

Observations on Longevity in the Ministry

Church leaders, since my 60th birthday last fall the subject of longevity has been on my mind. What does it take to last in the ministry? How does a ministry leader achieve a long tenure in one place? Here are some observations about going the distance in your calling.

1. *Leaders with longevity have figured out how to operate at a sustainable pace.* What constitutes a sustainable pace changes as your birthdays accumulate, so long-tenured leaders make wise adjustments along the way.
2. *Leaders with longevity never stop being students.* They keep learning, keep asking good questions and keep adding wise teachers to their life.
3. *Leaders with longevity stay in their lane.* They have a clear sense of what their assignment is from the Lord and they focus on faithfulness in that assignment. They also learn how to delegate and equip others for the work of ministry.
4. *Leaders with longevity don't overreact.* Bad stuff happens in ministry. Antagonists rise up in churches. Leaders who go the distance process their emotions in healthy ways and don't allow themselves to be goaded into career-jeopardizing reactions.
5. *Leaders with longevity tend to their souls.* They meet regularly with Jesus through Scripture and prayer. They grow as disciples. They don't confuse their official ministry duties with their own soul-keeping.
6. *Leaders with longevity tend to their key relationships.* They prioritize their time and attention on the most important people, the ones who are sustaining to their life and ministry.
7. *Leaders with longevity take frequent breaks.* They take advantage of days off, short getaways, vacations and sabbaticals. They make sure their tanks are refueled regularly.

I'm interested to hear what you have observed about longevity in the ministry. Please share your thoughts with me at robby@bluebonnetbaptist.org.

And speaking of longevity, don't miss the Skill Builder at the May 12 Church Leaders Gathering. Pastor David Mathis of Hope Church in Kyle will be interviewing his mentor, Mel Grams. Mel is in his 90s and still going strong! I think you'll enjoy this discussion about "Going the Distance in Your Calling."

In the meantime, the Lord bless you and keep you!

