

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Greetings from the parsonage! I'm glad that several of you were able to come to the Open House Anna and I had for the five-year celebration of my ordination. One of you let me know that making it five years at a job can be hard to do. I received some information about the Shepherd's Canyon Retreat Ministry that I feel is good to share with you.



The Shepherd's Canyon Retreat Ministry is a retreat for pastors in crisis. A question that is asked in the Retreat's story pamphlet is "Is there a need for such a ministry?" to which they answer "Yes!" Here are some statistics:

***20% of pastors are "in crisis"—they are just "hanging on," coping with the issues they face day-to-day**

***Among Protestant clergy, an incredible number quit the ministry every month!**

***Only 50% of pastors entering the ministry today will make it five years**

***80% of pastors will say that the ministry has had a negative impact on their family**

***Upwards of 70% of pastors fight depression**

In the Shepherd's Canyon Renew, Revive, Refresh brochure, it asks several questions for you to consider:

"Are you feeling alone or isolated from spouse, family, and friends? Does it feel like you are living a lie? Do you wonder if you have an addiction that is affecting your life? Do you lack a support system that you can trust and with whom you are open? Do you wish that you could get out of your current location/position? Do you think that you would be happier out of the ministry? Are you angry, depressed, or afraid? Do you question God's role in your life? Is there a major conflict in your ministry? Do you find it difficult to cope with your role in today's fast paced technical world?" Then it says "If you answer 'yes' to any of these questions, or know someone who could answer 'yes' please contact Shepherd's Canyon Retreat..."

Some of you may be shocked by these statistics and to find out that pastors may answer yes to one or more of the questions above. Others of you may not be as shocked. We live in a different culture than many of us grew up in—and I'm saying that as a thirty-three year old! The

culture of our nation has changed, and continues to change. What was looked down upon thirty years ago no longer is, and what was upheld then no longer is, either.

This does not say anything new to us. The Scriptures tell us that the world is constantly changing. But the Scriptures also tell us that God's plans never change. "(T)he plans of the Lord stand firm forever (Psalm 33:11, NIV)."

It was God's plan to send His Son to save us, and He fulfilled that plan. He sent Jesus into the world to live among us and to die for our sins. Jesus paid the price you and I owe for our sins, and we have been made free. That is the Gospel which is your joy to share, as well as the joy of every pastor to share as well. Please pray that the Lord would continue to send out pastors into His fields, and that He would give all of them the strength they need to serve for many years—even many more than five! In Jesus' Name. Amen.

Your brother and under-Shepherd in Christ,

Pastor Josh

Pastor Josh will be on vacation a couple weeks this month, and will also be going to the District Convention. Please let an elder know if you need pastoral care this month. Blessings!

