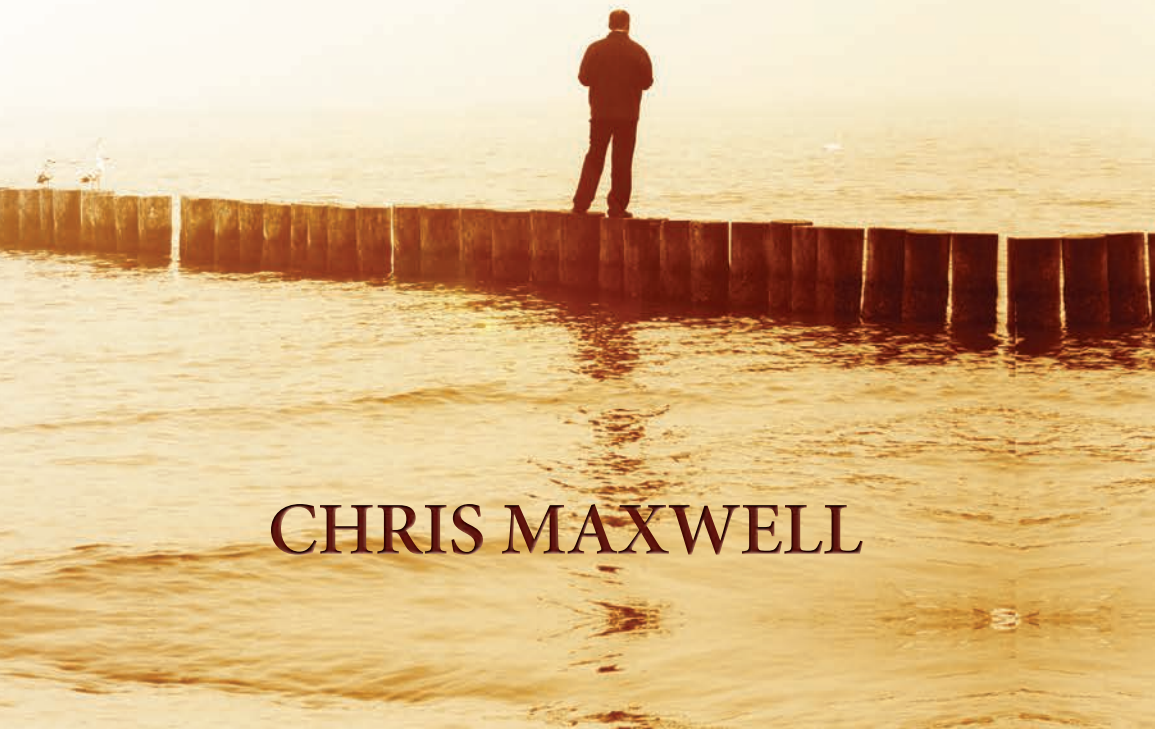


PAUSE FOR PASTORS

*Finding Still Waters
in the Storm of Ministry*



CHRIS MAXWELL

The conscientious pastor, focused on caring for the flock, is always tempted to neglect self-care—and the results of that neglect can be disastrous. That's why this book is so important. Chris Maxwell knows the hazards of professional ministry and how to handle them. The wisdom in these pages may save a life, or even a congregation.

— NATE LARKIN

FOUNDER OF THE SAMSON SOCIETY AND
AUTHOR OF "SAMSON AND THE PIRATE MONKS:
CALLING MEN TO AUTHENTIC BROTHERHOOD"

Chris Maxwell knows first-hand that many pastors are worn out, discouraged, frazzled, beaten down and often friendless. He knows this because he spends a lot of his time encouraging weary leaders. And this book flows out of his heart of encouragement. I pray the words of this book will flow like cold water on your soul to refresh and inspire you. You will receive new strength!

