

Hebrews 13:7 *Remember your leaders who taught you the word of God. Think of all the good that has come from their lives, and follow the example of their faith.*

“...the example of their faith.”

As the leaders of Anchor Church for over a decade, Joanne and I can look back and recount many stories of the good that has come from our lives. God has been faithful to us, and we want to celebrate His goodness with you! Joanne and I also want to encourage you that good will come of your life, too, if you take steps of faith to follow God where he is leading you.

That's all we've done. We haven't been perfect. We aren't super-Christians. We simply took a step of faith to give up some of our ambitions in life to follow God into what it seemed he was calling us to do.

We aren't special. We're two normal humans who had the sense that God was calling us to start a church. God may not call everyone to start a church. So in that sense, many of you won't be able to follow our example. However, that's not what this verse is saying. It says to follow the example of their *faith*. So, in this sense, Joanne and I encourage you to do the same thing: follow God in faith and see the good that he wants to come from your life.

Joanne and I believe that we are taking another step of faith in our journey of following God. A step of faith that we hope will inspire everyone to leave their comfort zone and follow God in faith believing that he has a plan for your lives and that he will never leave us - and that, when we follow him, so much good will come from that!

We've planted a church together, and you share in the good that has come from our lives as co-laborers in Gospel ministry with us. Truly, we weren't the only ones who took a step of faith to follow God into starting a church. Many of you have also taken a step of faith to join us in that calling!

After over 12 years of church planting and laying the foundation for a church, Joanne and I have the encouraging sense from God's Spirit that we have done what he called us to do. His work is not finished, but we have finished the portion of his work that he called us to lead. Although this journey has not been easy, and we've endured the kinds of hardship that all of God's ministers experience, we have an overwhelming sense of affirmation from God and from our closest friends and mentors that God is pleased with us and pleased with the work that we've done. We are also pleased with the work God has done through us, and we take great joy in the long-term support and collaboration we've had with faithful partners in our church family.

We started with a core group of friends 12 years ago to begin this journey, and we consider you to be a larger core group of friends who will walk through the the last step of our church planting journey with us: the transition of the church planter to a new lead pastor who can build on the foundation that we've laid. This pattern is consistent in the Bible regarding the work of church planters and missionaries, but it's not an easy task because of the love and trust we've built over the years together. Joanne and I, along with our elders and staff, sense that this is the best time to begin the process of succession because the church is growing and gaining momentum. Of course, that makes it harder for me and Joanne to step aside because of our excitement for the future of Anchor Church, but it also seems good to us that God is preparing our church with the margin and momentum to be able to transition in a healthy way. Of course, we'll need your prayer and support along the way! As hard as this is to share with you and our friends, we truly believe that the church is doing well and headed into a very exciting season of growth and strength. We want to do everything we can to set that up for success - even if that means stepping aside and finding the best leader for this next season.

To be clear, this will be my last year as the Lead Pastor of Anchor Church. I plan to continue as Lead Pastor with teaching and leading the church until December 31, 2023 or unless we find a new pastor before then.

While it is not clear what the next steps are for me or my family, I've grown increasingly interested in what it could look like to exercise my faith in the context of business and leadership in the marketplace. We do believe that someday God may use us to encourage other churches and church leaders, but we hope to enjoy a season of rest from years of ministry. Each time we've shared this news with increasingly larger groups of people, Joanne and I are overwhelmed by the love and encouragement that we are receiving. It's hard to explain what it feels like to have given and received this kind of love over the years and even now in the light of such hard news to share. We are truly grateful.

There's another passage that I want to share that I think can become a rallying cry for the next season of our church: **Psalm 90:16-17** *Let your work be shown to your servants, and your glorious power to their children. 17 Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us, and establish the work of our hands upon us; yes, establish the work of our hands!*

The next leg of our church planting journey together is perhaps one of the final stages: to hand our work off to the next generation. In this sense, our transition represents one final challenge for us at the end of this church planting journey: God establishing the work of our hands so that it outlives us to reach the next generation. Stepping down from my role in a healthy way, bringing on a new Lead Pastor who will love and serve the church, and everyone working together to support this transition is the best way to prepare the church for the inevitable transitions that will take place over the next 100 years. We have the opportunity to establish another example of faith for the next generation to follow for healthy transitions of leadership when their time comes.

Will you pray for us? Will you partner with me in this last leg of the journey as your Lead Pastor to see this transition through and, with me, to offer love and support for our new pastor? Will you work with me to unify our church and encourage those who are sad or disappointed, so that our church increases in fervor for prayer, for the Gospel of Jesus, for love for one another, for reaching our neighbors, and for establishing a church that will have an impact on our community for generations to come?

As we look ahead to the future of Anchor Church, we have a sense of hope and expectation for all that God will do - for the good that God wants to produce in and through each of our lives. Thank you for your partnership in the Gospel with us! We pray God will strengthen the partnership and leadership of Anchor Church during this season. Let's get there together!

Love,
Kris and Joanne Hassanpour