



## Ministry Pivot with Yvette Blair-Lavallais and Heber Brown III

**Description:** During this episode, Russell St. Bernard speaks with Rev. Yvette Blair-Lavallais and Rev. Dr. Heber Brown III about the importance of rest and sabbaticals in the Church. They discuss church and leader burnout, the financial struggles of taking time off and the stress of carrying the ministry load of Pastoring without a break. Listen to the conversation, download the resources, subscribe plus comment, and discuss it with your team and staff.

Pastor Yvette Blair-Lavallais → <https://yvetteblair.com/welcome>

Pastor Heber Brown → <https://www.heberbrown.com/>

### Takeaways:

- Pastor Yvette noted, the Church was and is the center of the community. She stated that this is an added weight for Pastors as they deal with being the answer for the community on so many levels. Pastors need an outlet.
- Pastor Heber notes that as pastors we are not equip to be the mental health expert in the community and need to find resources to help them lead those needing help through this season.
- Pastor Yvette shares about the inverse of Pastoral care, where the congregation isn't solely looking for the Pastor to serve them but instead looking at what it means to serve the Pastor and make sure that they're healthy in this season.
- Pastor Heber and Pastor Yvette spoke to how their congregations helped to work with them to figure out the best way to proceed with their sabbaticals.
- Pay should not be an issue to allow Pastors the advantage of a break and time off that they need to rest and recharge.
- Sabbatical Programs:
  - 2022 Lilly Endowment Clergy Renewal Programs [Click Here](#)
  - Duke Divinity Reflective Leadership Grant [Click Here](#)
  - Take The Next Call [Click Here](#)

- **Notes from Rev. Yvette Blair-Lavallais**

**Conversations for Sabbath Rest for Pastors:**

- 1. The pastor should gather a few key leaders (5-7) and begin to have the conversation about the need for sabbatical rest.
- 2. Work in partnership to explore the options. It is not the sole responsibility of the pastor to identify ways to take a sabbatical.
- 3. Look at the budget and make a faith decision on where funds can be rearranged toward helping the pastor to take some paid time off. God is our Provider and will honor your sacrifice.
- 4. In the best scenario, sabbaths are planned; however, if your pastor needs rest now, pray with your pastor and then take action steps about what that looks like. It could be a retreat. Connectional denominations (i.e. United Methodist Church) offer clergy retreats. Check with your Supervising Elder or District Superintendent.
- 5. Once the plans have been established, share this with the congregation so that everyone is praying on one accord for the wellbeing of your pastor. Make a covenant that sabbath rest will become part of the rhythm of your church.

**Other Ways to Help Your Pastor:**

- 1. Honor your pastor with dedicated self-care days. This means that, unless it is an emergency, there is no expectation for your pastor to respond to emails, texts or phone calls on the designated self-care day. This should be supported and initiated by leadership.
- 2. Does your pastor have health insurance? If the church cannot afford it, offer a membership to a fitness center, YMCA or pay for wellness classes, monthly spa visit, golf game, etc. This is an act of pastoral care toward your pastor.
- 3. Let your pastor know that you care and then pray with your pastor.

**Resources**

- Trends in the Black Church [Click Here](#)
- Barna Study “Pastor Well Being” [Click Here](#)
- Clergy Shortage [Click Here](#)
- Soul Reset by Junius Dotson [Click Here](#)
- Pastor Brown shared about the “Nap Time Ministry” [Click Here](#)
- 5 Minute Pivot and Other Podcast by Rev. Russell St. Bernard <https://ministrypivot.com/conversations/>
- Articles from Rev. Russell St. Bernard <https://ministrypivot.com/articles/>

### **Final Takeaway:**

- The Pastor and the key leaders should speak about how best to provide moments for the pastor to get the level of rest that they need.

### **Discussion Questions: (Ask yourself and a friend these questions and answer honestly)**

- Have you taken a sabbatical recently? Have you spoken with your Pastor about taking a sabbatical recently?
- When have you scheduled on your calendar time for rest and recharge? What seasons throughout the year have you provided for your Pastor to rest and recharge?
- When was the last time we asked our Pastor how they are feeling dealing with the weight of ministry?
- When was the last time we scheduled to ensure that your Pastor doesn't have to preach for a few consecutive Sundays?

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