

A Word to GBC from Pastor Garrett about his Relocation...

GBC Family-

As most of you know, I (Garrett) went to Washington D.C. about a month ago [November 2009] to explore a ministry opportunity that would allow me to sit under an older pastor for a season and then plant a church in that area. The time of ministry we had there was blessed and they have extended an offer to me to come and join their team beginning in January 2011. After a time of prayer and discussions with our elders, we feel certain this is the Lord's will for us at this time.

The reason behind my move can be summarized in this: I'm ready to grow deeper as a shepherd. I have been in leadership roles since I came to know the Lord at 21, including beginning ministry in Graham when I was 25. During this time God has taught me much through both "failure" and "success", but I have longed for a season of sitting under an older, wiser pastor who can help me develop my gifts. By God's grace I hope to have somewhere between 30-50 more years in ministry and I believe the Lord is showing me that this move will make those years more fruitful.

This decision is a very difficult one for us as we both have grown to love our church, friends, and lives here in Graham. God has been so faithful to mold and shape us here and we will never be the same in light of the work He has done through many of you. We love you very much, but strongly believe this is the Lord's hand and know that we must follow where He leads.

In light of this, we ask that you join us in our prayers for the Lord to guide GBC and make His will clear to us as we move forward. I am sure you have some questions about this transition, so I will attempt to address them in the following lines.

When will Garrett be leaving? Lord willing, Garrett's last day as pastor of GBC will be September 31, 2010. After this he will be taking a 3 month sabbatical and living in West Virginia with his family.

Who will the new pastor be? The Lord knows. This is our great confidence in the midst of our transition. We are not fearful of who the next shepherd will be or when he will arrive because we know the Lord loves His flock more than we do and He will provide everything we need. If you know of any friends in the ministry who have recommendations, please have them contact the elders.

How will the new pastor be selected? The elders are talking with prospective pastors that have been recommended from various friends in the ministry. Over the next several months the elders will review resumes, have phone interviews, have face-to-face interviews, and have select candidates preach. After this we will seek feedback from the members to assist us in making final decisions.

For a candidate to be considered, they must be in theological agreement with our doctrine, and hold to very similar perspective on the values we hold dear here at GBC.

Will the new pastor be young or old? Ask the Lord. There are no biblical requirements regarding this, so it is not a factor in our decision.

When will the new pastor begin? Our hope is that the new pastor would be able to join our flock sometime between May or July. This would allow a short season for him and Garrett to walk together and learn about ministry in Graham and about the GBC family before the final transition.

I pray these answers will help to settle your heart and find your hope in the Lord. Spend time reading 1 Samuel 16. This is the passage where Samuel is seeking to anoint the next king of Israel. God led him to David after Samuel tried his hardest to guess which man was the Lord's chosen one. I have spent much time in this passage and believe God knows who the faithful man after His own heart is. God will show us who that man is as we seek His will.

Also, please remember that we are not promised tomorrow. This means that it would be sinful for us to focus so much on what the future holds for our church that we neglect to be faithful in the present. As I am excited about what the Lord is doing in the future, but I am also very aware that today could be the last day I minister for Him upon this earth. In light of this, we must each invest all we have to give Him glory in the present. Please do not be distracted or discouraged by uncertainties. Lean upon Jesus and be faithful to Him in the midst of the waiting.

Please feel free to contact Garrett or the elders with any further questions. The best way is to call them or email them directly.

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May the Lord lead us all in the way He pleases,

Garrett and GBC Leadership Team