

Pastor's Patch



*By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing;
so on the seventh day he rested from all his work.
Then God blessed the seventh day and made it holy,
because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.
(Genesis chapter 2 verses 2-3)*

Every seven years all Accredited Baptist Ministers have opportunity for a three month break. Built on the example of God resting from His work, pastors also are also encouraged to rest from theirs. Nevertheless, I'm truly grateful for my church for enabling me to do this. Having had three previous sabbaticals over my ministry, I can vouch for the blessings they provide: here's just three.

- 1) A rest from the duties and responsibilities is crucial for us all, not just pastors. I hope we all take a day of rest every seven days. But a sabbatical enables pastors to REST, to step back from the role and pressure for a longer period. Not a day goes by when I'm not thinking, planning, praying about the church, the tasks and my ministry. A sabbatical really does allow me to "switch off" for an extended period, and I'm convinced my worry lines reduce!
- 2) A sabbatical is a chance for me to REFRESH and a helpful reminder that I'm not indispensable. We have a gifted team of leaders who'll respond to the opportunities and challenges from 1st June to 31st August. I'm sure the whole church will support them and get involved too. The essential things will still get done, and what doesn't get done is probably unimportant. My experience also is that I'll come back to a stronger, healthier church where God has continued to work. So not only will I be refreshed, I'm sure the church will too
- 3) This period also gives me a chance to REFOCUS. I can refocus on my walk with the Lord, taking time not to hear what the Lord may say *through* me, but mainly what He is saying *to* me. I can refocus on my family who sometimes pay the price of church ministry which is no respecter of schedules and days off. I can refocus on my down time, with hobbies, jobs that I want to do rather than being squeezed out of a busy schedule.

I won't be in services or meetings but I'll still be around town so do feel free to say "hi" and have a chat. After all, you are never "just a job" but you remain my "church family" whom I love and whom I love to serve.