessions from conference
- #shorts
- and more!

Also, be on the lookout for **something new coming from DHF this fall!** Ring the notifications so you are one of the first to find out.

