

Hey Crossway Friends & Family,

This past Sunday, I shared an update on my family's summer plans during my sermons at the Pond Campus. From June 18-August 18, we are taking a Sabbatical. A Sabbatical is a practice that encourages pastors to receive extended time to rest, replenish and be renewed, so they can better serve their congregations in future seasons.

Why am I taking a Sabbatical now?

First, I've never taken a Sabbatical before. I had my first ministry leadership role at age 16, when I was the director of student ministries at my home church. Over the past 26 years, I have served God diligently and without any extended time off. This feels like an inflection point in my ministry career, and a right time to take a break.

Secondly, it's a change of season for my family. As our daughter goes to kindergarten this fall, it will be the first time in ten years that we won't have a little one around the home. Sabbatical will give us the opportunity to make the most of this time with our family. I want to give my kids the gift of me just being dad, and not Pastor Dave for a stretch.

Third, while I'm not burned out, or in bad shape whatsoever, I don't want to find myself in that kind of situation down the road. This Sabbatical is more preventative care than anything else.

Fourth, over my seven-and-a-half years here at Crossway, we have done a lot. In order to discern what's next as a community, letting the ground lie fallow for a season, will prepare us for the best kind of future fruitfulness. As it's been said: Change of Pace + Change of Place = a Change of Perspective.

Fifth, I am going to fast from technological use. Detox even. I will shut my phone down and leave it behind. I will not respond to emails, texts, calls, social media, or any other form of communication for two months. Fasting from compulsive checking, I believe, will enable my life with God to deepen immensely, and allow me to be fully present to my family. Our elders and pastoral team are graciously filling in for me to respond to any pastoral needs that arise during this time.

Finally, close to two years ago, I began exploring this idea with our elders. I had their approval to apply for the Lily Foundation's Clergy Renewal Program. This program awards pastors significant financial resourcing for pastors and their families to travel and get away during a period of Sabbatical, and to offer financial resourcing for churches to find ministry coverage during a pastor's absence. It is highly competitive,

and we were blessed to receive this grant. It requires a minimum time of three months be taken off. So we are taking two months off this summer, and an additional month off in the summer of 2027.

To be clear, by God's grace, everything related to our Sabbatical will be funded by the Lily Foundation Grant, not our church's budget. I praise God for his provision in this way.

Before I leave, I'll kick off a new teaching series on the book of Philippians. All summer long we'll go verse by verse through this extraordinary letter of Paul's, showing us how we might be filled in greater ways with the joy of the Lord. Part of this grant will allow us to bring in guest speakers for five of the nine Sundays that I won't be here.

One of my ministry mentors, Paul Borthwick, who is a global missions leader, and who has taught at Crossway before, will preach two of the weeks in July. Along with Paul, Nate Parks, who's the President and CEO of Berea ministries, including Camp Berea, will preach three Sundays in August. Our pastoral team will preach the other four Sundays while I'm gone. I have no doubt: our Sunday services will continue to be powerful!

Here are a few of my prayers and requests for us while I'm gone.

1. Lean in, don't drift away. Sabbaticals can be strengthening for churches, because they afford opportunities for others to step up and serve in the absence of a pastor. So lean in and see what God does while I'm gone.

2. Build community. Attend one of our summer hangouts. Invite someone out for coffee. Begin serving. Be the church together.

3. Continue investing. Our fiscal year will conclude on July 31. We are in a good place financially as a church, but the final push to finish the year strong is always needed. We have about 6 months left of our Kairos campaign. Consider giving if you've never pledged or fulfill the pledge you made to the Lord and our church.

4. Rest. These two months for me will be a time to stop, rest, delight, and worship. While we still have an incredible summer of ministry planned as a church, I hope we can all dial back the intensity of our pace to enjoy and savor life with God during summer. Let's slow down to see all that God has done.

I'll continue to share more updates and answer more questions over the next month. To ease any worries you may have, please know: I have every intention and plan to come back renewed, refreshed and ready for the next great season of life together here at Crossway. I have no intention to go anywhere else. And I will sincerely miss being with you during my time away.

Thanks for reading and for praying for our family during our Sabbatical. Should you need to reach our pastoral staff or elders while I'm gone, you can find contact information on our website.

We have a lot to look forward to when I come back as well. We're planning outdoor services at the Pond on August 30, followed by Vision Sunday, on September 13. Can't wait!

With the utmost gratitude to God for our church family,

Pastor Dave