

Evangel Sabbatical FAQ's

What is a Sabbatical?

The concept of Sabbatical is rooted in the Biblical view of Sabbath rest which God modeled in Genesis 2 and commanded in Exodus 20. In Leviticus 25 the Lord says that in the 7th year the people should not sow the field or harvest a crop. The land was allowed to rest and therefore, so were the people. The Gospels tell us of times when Jesus retreated to be by Himself to pray and, on occasions, He took off for some rest and renewal.

A Sabbatical affords a pastor the opportunity to step away from his day-to-day responsibilities for an intentional and extended season of rest, reflection, rejuvenation and reconnection with God and with his family in order to strengthen his spiritual life and renew himself for future service. It is considered a "best practice" in healthy churches to offer pastors a sabbatical periodically, usually on a seven-year cycle.

Why are we offering Pastor Chris a Sabbatical?

We believe our Senior Pastor should model God's design for Sabbath rest. Pastoral work requires a unique approach compared to typical work because continuous engagement can gradually deplete a pastor's spiritual strength. Therefore, taking regular periods of extended rest is essential for pastors to maintain their spiritual vitality.

This extended time off is meant to help Pastor Chris rest from 15 years of full-time vocational ministry, recharge for the next season, refocus on his calling, and re-enter his role at Evangel Church with a renewed sense of purpose, passion, and spirit-enabled power. A time of Sabbatical is important both in the sharpening and renewal of our Pastor and for the health and strength of the church.

Do we need to be concerned about our pastor?

We are offering Pastor Chris an intentional rest in order to be able to return with fresh vigor for the work ahead. Our approach in offering this Sabbatical is pro-active: we are seeking to prioritize Pastor Chris' vitality, recognizing that a renewed and refreshed pastor is better able to lead us towards the vision God has for Evangel Church. While

sabbaticals can be associated with pastors who experience personal problems or plan to depart from their congregation, this is not our situation.

When will the Sabbatical take place?

Pastor Chris will enter his sabbatical the week of June 12. He will return to regular ministry responsibilities the week of September 4, 2023, and resume preaching responsibilities Sunday, September 17, 2023.

Who will cover Pastor Chris' responsibilities in his absence?

Evangel Church is blessed to have a leadership and pastoral team that will be able to cover all of Pastor Chris' responsibilities during his absence. The majority of Sunday preaching will be covered by Pastor Bobby, our Teaching and Discipleship Pastor, our Preaching Team, and special guests who Pastor Chris has personally invited to preach. Wednesday Night Prayer services will be led by Pastor Roy, our Community Life Pastor and Pastor Leslie, our Woodbridge Location Pastor.

Who do I contact for pastoral care, an answer to a spiritual question or if I have a family or personal crisis?

Pastor Roy already assumes responsibility for supporting families during crisis times. During the sabbatical the remaining pastoral team will support any family in need. As always you may call the church office for assistance.

Spiritual leadership at Evangel Church has always been carried by all our leaders and pastors together. If there is any spiritual need you have we hope you will begin by reaching out to your Lifegroup leader, then one of the staff or leaders. They are all here for you and eager to serve and come alongside you.

What will Pastor Chris be doing while he's away?

He will spend his time resting, recharging, spending unhurried time in solitude, prayer, reading and reflection, thinking strategically about the future, visiting mentors and life-long friends, and being with his family in a unique way in this season. Much of the

sabbatical will be spent away from Evangel to allow Pastor Chris to disconnect in the most healthy way possible.

Is it Pastor Chris' intention to return to Evangel Church after the sabbatical?

Absolutely. Pastor Chris is not seeking any other ministry opportunity or speaking in other churches or church contexts throughout this sabbatical. He's resting and rejuvenating, and then returning to Evangel Church.

What can we expect while Pastor Chris is away?

We are confident that all of our ministries will continue to flourish while Pastor Chris is away and that we will continue to live out our vision to be changed lives changing communities across the street and around the world. Church functions will continue, and our dedicated staff and ministry leaders will continue to serve us in the day to day functioning of the church.

Can I contact Pastor Chris while he is away?

We ask that you respect this time of rest for Pastor Chris. Please don't anticipate a response from his email, text or social media.

What can I do to support Pastor Chris during his sabbatical?

Pray for Pastor Chris and his family—that this time would be refreshing for them, and that Pastor Chris would experience rest in his soul and intimacy with the Lord.

Participate in the life of Evangel Church in increased measure, loving and serving those who call Evangel home, and those who will make Evangel home while Pastor Chris is away.

Pursue Jesus and your relationship with him, as Pastor Chris does the same in a different context for this season.

What if I bump into Pastor Chris around town?

If you happen to run into Pastor Chris while out and about, it's perfectly fine to greet him with a wave and a friendly "hello". However, we kindly ask that you respect the spirit of his sabbatical by allowing him to step away from his pastoral duties during this time. He will be happy to catch up on all your news once he returns in September and in the future.

Will Pastor Chris and/or his family still be attending regular services or events at Evangel during his sabbatical?

At this time Pastor Chris and his family do not plan to attend Evangel during the sabbatical season, however the family is free to do so at any time.

I still have questions and concerns, who do I contact?

Feel free to send questions to our leadership team by emailing Sabbatical@evangelchurch.com.