



## What is a Pastoral Sabbatical?

A sabbatical is a deliberate season of time set aside for our pastors and elders where they are relieved of their normal pastoral responsibilities either in part or full. These seasons are granted so as to allow the shepherds of our church time to rest, renew and revision.

- (1) Our pastors and elders should **rest**. Their duties as pastors and elders are consuming and demanding and rest for their body and soul is often neglected.
- (2) Our pastors and elders should **renew**. The demands of ministry are not like other vocations as they come with significant spiritual weight. That can place undo burdens on their bodies, marriages, families and other relationships.
- (3) Our pastors and elders should spend time to **revision** their call and leadership responsibilities by seeking God's leading through Word and prayer as well as trusted counsel with other pastors and counselors.

The ideal time for a pastor or elder to take a sabbatical is before they need one. We want our overseers to run the race well and for a long time. Without seasons of rest, renewal and revision, spiritual weariness and dryness can set in thus making our leaders susceptible to spiritual neglect and sin.

Last thought: A sabbatical is not a fancy word for vacation. Fulltime vocational pastors of our church are granted vacation time each year and a sabbatical does not count against that needed time. Vacations are granted for regular family and personal rest & recreation. Though there will certainly be recreation during a sabbatical, personal spiritual duties are outlined and expected for those granted a sabbatical season. The elders will assist those granted a sabbatical to outline goals, focuses and expectation during their sabbatical.

## What is Grace Church's Policy for Pastoral Sabbaticals?

The current constitution and bylaws ratified by the members of Grace Church in 2017 outlines that our vocational pastor be granted a sabbatical every 5 years starting with 4 weeks and increasing every successful 5 years by 2 weeks with a maximum allowance of 12 weeks in one year. It must be noted that this is fairly typical for many churches in the reformed tradition, many of which require no less than 8 weeks for each sabbatical season.

Additionally, Grace Church desires to give our non-vocational elders a year long sabbatical every 3-5 years depending on the demands of ministry and the number of qualified elders the church has in stalled for the office.

## What is the extent of Pastor Tom's sabbatical in 2022?

Tom will take a modified sabbatical in 2022 which will include a 6 weeks break from preaching. During this six weeks, Tom will maintain some general oversight of weekly needs of the church but will devote most of his time to the 3 marks of a sabbatical listed above. (Rest, Renew, Revision). Since Tom was given a 4 week sabbatical during his last year at Providence Baptist Church to turn his attention to planting Grace Church and since we are in year 7 as a church (2 years past sabbatical policy recommended in our Bylaws), the elders feel giving Pastor Tom a 6 week sabbatical is right and appropriate. The focus of his sabbatical is generally outlined later in this document.

## What will happen at Grace Church during Pastor Tom's Sabbatical?

- ☀ **Preaching:** The preaching duties for June and first 2 Sundays in July will be attended to by Gabriel Aron (6/5, 6/12), Josh Lafave (6/19), Justin Long (6/26), Delon Bradley (7/3) & Jordan Williams (7/10)
- ☀ **Weekly Preparations for Mid-week Prayer and Sunday Worship:** Pastor Tom will continue to work with Andrea and Kirk and plan
- ☀ **Member Care:** Pastor Tom will continue to work and meet with current members needs but new member needs will be redirected to the elders during his sabbatical. This will allow elders to determine if Pastor Tom is needed so he can attend to his assigned Sabbatical Objectives. The elders request that you do not reach out to Pastor Tom for ministry or church related needs or issues during this sabbatical. The staff and elders will be the front line in attending to any member or ministry needs during this time.

## ☀ **Contact Info for Elders & Staff:**

- ~ General Church Questions, Needs, and Activities
  - Andrea Lafave - Church Admin - [andrea@gracesmyrna.org](mailto:andrea@gracesmyrna.org)
- ~ Sunday Worship Questions
  - Kirk Hutcherson - Worship Director - [kirk@gracesmyrna.org](mailto:kirk@gracesmyrna.org)
- ~ Youth Ministry
  - Jordan Williams - Youth Director - [jordan@gracesmyrna.org](mailto:jordan@gracesmyrna.org)
- ~ Member Needs and Care
  - Josh Lafave (elder) - [jslafave@gmail.com](mailto:jslafave@gmail.com)
  - Delon Bradley (elder) - [bradleydelon@gmail.com](mailto:bradleydelon@gmail.com)
  - Justin Long (elder) - [Justin.long@topper.wku.edu](mailto:Justin.long@topper.wku.edu)
  - Gabe Henkel (elder candidate) - [henkel.gabe@gmail.com](mailto:henkel.gabe@gmail.com)

## **How can we pray for and support Pastor Tom?**

- ☀ Pray for Pastor Tom to rest well - Body & Soul
- ☀ Pray for him to seek clarity on future needs of Grace Church
- ☀ Pray for his theological study and preparation for training and teaching needs starting in Fall of 2022
- ☀ Pray for renewal activities for Tom and Amanda's marriage and in their parenting.
- ☀ Feel free to let the Agnew's know that you are praying for them and check in on them as you feel led.
- ☀ Feel free to bless Tom and family in any way you feel led during his sabbatical.

## **Can we know what Pastor Tom's goals, objectives and focuses are during this Sabbatical?**

Absolutely! We feel that Tom will get more out of this time of sabbatical knowing that his church family is cheering him on. Below you will find a broad outline of goals and activities that Tom will focus on during Summer 2022.

### ☀ **REST**

- ~ Family Lake Trip to Center Hill Lake - June 16-20th
- ~ Family Trip to East Tennessee, Virginia and North Carolina to visit extended family - July 5-11th
- ~ Attend to much needed and overdue home projects

### ☀ **RENEWAL**

- ~ Deliberate One-on-One Time with Amanda during the Summer
- ~ Renewed One-on-One Discipleship with Caleb, Asher and Judson
- ~ Reset goals for physical, emotional, & spiritual health (work with counselors/coaches and trainers)
  - Enlist a Trainer & Gym
  - Meet with a counselor
  - Read *Voice of the Heart* by Chip Dodd

### ☀ **REVISION**

- ~ Reading List
  - Theology
    - *Deity and Decree* by Sam Renihan
    - *The Mystery of Christ: His Covenant His Kingdom* by Sam Renihan
  - Current Issues
    - *Strange New World* by Carl Trueman
    - *Confronting Injustice without Compromising Truth* by Thaddeus Williams
  - Ecclesiology/Church Polity
    - *Denominations or Associations* by Jim Renihan
  - Personal Ministry Enrichment
    - *Care of Souls* by Harold Senkbeil
- ~ Attend the Annual Meeting of the SBC in Anaheim (Traveling with Pastor Joe Stegall from PBC)
  - June 13-16th
- ~ Begin the work of the Vision Team
- ~ Elder & Families Renewal/Recreational Activity
- ~ Visit 2-3 churches for recon.