— J. LEE GRADY, FORMER EDITOR

CHARISMA MAGAZINE
DIRECTOR, THE MORDECAI PROJECT

Most pastors need a reason to slow down—in Chris Maxwell's word, Pause—and take time to not only smell the roses but listen to the heart of God. Maxwell's Pause is one of the better reasons to simply STOP everything else, open the book, read, reflect, reminisce, pray, and listen. I wish someone had written a book like this when I was a younger spiritual leader. I needed it more than I knew; I need it now. Thanks Chris for another perfect reason to Pause.

— DR. DOUG BEACHAM, GENERAL SUPERINTENDENT

INTERNATIONAL PENTECOSTAL HOLINESS CHURCH

Pause for Pastors is a gift that reflects the wisdom, faith, and gentleness that I have seen in Chris Maxwell since we were college friends. More importantly, it reflects the faithfulness of the God who has given Chris new life and ministry on the other side of a devastating illness. By grace, Chris' gifts of listening and savoring have found their way into a book that should be awaiting many as they come in from laboring in the fields.

— D. MARK DAVIS, PH.D. IN THEOLOGY, ETHICS, AND CULTURE
PASTOR OF ST. MARK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN NEWPORT BEACH

Pause for Pastors almost sounds like an oxymoron as most pastors seem to live at warp speed and cannot seem to find the 'slower' button, much less the 'pause' switch! Yet, as Chris Maxwell asserts in such a gently compelling manner, pastors need to pause, reflect, replenish, revive, and renew in order to thrive in ministry over the long haul. Through stories, anecdotes, scripture, and real life experience Chris provides much-needed insight, wisdom, and opportunity for those of us in vocational ministry to stop and recalibrate our hearts to the heart of God. This book will undoubtedly inspire, convict, and challenge you as it did me...to slow down long enough to catch the wind of the presence of God in our spirits and move from doing for God to being present with God each day.

— DR. TRACY REYNOLDS, DEAN
EMMANUEL COLLEGE SCHOOL OF CHRISTIAN MINISTRIES

My Dad never learned the art of pausing, and it killed him at age 35. As a PK (Pastor's Kid) for just a 2-year period, I well remember the stress and strain of the ministry on my father as he tried to pastor a growing church. After only two years, this gifted man left the ministry and began a career in salesmanship. In that profession his

unrestrained workaholism paid off! He was National Sales Person of the Year for two consecutive years when coronary failure took his life as a very young man. I've often wondered how the Kingdom of God may have thrived had my dad learned to pause, to listen to that still, small voice, and be refreshed with God's presence. In this case, failure to pause, cost him his life... and it cost the Kingdom even more. For God's sake, for your family's sake, for your ministry's sake, for your own sake, take Maxwell's excellent resource, designed for pastors, and use it well. Be refreshed and live!

— BEVERLY J. OXLEY, PH.D.
LICENSED PSYCHOLOGIST

Chris Maxwell is a Pastor to Pastors. When you turn the pages of Pause for Pastors you will quickly find that this book is not designed to peddle leadership techniques to professionals, rather it is an invitation to the Pastor to return to the place that called them into a life of service to others. Pause for Pastors is an encouragement to the well-seasoned Pastor as well as a mentoring voice to the young emerging leader.

— DR. CHARLIE DAWES, AUTHOR
DEAN OF STUDENT LEARNING
ASST. PROFESSOR OF PRACTICAL MINISTRY AT
SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY

Pause For Pastors Sample

PAUSE FOR PASTORS

*Finding Still Waters in the
Storm of Ministry*

CHRIS MAXWELL



True Potential
REACH THE WORLD

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PAUSE FOR PASTORS

Finding Still Waters in the Storm of Ministry

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Other Books by Chris Maxwell

Beggars Can Be Chosen: An Inspirational Journey Through the Invitations of Jesus

Changing My Mind: A Journey of Disability and Joy

Unwrapping His Presence: What We Really Need for Christmas

Pause: The Secret to a Better Life, One Word at a Time

Pause for Moms: Finding Rest in a Too Busy World

Pause For Pastors Sample

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Thanks to So Many

Thanks to my wife Debbie, our sons—Taylor, Aaron, Graham—and our entire family for enduring years of ministry and still allowing love to guide our lives.

