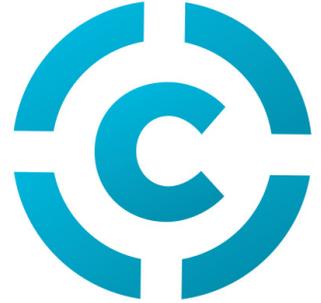


# CITYCHURCH

LOVEHOPECITY.COM



Dear City Church,

Pastor Kyle and Lisa here. We are very excited to announce that we will be taking a three-month sabbatical this summer. The elders will commission our journey on Sunday May 28<sup>th</sup> and we hope you'll be at church to pray for us that day. We plan to return at the end of August.

By now, a good number of you have probably already heard about this through an online video that we posted. In case you're hearing about it for the first time, allow me to explain what a sabbatical is, what we will be doing, what will be going on at City Church in our absence, what we are praying for you in this process, and how you can pray for us as well.

The idea of extended time away for pastors is grounded in the biblical teaching of the Sabbath (which comes from the Ten Commandments). This is not an extended *vacation* and should not be viewed as such. It is a time of spiritual rest and rejuvenation. Here's one definition I read: "*A ministry sabbatical is a release from the routine of the call for the physical, emotional, spiritual, and intellectual well-being of the ministry leader.*" By and large, the principle is that a longer period of time away from ministry is needed every seventh year (or so) to keep pastors healthy, growing, and ready for the next stretch of ministry ahead. Though the process looks a little different in every church and may be unfamiliar to some, it has been a well-established ministry practice for a really long time. Many pastors have articulated that the Sabbatical is vital to the long-term growth of the church.

Allow us to reassure you that we are not in a "bad spot," experiencing a crisis of faith, or under some form of discipline. We're taking this break so those kinds of things *don't* happen! This is a bit of "preventative maintenance." We *love* this church. We hope to be here a *long* time.

Some of you might be wondering what we'll be doing with our time. We will focus on four main things during our time:

1. **Spend at least an hour a day in silence, prayer, and Bible reading.** This may sound silly to say as a pastor. I spend that amount of time currently in the Bible. However the rush of ministry means it is often "for a purpose" (writing a sermon, small group questions, blog, etc.). I look forward to spending large chunks of time with the Lord with no agenda.
2. **Spend time with family.** Our little one is getting bigger every single day. We are greatly looking forward to spending time with our immediate and extended family.
3. **Spend time working out.** This summer will provide time for us to refocus on our physical health.
4. **Spend time resting.**

As far as church life is concerned here, we have an amazing team. God has given us capable, Spirit-filled leaders who will carry the torch while we are gone. We have an internal Sunday teaching team that is phenomenal. Sunday activities will continue as usual. Since our small groups don't meet during the summer, we will have additional worship and fellowship activities for everyone.

**Here are some things you can be praying for while we're gone (for us and for the church).**

1. Pray that God makes the time fruitful in the purpose He has for us all.
2. Pray that God protects Lisa and I from feelings of anxiety about how things are going in the ministry.
3. Pray for healing to happen in Lisa's body. She is doing better, but still has lingering pain. We are asking for total deliverance in this regard.
4. Pray that we will clearly hear God's voice.
5. Pray for our family's protection in every way.
6. Pray for us to connect with one another deeply.
7. Pray that we will get some fire from the Lord to come back down the mountain with.
8. Pray that God will grant them supernatural wisdom to our team here.
9. Pray for protection over City Church's campus from major issues happening during our time away.
10. Pray for relational unity in the church in support of our time away.
11. Pray for lives to be changed for the glory of Jesus at City Church during our time away.
12. Pray that (if it's God's will) we can have another baby. ;)

**We have one request: please keep this community a priority as we *briefly* step away.** I would ask that you remain faithful in attending, in serving, in giving, and in every other way God calls you to participate in church life. The flesh and the devil may try to convince you to stay home a bit more. Let me be crystal clear: *that's not what God would want you to do.* This is Jesus' Church. As you have in my presence, keep up the good work in my absence as obedience to the Lord.

I leave you with the Apostle Paul's words from Philippians 2:12-13.

*"Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure."*

**Lisa and I are praying that our time away is a time of growth for this church and for you personally.** We know how much you love and bless us. We feel it every day. Of course we will miss you and (we hope) you will miss us! We pray that God widens and deepens Lisa and I, City Church as a whole, and you personally during this time. Keep leaning on Jesus and you'll never fall.

In Christ,

Pastor Kyle and Lisa