

Living In Sabbath While Running The Race: Finding Balance Between Ministry And Family

Let's face it: ministry can be hazardous to your family and to your health. Burnout, exhaustion, disappointment, and unmet expectations are real dangers that can rob you of joy and even end your ministry. Is it possible to survive the stress of ministry and even to *thrive* long term in your personal life, in your marriage, and in your family? This session will provide both encouragement and practical help for finding balance between ministry and family time, all designed to help you and your family serve with joy for a lifetime.

Jay Mosser has served in pastoral roles for 42 years – about 20 years in various assistant pastor capacities and the rest as senior pastor. Through those years he has served in three churches ranging from smaller (less than 50) to larger (about 1,000). He has worked with children, teens, worship ministry, pastoral care, preaching and leadership. Jay has an M.Div. from Western (Conservative Baptist) Seminary and a D.Min. from Corban University in Oregon, where his doctoral thesis was titled “How a Pastor’s Theology of Shepherding Affects the Health & Growth of a Church.” He is married to Kathy and has three daughters and five grandchildren. In his spare time, he loves to read, hike, travel, watch sports, and spend time with his family.

Let’s Talk (as in, let’s “Get Real”)

- Listen to an exhausted pastor: Article from Christianity Today – “I’ve Reached My Breaking Point as a Pastor”
- What are the Top Ten Stress Points for pastors & families? (Let’s make a list)
- Life as a pastor and pastor’s family:

Dying (or about to) Surviving (barely) Making It Thriving

- ⇒ From your contacts & conversations, where do you think most pastors are?
- ⇒ Where do you think most pastor’s families are?
- ⇒ Where are you?

Setting the Stage...and A Moment of Triage:

- I Kings 19:1-18
- Matthew 11:28-30
- Mark 6:30-34
- II Corinthians 1:8-11
- Psalm 55:6-8

Let's Break It Down:

1. "Living in Sabbath..."

- a. Understand the principle of Sabbath that is baked into creation
- b. Don't miss it: Sabbath was a gift, not a curse!
- c. When you think "Sabbath," think "Shalom...Human Flourishing...True Rest"

2. "While Running the Race..."

- a. God HAS called us to ministry and ministry calls for rigorous effort
I Corinthians 9:24-27; II Corinthians 12:15; Galatians 4:19; II Timothy 2
- b. Even the Apostles disagreed on ministry expectations
Acts 15:37-41

3. "Finding Balance Between Ministry and Family..."

- a. Your spouse is a gift from God. Proverbs 18:22
- b. Children are gifts from God as well. Psalm 127:3
- c. How you treat gifts, says a lot about what you think about the Giver.

4. Know What "Chapter" You're In (I Corinthians 7:17, 26 – "the present distress")

- a. How old are you? How long have you been married? How old are your kids?
- b. Each chapter of life comes with a different stewardship from God.
- c. Live fully into the chapter you're in with its privileges and its limitations!

5. Other Habits for Long Term Health

- a. Pay attention to your physical health. Sleep. Exercise. Eat well. See a doctor.
- b. Plan "margin" into your daily life – room to breathe.
- c. Take a Sabbath Day every week.
- d. PLAN and PROTECT other breaks, both alone and with your family.
- e. Ask your spouse and your kids about your schedule. Have a "family meeting" and listen to everyone. (In fact, make that a habit!)
- f. Rest is not an option if you plan to be in ministry long-term. You need to decide.

Let's Talk: Q & A – What questions come to mind?

Suggested Reading

- Decade by Decade, by Bob Biehl
- Lost in the Middle: Mid-Life and the Grace of God, by Paul David Tripp