Thanks to my many parishioners—from years as a lead pastor, youth pastor, campus pastor—for accepting me, forgiving me, and learning life together.

Thanks to my accountability partners, prayer teams, staff members, church leaders, denominational leaders, and pastors for guiding me, mentoring me, coaching me, daring me, and believing in me.

Thanks to the pastors, students, writers, and editors who contributed to this book, and to each pastor who has chosen to receive the invitation of leadership through service to others.

Thanks to my editors—James Rovira and Paul W. Smith—and my publisher—Steve Spillman of True Potential—for believing in me, daring me, and guiding my words.

Thanks to Father, Son, and Spirit for creating and recreating me, and for refusing to leave me alone. Thanks for the honor and privilege of serving in pastoral ministry, and for reminding me so many times that You are interested in who I am rather than grading what I do.

Pause For Pastors Sample

About *Pause for Pastors*

Pause for Pastors, like the other books in the *Pause* series, is designed for both personal and team reading. Each chapter follows a theme, and each theme offers opportunities for individual reflection and group discussion. On the singular setting, readers can calmly reflect on each story, answer the questions, read and meditate on the Scriptures, and seek to apply the theme in a unique, personal, authentic way. Similarly, groups can engage in discussions related to every story. *Pause for Pastors* moves us toward an action, a reminder, a contemplative inspection.

Either of those—a pastor taking time to personally pause or a pastor joining a group of accountability partners—are a little too rare in today's church culture. But they are happening more. Sometimes after poor decisions or bad news or personal depression. Sometimes before the pain goes too deep. However you might decide to enter a time of personal reflection and investigation, and whatever your personal situation, begin now. Pause and think. Investigate. By yourself and in the correct group. Choose to not fight this battle of life alone.

Experiencing “still waters” by pausing doesn't mean a life where everything somehow feels just right. It doesn't mean big numbers or big money—those elements often associated with

success in our culture. The chapters help us gain a greater and deeper understanding of true peace and rest in the middle of our storms.

Spiritual exercises, questions to consider or discuss, and Scripture conclude each chapter. When practiced alone or among family, friends, and small groups, those exercises can guide each of us in our journeys.

—Chris Maxwell

Foreword:

By Dr. Lou Shirey

“He’s crazy.” I would never have said that aloud. I was thinking about my father who was a chaplain in the US Army. No matter where we lived, he would come home from his full day of duty and immerse himself in the hard work of tending his garden.

Born on a farm in Alabama, he loved to see plants grow. Every day after work, he would go outside to his garden, whack away at weeds, and attack insects threatening to destroy his crops. In due time, he was rewarded with armloads of vegetables from the plants he had nurtured from tender shoot to fruitfulness. As a kid I thought he was crazy for doing manual labor after a full day of work. What did I know? Not much. Dad understood the therapeutic value of working in his garden. It was his way to recharge, pause.

When my wife and I married, my contribution to our household was a German antique grandfather clock. I decided to clean it up even though I had never done woodworking before. Off came the old varnish and coal dust, and on came a wood stain to enhance the beautiful grain.

Becky, my wife, gave me enough pats on the back to let me know I had done a good job. I was hooked. I have lost count of

the armoires, desks, clocks, sideboards, chairs, doors and tables I've restored through the years. I don't find pleasure in growing things, but quite by accident, I discovered my way of pausing.

For the past few years, my hobby has taken a slightly different turn. I search antique stores and auctions for old and unusual boxes. After refinishing them, I collaborate with Mike, my blacksmith friend. He fashions iron bases, transforming my restored boxes into one-of-a-kind coffee, sofa or end tables—depending on the size and shape of the box.

I've discovered the pleasure of taking something marred and worn, then restoring it to its former beauty. I'm intrigued to discover the beautiful wood obscured under coats of paint and years of wear. Working with my hands, seeing a finished product creates closure for me.

