

Daniel Glaze

A young minister developing a foundation for longevity in ministry



It is no secret that many churches seek experienced pastors when searching for new leadership. However, many young men and women, like Daniel Glaze, are called to the pastorate as their initial ministry. In an effort to offer a safe place to gain pastoral experience and encouragement, the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, with funding and visioning of the Lilly Endowment, Inc. developed a pastoral residency program. Daniel participated in the residency program serving as a pastoral resident for two years at First Baptist Church, Frankfort, Kentucky. Now pastor of First Baptist Church, Ahoskie, North Carolina, he seeks to integrate what he learned as a resident into his own pastoral leadership. Excited about the possibilities for ministry in Ahoskie and aware of his own tendencies toward overwork, Daniel, like many other young ministers, is trying to balance the demands of the pastorate in a way that ensures good personal and congregational health.



Daniel has long known that pastoral ministry is his calling. From growing up as the child of a minister to experiencing his calling as a teen through the encouragement of his community of faith, Daniel sensed as he journeyed through seminary that his first step in ministry was to a pastorate. A natural next step was the fairly new pastoral residency program. Through this program, Daniel was able to practice skills in a full-time capacity in a teaching congregation. His time at First Baptist, Frankfort, was extremely positive. He not only learned many skills for the pastorate, but was also able to observe closely the inner workings of a healthy church congregation and staff. He also

had a safe place to try new things while working with an experienced pastor and a small congregational support group.

After completing his residency, Daniel became pastor of First Baptist Church in

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Ahoskie, North Carolina, in November 2006. Ahoskie is a small town in the northeastern part of the state.

Pastoring in a small town holds unique benefits as well as challenges.

As pastor, Daniel spends a great deal of time preaching and in worship planning as well as in doing pastoral care. One of his greatest challenges has been his tendency to take on too many responsibilities. He acknowledges his own difficulty in saying “no,” a problem he suspects he shares with many in ministry. He is aware, however, of the importance of his own self-care and health both for himself and his family as well as for the church. “It’s all about balance,” comments Daniel. “It may be that the family has to come home from vacation early for me to preach a funeral, but I will make it up to them. It may be that I am at the hospital late with a chronically ill parishioner, but I might sleep in the next day and fix pancakes for the family. Rather than exhibiting poor self-care, I like to think that I am modeling good values for my family. Just as time at home is precious, so is stopping what we’re doing to serve people in need. I want my children to learn that too. Again, balance.” Daniel continues, “That said, I must admit that I have noticed some colleagues enter churches straight from seminary with self-care at the top of their list—so they expect to be done with work every day at five, not to have to take calls at home, and are always ‘off’ on their days off. That’s as unrealistic as working 100 hours a week! If those are one’s expectations, I think a reevaluation of one’s call is in order.”

This awareness of the importance of self-care and ministerial health is often emphasized in the recent training of new ministers. Young ministers like Daniel are often aware of the possibilities of burnout and therefore attempt to avoid possible crisis points in ministry by being proactive.

One way Daniel attempts self-care is by being intentional about having time away from church. He tries to have two days away from church each week and regularly to spend time away from the church community with his family. This, he believes, helps to draw boundaries between his personal and professional lives and enables his creativity. It is important, Daniel believes, for ministers to be proactive in their own self-care. Most churches do not take the first step. Educating the church on the needs of the ministers will help the congregation better care for their staff, which will have a direct positive effect on the overall health of the church.



Staff teams that hold a similar mind-set related to self-care can help educate churches on the needs of their ministers. A staff that agrees on a common day off helps a church establish a common “day off” for church business. Likewise, staffs that work together to recognize boundaries related to time off and time away will hold one another accountable and help avoid the pitfalls of an overfunctioning team member.

Daniel believes churches can take a couple of important steps as they attempt to care for their ministers. First, offering a sabbatical leave after a certain period of service would be a powerful way for ministers to be recharged for ministry. Although the concept is fairly new in church life, sabbaticals give ministers a chance not only to rest, but also to explore other potential ministries for the church and expand study and preparation for preaching and teaching. Daniel would also like to see churches branch out from the often corporate structure of the personnel committee to more of a team approach. A staff relations team, for instance, could function in addition to a personnel committee to be better tuned into the holistic needs of the staff, offering support, encouragement, and accountability. These are areas he hopes to explore with his own church.

Well-Being and Excellence in Ministry

Although Daniel Glaze may be a fairly new pastor, he has already learned some important lessons for ministry. If he is to continue this work to which he feels called, he has to take care of himself and not allow the demands of ministry to become overwhelming. At First Baptist, Ahoskie, he already feels blessed by the church as they seek ways and opportunities to support their pastor and staff. One of the sweetest experiences Daniel has had at the church so far was sharing the birth of his family's second child with them. As the church celebrated their first "staff baby" in a long time, the Glaze family felt truly loved and blessed. He is excited to continue this relationship of mutual love and support with First Baptist Church, Ahoskie. This love and respect, he believes, will no doubt be the best foundation to promote the most positive ministerial health.

As a young minister, Daniel clearly shows the importance of trying to balance the demands of the pastorate. His participation in a residency program has enabled him to develop further his skills for ministry. He is now prepared to serve his first pastorate in ways that he might not have been able to serve before his experience with a teaching church and a supervising pastor. Young people today are faced with rising costs in tuition and books and housing for their seminary education. Many complete their training with considerable debt in student loans. This affects the beginning years of ministry.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. Jesus said, "Let your word be 'Yes, Yes' or 'No, No'" (Matt. 5:37). It may be difficult for both pastor and people to learn to say yes and no as part of their spiritual formation. Is your minister given the freedom to say "no" as well as "yes?" How could your congregation be encouraged to exercise both answers for the sake of the ministry they share?
2. Are both the minister(s) and congregation aware of the benefits of ministerial self-care and good health to the congregation?

3. What time away from the church and the church field are your ministers encouraged to take?
4. Have good boundaries between the minister(s) and the congregation been established?
5. Can a minister be friends with her/his parishioners?
6. What are the specific needs of your minister at this point in his/her life?
7. What does your congregation do to help recharge your minister(s)?
8. What does your church do to offer support, encouragement, and accountability for your minister(s)?