



The Invitation

You are receiving this invitation because we know that you are someone who cares about the health and success of Christian churches and the leaders who serve them. We have all seen news stories or heard of pastors who have struggled to hold their lives together under the pressure of church ministry. Some have been fired or quit, lost their relationships with spouses or children, and even taken their own lives. Is being a pastor really that stressful and challenging? Does God want us to care for and invest in those who have volunteered to spiritually care for us? This letter is an invitation to join us in trying to solve a growing problem for God’s people.

AMERICA'S PASTORS ON THEIR FUTURE IN FULL-TIME MINISTRY— 2021

Barna

Have you given real, serious consideration to quitting being in full-time ministry within the last year?

● Yes ● No

2021|Jan



2021|Oct



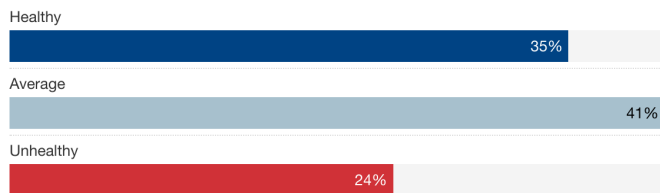
n=413 U.S. Protestant pastors; January 22–27, 2021.
n=507 U.S. Protestant pastors; October 12–28, 2021. | Source: Barna Group

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CURRENT HEALTH OF AMERICA'S PASTORS—2021

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- "Healthy" is defined as scoring "excellent" or "good" on all six of the well-being categories
- "Average" is defined as scoring "excellent" or "good" on at least half of the well-being categories
- "Unhealthy" is defined as scoring "excellent" or "good" on less than half of the well-being categories



n=507 U.S. Protestant pastors; October 12–28, 2021. | Source: Barna Group

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Pastors are in Crisis and so is the Church

Research in the last couple of years shows that pastors are in crisis. 38% of pastors say they are considering quitting. That’s a 10% increase from 2020. The number goes up to 46% for pastors under 45 years of age. Only 35% of pastors identify themselves as good or excellent in the six well-being categories of relational, spiritual, physical, emotional, vocational, and financial well-being. Church members are increasingly frustrated with broken leaders and leadership cultures. Some are leaving churches and the Christian faith as they see pastors fail due to sin or emotional and relational struggles. “Strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.” Zechariah 13:7 & Matthew 26:31.

A New Solution for Pastor and Church Health

The research also shows a direct relationship between those who score themselves as unhealthy and are also considering quitting. We need to help pastors become healthier to see them increase their effectiveness and longevity. We all want to be served by healthy pastors. Pastors are willing to be helped. 75% of U.S. pastors said they would be interested in getting advice or guidance from other pastors who have already experienced similar challenges. Pastors need safe places and people where they can be transparent about their personal, family, and church

The solution is for experienced pastors to provide free mentoring and care for other pastors.

struggles and where they can receive compassion, healing, and guidance from a trusted advisor and advocate. The solution is for experienced pastors to provide free mentoring and care for other pastors. **Standing Stone's mission is to significantly reduce the number of pastors and ministry leaders leaving their ministries prematurely through this three-pronged approach:**

- 1. Pastoral care for couples at risk of leaving their ministries.**
- 2. Educating church boards and members on the challenges and needs of their pastoral staff.**
- 3. Mentoring relationships with people preparing to serve or just starting in ministry.**

Our Attempt to be a Part of the Solution

Standing Stone accomplishes this by recruiting experienced pastoral couples with training in mentoring and experience in working through emotional and relational challenges to serve as pastoral support to pastors and their spouses in local churches. We have 220 pastoral couples serving in the US and several other countries. We were asked by Standing Stone to join their mission and began serving five years ago. Since September 2018, we have provided care to over 30 pastors and/or their wives. These meetings happen weekly or monthly and can last from a few meetings to long-term coaching and care depending on the need. **Standing Stone is building the *Center for Ministry Health* which will provide resources for ministry leaders and churches. I (Fred) believe the greatest contribution I can make is to serve on this team. To do so, Standing Stone requires me to move from being a volunteer to joining paid staff.**

Our calling is to help ministry leaders become more healthy and resilient leaders.

After 25 years of ministry as a pastor, missionary, and leadership couple, we have learned that our primary ministry calling is to focus on the health and effectiveness of other Christian leaders. The key to longevity and health is learning to allow the hurts and stressors we experience as ministry leaders to make us more empathetic and compassionate leaders. We believe that through mentoring and encouragement, ministry leaders can learn to use their difficult experiences to become healthier and more effective leaders. Our calling is to help ministry leaders become more compassionate and resilient leaders.

Please join our team and help us support Christian leaders. You will receive our quarterly newsletter with updates and guides on how to pray.

- 1. Join our prayer team**, praying for us and with us for the emotional and relational health of local ministry leaders. You can sign up by emailing us at fred.c@standingstoneministry.org
- 2. Join our financial team**, sharing in the expense of ministry and investing in the emotional and relational health of local ministry leaders. Please consider helping us reach our initial goal of raising \$5500 a month to support our part-time work of caring for pastors and missionaries with the future goal of raising \$14,000 a month to work full-time with Standing Stone.
- 3. Introduce us to your pastor, pastor's wife, or church.** We would love to find ways to support your pastor or church leadership team, including individual pastoral mentoring, conflict mediation, board development, and coaching, all provided by our experienced team at Standing Stone Ministry.

To **sign up for our prayer updates** please email "pray" to Fred.c@standingstoneministry.org To **contribute financially** visit: <https://standingstoneministry.org/shepherd/fred-chambers/> and click donate or you can mail checks directly to Standing Stone Ministry, 2340 S. El Camino Real, Suite 3, San Clemente, CA 92673. "Ministry of Fred & Lisa Chambers" in the memo or by accounting@standingstoneministry.org or call (970) 264-9329.