

# Why it Matters?

Most pastors believe God has called them to the role of pastor. But being called by God doesn't make the work easy. To the contrary, the work of a pastor, though rewarding, is challenging. Churches are complex organizations. A local church pastor must be a talented and tireless multi-tasker. One researcher wrote, "I have never encountered such a fast-paced job with such varied and impactful responsibilities." The demands on pastors require them to quickly switch between complex tasks that require completely different knowledge, skills, or abilities. COVID-19 and increasing political conflict doubled down on the pressure.

Why does this matter? Because many pastors want to quit. A study released by the Barna Group in December 2021 noted that 38% of pastors had seriously considered quitting the ministry that year. Some moved on to new assignments. Others left for the greener pastures of a new church. Some just gave up.

At Church Hope, we believe there's a better path. In February 2022 Jared Wilson wrote an article offering this: "I'm convinced that what a lot of pastors on the verge of quitting need is not a new context or a new vocation but a substantive break—a sabbatical."

What's a sabbatical? Taken from the word sabbath, a sabbatical is a time away to rest and refresh. It is a time to focus on personal, spiritual, and emotional renewal in preparation for the next season of ministry.

This leads to the ministry of Church Hope. We believe a sabbatical is a healthy way of supporting and honoring those called to carry the weight associated with shepherding a congregation. Because ministry can lead to spiritual and emotional exhaustion, a sabbatical can work against ministry burnout. A typical and effective sabbatical will last for a period of five to ten weeks.

Unfortunately, in many churches, offering the pastor a sabbatical seems impossible. This is especially true in churches where a lengthy break may not be feasible either for budgetary reasons or simply because there is not another qualified individual available, either on staff or otherwise, to backfill the temporary vacancy caused by the leave of absence.

Church Hope recognizes the short-term and long-term value of a planned pastoral sabbatical. To that end, Church Hope is a resource for churches that want to gift their pastor with a sabbatical. During a pastor's sabbatical, Church Hope will provide—at no or minimal cost to the church—a highly qualified, experienced shepherd who will provide temporary coverage for the church. This ministry will include preaching, coaching church leadership, and other ministries as desired by the pastor and the church board.

## Our Mission

**The Mission of Church Hope is to glorify God by providing rest, hope and encouragement to pastors through sabbatical coverage and other ministries.**