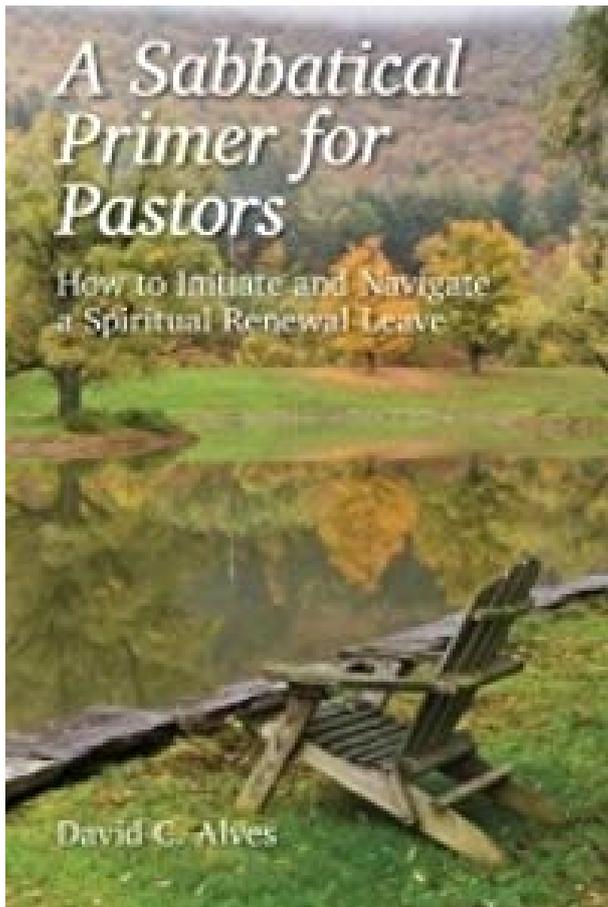


# A Sabbatical Primer for Pastors: How to Initiate and Navigate a Spiritual Renewal Leave



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Have you noticed the toll modern ministry is taking on our pastors? Pastoral fatigue and burnout cost the church more than just money; it costs lives, drying up the pastoral pool. More pastors and church leaders leave ministry today than in the history of the Christian Church. And I almost became a statistic. Pastors are in big trouble but have few resources to help. More and more has been written about sabbaticals, yet few comprehensive, but simple, guidebooks are available to assist a pastor to initiate and maximize the gift of his or her pastoral sabbatical. This primer is designed to take a pastor through the sabbatical from conception to conclusion.

This book contains more than was available to me when I took both my first and second sabbaticals. Though not exhaustive, the contents should accomplish the purpose of a primer on spiritual sabbaticals. WHAT OTHERS ARE SAYING: "What a wise and winsome invitation to the spiritual practice of sabbatical! But there's more--once you've said yes to the invitation, you will also find a road map for planning and then taking the journey into this oft-unexplored terrain. This is a most helpful offering!" --Dr. Ruth Haley Barton, Founder, Transforming Center, author of "Invitation to Solitude and Silence" and "Strengthening the Soul of Your Leadership" "If every beginning minister were given a start-up kit when they began, David Alves' book,

would be an essential. It contains the indispensable fundamentals for a long and fruitful ministry. Providing step-by-step guidance, this book could save many from premature erosion that takes place beneath the surface in ministry. I highly recommend this primer for every new and veteran minister who cares about his or her future vitality!" --Dr. Wayne Cordeiro, author of "Leading on Empty: Refilling Your Tank and Renewing Your Passion" and Senior Pastor of New Hope, Oahu "You will never know how hard it was to keep you boys busy," my dad acknowledged in a moment of morphine-induced honesty following surgery for colon cancer. "Did it ever occur to you to give us a day off?" my youngest brother asked. Dad hesitated, but only for a moment - "The thought never crossed my mind." "Keep busy" buzzes in my head.

My daily "to do" list gives an often distorted shape to my day. In "A Sabbatical Primer for Pastors," David Alves raises his voice over the buzz. "God is taking you out of the brick making business," he writes. With frequent references to his own story, David argues that Sabbath and Sabbaticals offer a God-designed way for me to be free from the drivenness that has served as a constant companion since my youth. The Primer troubles me with a question that lingers like the scent of a powerful perfume: "which father's voice will shape the remaining years of my life?" -Clayton Blackstone, author of "Meet Me for Breakfast" and Pastor of the Advent Christian Church in Bangor, Maine