The role of a pastor is often just the opposite. What is our product? It is a human being—an unfinished process. We are constantly changing, growing, transforming. We often use measuring sticks like attendance and financial contributions to determine our success as pastors. Although it's helpful to put some structure on our productivity—the transformation of people—the ultimate goal of our service is almost impossible to measure. We trust the transformation of people to the Master Restorer, but only He can see the completed person.

The work of a pastor contains an element of mystery. Eugene Peterson writes in his book, *The Pastor*, about the epidemic numbers of pastors defecting from ministry. He states, "I wonder if at the root of the defection is a cultural assumption

that all leaders are people who ‘get things done’ and ‘make things happen.’” He acknowledges how being a pastor has some of the components of “getting things done.” But he goes on to state how he views the vocation of pastor in ways that “can’t be measured or counted.” My method of pausing, restoring old boxes, has helped me balance the tension between “getting things done” and the many ways in which a pastor’s service cannot be “measured or counted.”

I wrote my doctoral dissertation on the issue of burnout among pastors. I often joke that at times I was near burnout reading about burnout! My research involved mailing surveys to more than three hundred pastors. The survey included a burnout inventory, a spiritual well-being inventory, and a request for the pastor to note support groups, outside activities, and hobbies the pastor enjoyed. Statistically, the results showed those pastors with strong support groups, and outside interests scored significantly lower on the burnout scale and had higher levels of spiritual wellbeing.

I have friends who find scholarly pursuits of research and writing as a means of refreshing. Others enjoy sports or physical fitness. Eugene Peterson devotes an entire chapter in his memoir, *The Pastor*, describing the joy he finds through long distance running. He was a runner in high school, but it wasn’t until he became a pastor that he reengaged with his way of pausing from the unfinished business of a pastor. The number of ways a person might choose to pause is as varied as the scope of humanity. It’s not as important what a person chooses as giving oneself

permission to choose. In my own experience, I'm a better pastor by giving myself permission to pause.

I now see how my father could have lost perspective, “gone crazy,” if he had *not* worked in his garden. He needed that outlet. Seeing his garden go from seed to fruit made him a better pastor. I'm at my best as a pastor when I have one or two boxes that are in some stage of completion. From time to time maybe the most gracious and caring thing a friend can say to me is “Lou, go work on a box.”

Chris Maxwell has learned—through his many years of pastoring, through his battle with epilepsy, through his writing and traveling and speaking—the importance of a pause. Two decades as a lead pastor and almost a decade of working with college students, his voice is respected and appreciated.

During the past decade, I have spoken often with Chris as this project, emphasizing the importance of the pause, has unfolded. Chris has brought many other writers to share their stories and experiences. As varied as we are as individuals, our means of pausing will be as diverse also.

Over fifty years ago, a short poem by Wilfred Peterson, came to my attention. In “Slow Me Down LORD” he wrote,

Slow me down LORD

Ease the pounding of my heart

by the quieting of my mind...

Teach me the art of taking minute vacations.

Chris Maxwell echoes this valued truth, learning to pause, to take minute vacations. So for me, I do this in a number of ways but working on an old box is a wonderful break for me.

— Dr. Lou Shirey

Director of Clergy Development/WIN Prayer Ministry

International Pentecostal Holiness Church

Pause For Pastors Sample

Pause For Pastors Sample

Introduction: An Adventure in the Storm

In these early years when I was becoming a pastor, I needed a pastor. —Eugene H. Peterson¹

I remember my final Sunday as a lead pastor. Though I often forget things, I can't forget that. Faces and voices, a sanctuary and a pulpit, many years and many moments.

Memories were breathing—all replaying at once. Life and death. Marriages and funerals. Prayers and songs and laughter and disagreements and meals and conversations and pain. And more prayer.

As I think back to those experiences, I'm asking myself, "What did I learn?" Not, "Did I succeed?" or "Did I fail?" My fingers loudly pound keyboard letters so that stories will appear for eyes to see: stories of lessons learned. Stories that just might help a pastor and his family smile when they hear this word, *church*. Stories that just might help a pastor and his family pursue help when they're carrying too heavy of this weight of church.

