

APPENDIX B: LEARNINGS FROM CGC SABBATICALS

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Each sabbatical is unique.

Our first sabbatical happened in a change of season - we were commissioned to go and gear up FOR the next challenge that lay ahead. The second one felt like a resting FROM a season of intensity of ministry. This was for wellness in marriage, family and spirituality. Our key learning was to shape the sabbatical according to its purpose. This happens by having good conversations up front around the purpose and then shaping the sabbatical accordingly.

We also learnt that we needed to ensure we were on the same page and that we were *reading the season of our family life well*. What we might experience as a break could be an extra strain and burden for the family, especially our spouses.

Deal with home-game stuff as much as possible before you go – we needed to ensure that our eldership team was well set up, that responsibilities were delegated, and that people felt well cared for before we left. This enabled us to go in strength.

Have the big things in our own life settled so that the sabbatical itself is not a journey of decision. If we are wrestling with important or weighty decisions to be made during this time, it is hard to rest and refresh.

Have a spiritual re-vitalisation plan – it is easy for days to flow into each other, so having a plan in place helps direct the rest. We need to read the things our souls need for re-vitalisation and plan to do them.

Disconnecting identity and spirituality from one's ministry is such a key thing - being able to disentangle these things is one of the key elements of the sabbatical. Be ready for this internal journey.

Bonus of a sabbatical coach – as leaders we can feel like we can plan for and strategise the sabbatical for ourselves. But, having someone else come and ask you questions is key – things that you don't even know you don't know. It is ideal to do this a couple of months beforehand.

Re-entry is key – the weight of responsibility we carry means we often feel we need to “bring it” on our return. Most of the time we come back to business as usual and need to integrate slowly without feeling like we “need to deliver”. We often come back with fresh lenses, and it is a season to be aware and listen more.

Don't come back with financial deficits which create stress and burden on your return. Limit yourself to what you can truly afford so that you are also living within your means. Be open to the provision of grace upfront.

APPENDIX C: SUGGESTED SUNDAY ANNOUNCEMENT PROCESS AND WORDING FOR SABBATICALS

It is suggested that at least two Sunday announcements are made – the final one being on the final Sunday in attendance. Doing two allows the congregation the chance to process and ask questions and communicate with the person/ couple involved, without any time rush. There is then no chance for false stories to creep in (Why was this rushed? Why can't we speak to them? Was something wrong? etc.)

In the New Testament, we see that Jesus modelled a wisdom and reality of appropriate seasons of rest through his own life and indicated a deep understanding and appreciation for the rhythms of life and the requirement for Sabbath rest (rest towards God).

His own ministry showed times of withdrawal for prayer and spiritual solitude. We likewise recognize that having leaders who have hearts towards God and people that are tender and wise and energetic need to have times of extended rest and recuperation.

So, from time to time, after faithful years of serving, we allow our leaders to have a season of extended rest from the responsibilities of church leadership and work (if they are full-time employed). It is strategic rest to allow the leaders to rest in God and come back refreshed spiritually, mentally and physically.

As you know, Yy and Xx give their very best for God in this community. And anyone who runs a race knows that you can't go at the same speed for too long. You need time to pause, stop, rest and get ready for the next stage. This is not an emergency, but rather an important and strategic time to invest in themselves, as a couple and as a family.

So, as leaders, we are excited about how God will use this time to grow them and prepare them for the next season of ministry.

For xx months, we will not see them. They won't reply to emails, they will exit many WhatsApp groups. They will still love us but will step back from actively ministering.

How can you support them in this time?

Pray for them: that this is a time of replenishment, restoration and rest. Praying that they would hear from God, be filled up and freshly envisioned for the next chapter of ministry.

[few words by the couple - optional]

I am going to invite a few leaders to come forward, lay hands on them and pray for them.

PRAYER TIME – 2 OR 3 LEADERS PRAY INTO MICROPHONE

If you want to share something with Yy and Xx, please feel free to connect with them after the meeting.