

Jason Holdridge Testimonial

How It Benefitted me in my calling as a pastor

The sabbatical gave me space to almost separate fiction and non-fiction happening in my head and heart. There are times when you feel like life is so complex and busy that you don't have space and time to process what has happened, what is happening, and what needs to happen next, at least not with crystal clarity. The sabbatical gave me freedom and flexibility to deepen my confidence in my calling as well as refreshing my joy in my calling.

How It Benefitted my Church

One of the challenges, when you leave for a stretch of time, is to delegate and empower the leaders around you to carry the calling in your absence. But that challenge was actually the best opportunity for our church to deepen our bench and reboot our systems and structures to share the weight more and to divide and conquer. When I came back, leaders around me were better and I didn't resume certain tasks that weren't necessary for me to fulfill in the first place. We rebooted with a restructuring of meetings and responsibilities, and it served the church better in the long run - definitely more sustainable for the future of the whole body, both staff and congregation.

The Importance of a Sabbatical Coach

It was crucial to have a sabbatical coach because I decided to not talk to anyone from our church body during my 13-week hiatus. My coach became the sounding board for all the issues that were surfacing in my spirit as well as the one who celebrated little steps toward health. He asked great questions and helped me measure my growth week to week. There were times when he would challenge my assumptions or conclusions in order for me to emerge from this experience with a grounded belief system. I needed someone outside the weeds and woods of my ministry to walk with me and to handle my heart with grace and truth.

What Would you say to the church's Leadership Team regarding Sabbaticals?

It is powerful to have a pastor who is refreshed and healed and free and alive! It certainly fills the tank of the pastor, but the effects and side-effects of a sabbatical brings revitalization to the whole church as the pastor comes back with a deeper connection to the Father, a healthy heart, and a fresh vision to see the Great Commandment and the Great Commission pursued with passion.