¹ Eugene H. Peterson, *The Pastor: A Memoir* (New York: HarperOne, 2011) 212.

Stories of honesty—told by myself and many others—that just might offer a little bit of peace in the storms of pastoral life.

Do you know about those storms? Storms provoked and driven by deep callings, deep love, deep life. Storms of pain. Storms that blow harsh winds, shout frightening thunder, and cause us to question our callings, our credentials, and ourselves.

I think you know about the storms.

I invite you to pause and think about those storms. To think deeply about them, and realize how your inner world has been damaged by the storms, how your roof leaks, how your trees struggle to stay attached to their roots, how your heart aches. And to consider that painful storms can teach us and heal us as we face their realities and repair their damages. Maybe in the future your internal self might be stronger and more real than ever.

Let's start here. As pastors, we often know the right words to say. We can describe situations in ways that sound impressive. We can tell stories and offer stats about our churches to convince people of our success. We can shove the taglines. We can sit at those pastors-impress-each-other luncheons and do our part.

Or, we can go to the other extreme and let the conversation include this menu: complain about board members, complain about attendance, complain about other churches robbing our sheep, complain about other pastors and their doctrinal errors or their moral failures or their methodical silliness, complain about lack of money, complain about staff's poor efforts, complain

about the complainers. Brag on the success or gripe about the reasons other people are keeping great success from happening for us.

Can we talk about something else? Can we talk about ourselves? Can we talk about how we are really doing? Not how or what our churches appear to be doing, but us. Me. You. Our own insecurity. Our own desire to prove our value—and our tendencies to use church growth stats and conversions and baptisms and financial reports and building projects to raise our status. Let's talk about our deep wounds. Our relational scars. Our unanswered prayers. Our faith merging with doubt.

I'm not suggesting that we tweet our troubles for the world to know or merge our misery into an unrelated sermon. I'm not suggesting we become reactionary, desensitized, or enabling.

I am suggesting that we just stop playing the game. Just stop. Stop by choice. I am suggesting that we believe our personal worth and value aren't based on a nation's meaning of success or a movement's trends toward being part of that inner circle. I am suggesting that we find a few people to talk to about our true selves. I am suggesting we let it start by visiting with our Heavenly Father during a storm.

Or during a Saturday night like this one I remember.

I was the only one in our church auditorium. I didn't turn the lights on. Sensing the Saturday night's reverence, seeing Saturday night's darkness, and hearing Saturday night's silence, I paused after a hurried day and prayed. That was a major change from how my day had gone.

The busy day had been a mix of pleasure and stress. After watching our three sons play ball, I raced to a meeting with friends from our church, and then visited a church member in the hospital. I also read email from a person in the church. Instead of entering a healthy discussion about conflict and wounds, she was leaving the church because of what a Sunday school teacher said in their class. Or, I guess, “her class.” She was angry and leaving; she told me not to try to convince her otherwise.

And another email. A missionary family emailed me to say their support had cut in half. Could we help them more? If not us, who would I suggest?

And another note. The family who recently started visiting our church thought it was the best church ever and they would be there on Sunday. I saved the note beside three letters I’d previously received from other pastors warning me about the problems that family caused in their congregations.

Also, one of my personal dreams appeared to be dying.

Storms on a Saturday of Central Florida sunshine and brief rain, of snacks eaten and ball games enjoyed, of deep wounds and ongoing conflict. A Saturday of storms and ministry, of pastoring.

My sermon for the next day was about peace. Did peace fit that Saturday? I knew hurry and noise and competition and events and conflict and needs and questions and disagreements. But I also knew a little about some type of peace. Not an emotional feeling. An inner awareness, an assurance, an unexplainable calmness.

The sermon had been planned way in advance—that was how I liked it. Scriptural passages to read and stories to tell and points to make. A clear conclusion. But before letting that Saturday conclude, I drove over to our church facility. I needed to pray, to think of the next morning. I needed to think and pray and breathe peace.

That's where I felt, or sensed, or heard, or met—not really sure what word is best—peace. In the sanctuary. In that place of noise and crowds on a Sunday. But that Saturday night? Silence. Darkness. Reverence. And, in a strange way, an awareness of peace.

It ended up being one of my best Saturday nights alone in that place of hidden holiness and peaceful assurance.

As we've emphasized in each book of this series, pause in your rush through life and notice yourself. Visit your own stories. The stories of hurt, of grief, of anger, of regret. The chapters of life and death and nothingness. The words of healing on days like today or Saturdays like mine. Gaze at the storm and feel it. Face the reality of yourself and your life. Believe these thoughts and stories can help you believe the storm doesn't end your story.

For now, for this now, choose to stop. Read the nouns and verbs. Slowly. During the storm, read and receive and rest.

Chris Maxwell

“Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength” (Deuteronomy 6:5).

Pause For Pastors Sample



Accountable and Free

[N]o matter who we are, no matter how deeply we live in the kingdom, we still need to be encouraged, admonished and challenged to grow in Christlikeness; we need to be accountable to an encouraging community.
—James Bryan Smith¹

The facial expressions of the married couple indicated nerves. His suit and tie appeared the right size for a guy a little slimmer. Her new dress and extra makeup, her forced smile and a hand refusing to let go of her husband, her shaking fingers and a stare toward the bishop—yes, very nervous.

Three men stood beside those two—one nearing retirement age, one in his twenties, one in his second year of college—carrying their own inner luggage onto the stage. Mental

¹ James Bryan Smith, *The Good and Beautiful Community: Following the Spirit, Extending Grace, Demonstrating Love* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2010) 142.

questions seemed to show up, or maybe I was imagining it all. Were they asking, “Why am I doing this?” or “What if they really knew me?” Were they thinking, “I’m gonna change this world” or “Surely one of these in attendance will hire me?”

I thought back to my own ordination service three decades before, and I hoped these five who were receiving their ministry credentials were a little nervous, a little hesitant, a little anxious. Oh, I hoped they held dreams and courage and confidence. I hoped they believed in their God and their *calling*. But I hoped they were a little unsure and much afraid. I hoped they weren’t just smiling with pride, glancing toward a world they were about to rescue. I hoped they were reaching out for the hands of a Heavenly Father to hold them and carry them each step on this journey of ministry.

I hoped they’d found a closet on their way to Narnia.

My in-a-hurry brain hit rewind, rushing me through my many years of ministry since I once stood and shook like they were standing and shaking. My problem as I looked back? I didn’t know enough about what I was getting into—which was probably best, I guess.

My other problem? I wasn’t nervous enough.

I didn’t know that ministry would be a storm. One long storm—violent and unexpected lightning bolts, frightening drum roles from thunder’s mood, rain refusing to slow her pace, calmness visiting in the hurricane’s eye, clouds appearing as faces staring and daring us to stare back, more calmness while waiting for the storm’s next outburst, shelters feeling not as stable as we’d

Accountable and Free

hoped, seeking safety, hearing vicious throbbing, beauty and awe and wonder amid the war—including various episodes during its voyage.

Yes, I loved the storm. And hated it.

Yes, I endured it. As of now.

I am fortunate. I had a few mentors to warn me early, while not telling me too much. Two men met me, stood in my way, and told me what I never learned in the classroom. They cautioned me and I'm grateful their words refused to leave me.

I am also fortunate to see mistakes made by a few of the pastors I first worked for. One of them told me, just before he died, to not do ministry the way he did. Though sometimes I did, I appreciated his warning of the storm.

And, I am fortunate to have family and friends to endure the storms of ministry with me. We sat together, enduring. We stood together, enjoying. We bowed together, much afraid.

As I now work with students who are entering the ministry and meet with pastors of various church structures, I see their hope to enjoy and their desire to endure. I see they are much afraid.

I want us all to find this healthy balance of living both accountable and free.

Accountable. Who is asking us the difficult questions? Who will challenge our rehearsed answers? Who cares enough to stand in our way and love us through whatever segment of the storm we might be facing?

Free. How can we be sure that accountability is not forced control? How can we work hard to be sure life is about much more than hard work? How can we find proper, unfathomable, valuable freedom in a religious culture controlled by stats and numbers?

As pastors, we need to be held accountable. As pastors, we need to be set free.

Not either or. But both and.

Maybe we can, like Chad Payne did, let one of our children hold us accountable and set us free:

Hi, I'm Chad. I am a recovering success addict.

Like so many pastors, the longing to succeed often colors how I approach ministry. Which new model can I use? What latest trend must I incorporate? How much time must I spend to finally "make it," so that my church will be known as the church that everyone strives to emulate?

Early in my pastorate, these were the thoughts that drove me to work far too many hours, strive to please too many people, and worry about far too many problems that in reality were trivial at best. By late 2000, merely three years into our tenure in full time ministry, I was stressed out, worn out, and very nearly burned out.

And there through it all, waiting patiently in the sidelines, was my family.

Kim could not have been a better picture of the pastor's wife. Supportive, loving, and understanding when I was off doing the Lord's work, she stayed home and cared for our three year old,

Elizabeth. She didn't complain when I brought too much work home or answered parishioner calls late in the evening. Even today she considers it her primary calling to care for me and our family so that I can effectively pursue the ministry to which the Lord has called me.

Because she saw her calling so clearly, Kim was reluctant to attend every single meeting held at the church. Knowing the challenges that often accompany growing up in a pastor's home, she carefully guarded her schedule to ensure our daughter was never neglected for the sake of "the ministry."

While I appreciated her conviction and agreed with it in theory, I was admittedly frustrated on occasion when she showed no interest in attending Women's Ministry meetings and other such gatherings. After all, she was the "Pastor's Wife." It was her job to show up and make me look good, right?

Not according to my friend and mentor, Glenn.

On one particular occasion, I had lovingly suggested she attend a women's meeting. Well, truthfully, I pressured her to go. When she sweetly explained that she did not want to go, I called Glenn to complain, fully expecting my friend to share in my incredulity and offer some persuasive argument I could use to convince my wife to conform. I exclaimed, "Can you believe she doesn't want to go to this meeting?" But my friend's response knocked the wind out of my self-righteous sails.

He said, "Then she doesn't need to go."

"What? What do mean 'she doesn't need to go'? She's the pastor's wife!" I shot back, defiantly.

“Is it part of your job description that your wife attend every small group meeting?” he asked. “She is ministering to your family, which is what you need to do. You can work long hours and give every waking moment to the church, but what happens when your congregation turns on you? If you haven’t stood for your family, who will stand with you then?”

I didn’t know what to say. I thought what I was doing would prevent the church from turning on me. I thought the Lord would take care of my family if I took care of the Lord’s family. At that moment, however, I realized I am called to be husband and father first, then pastor.

That evening I sat down with my wife and repented for pressuring her to conform to other’s expectations. I also confessed my sin of neglecting her and our daughter for the sake of building a “successful” ministry. And from that point forward, I made a deliberate effort to spend time at home to just be daddy for our little girl.

I could not have known how quickly Glenn’s prediction would come to pass. In February 2001, I asked my youth pastor to resign. The backlash was harsh and immediate. Word had gotten out before the news was made public, and the day I made the announcement several stood up, publicly denounced me, and walked out. In all, about a fourth of our membership departed. Amidst the fallout, I received personal threats and had lies spread about me throughout our community.

All hopes of being a success, it seemed, were lost forever. To a young insecure pastor in desperate need of affirmation, such

rejection was devastating. I was ready to leave both the church and the ministry. I did not want to see anyone, talk to anyone, or deal with anything those first few weeks.

One day, as I was begrudgingly preparing for a meeting with one of the remaining church leaders, Kim was doing her best to offer me encouragement. As we were exchanging the latest details of the ordeal, Elizabeth came toddling into the living room where we were standing.

We had tried to be discreet in our discussion, but children have a way of picking up on things even if they cannot fully comprehend them. With a quizzical expression on her little face, she looked up at me and asked, "Daddy, are people saying you're bad?"

How do you answer that? Fighting back tears, I put my hand on her shoulder and replied, "Yes, baby, some people are saying Daddy is bad. But you don't need to worry about that."

Without hesitation, she wrapped her tiny arms around my leg and said, "But Daddy, you're my hero!"

I cannot adequately explain what happened to me in that moment. Her one sentence gave me the strength and courage to carry on. I had convinced myself I was a failure because things at the church had taken a difficult turn, but in that moment, I realized that if I was a hero to my little girl, I was a success in what matters most.

Over the next few years, the congregation healed, many who had left returned, the church grew, and a new building was constructed. As wonderful as those things are, however, they pale in comparison to being a hero to my family.

I can think of no better definition of success.

READ:

You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love. For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” If you bite and devour each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other. So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want (Galatians 5:13–17).

Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers (Galatians 6:9–10).

REFLECT:

1. What advice would you offer those five who were receiving pastoral credentials?
2. What thoughts come to your mind as you read Chad's story?

Accountable and Free

3. Who holds you accountable and helps you find freedom in the pressure of ministry?

RECEIVE:

Christianity is all about relationships.

—Tim Elmore²

RESPOND:

Notice the ways you are not free in life. Identify the areas of bondage. Seek accountability to move you toward freedom, even if it comes from the voice of a daughter.

² Tim Elmore, *Mentoring: How to Invest Your Life in Others* (Norcross, GA: Growing Leaders, 2004) 150.

We hope you enjoyed this sample of:

Pause For Pastors:

Finding Still Waters in the Storm of Ministry

To purchase the printed or e-versions of this book
please visit:

<http://www.chrismaxwell.me/books/pause-for-pastors>

PAUSE FOR PASTORS

CHRIS MAXWELL

*Finding Still Waters
in the Storm of Ministry*

*In these early years
when I was becoming
a pastor, I needed a pastor.*

— Eugene H. Peterson



I remember my final Sunday as a lead pastor. Though I often forget things, I can't forget that. Faces and voices, a sanctuary and a pulpit, many years and many moments.

Memories were breathing—all replaying at once. Life and death. Marriages and funerals. Prayers and songs and laughter and disagreements and meals and conversations and pain. And more prayer.

As I think back to those experiences, I'm asking myself, "What did I learn?" Not, "Did I succeed?" or "Did I fail?" Pause for Pastors is filled with stories of lessons learned. Stories that just might help a pastor and his family smile when they hear this word, church. Stories that just might help a pastor and his family pursue help when they're carrying too heavy of this weight, church. Stories of honesty—told by myself and many others—that just might offer a little bit of peace in the storms of pastoral life.

As we've emphasized in each book of this series, pause in your rush through life and notice yourself. Visit your own stories. The stories of hurt, of grief, of anger, of regret. The chapters of life and death and nothingness. The words of healing on those rare perfect days.

For now, for this now, choose to stop. Read the nouns and verbs. Slowly. During the storm, read and receive and rest.

The wisdom in these pages may save a life, or even a congregation.

— Nate Larkin

Founder of the Samson Society
and author of "Samson and the Pirate
Monks: Calling Men to Authentic
Brotherhood"

*I pray the words of this book will flow like cold
water on your soul to refresh and inspire you.
You will receive new strength!*

— J. Lee Grady, former editor

Charisma Magazine
Director, The Mordecai Project

*I wish someone had written a book like this
when I was a younger spiritual leader. I needed
it more than I knew; I need it now. Thanks
Chris for another perfect reason to Pause.*

— Dr. Doug Beacham,

General Superintendent
International Pentecostal Holiness Church



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