

Greetings to all of you, our friends and family:

It's hard to believe but I have been a pastor at the same church for over 20 years now, and there's still nothing I'd rather be doing. In an effort to keep it that way, I will be taking a three month sabbatical from my regular duties here at Frontline Bible Church starting in mid-July. The word 'sabbatical' means to cease or rest from activities. The heart behind it reflects the idea of ceasing from regular duties to pursue activities that can refocus and equip for future ministry, at a pace that allows for the recharging of emotional, physical, and spiritual energy reserves.

Our mission at Frontline is to equip every person who attends to make an eternal impact in the world. Equipped Christians know they have a mission to live out as uniquely gifted followers of Jesus Christ. Sometimes those gifts will be used right here at Frontline and in the communities where our church families live. Other times individuals will feel called to ministries outside of Frontline, both here and abroad. Our job is to equip every person to live out their mission, wherever it may take them, but how can we do that even better and what is my role in it? Each part of my sabbatical will be focused around better understanding how to move an equipping church like ours to becoming a sending and multiplying church.

This search will take my son and me to Paraguay to see how two missionary families are building an equipping ministry from the ground up. It will take my wife and me to Israel to experience the land of the Bible for my own equipping purposes as lead communicator. I will be attending different churches with my family and interviewing other pastors and ministry leaders during this time to better understand how others equip for sending and multiplying purposes. I'm looking forward to having the time to read and view some resources out there dealing with this subject that I simply don't have time for in a normal ministry setting.

Lastly and most importantly, I will be spending time focusing on hearing from God regarding His agenda for me and the ministry here. If Frontline is really God's Church, then carving out time to understand His agenda for our mission is critical. Just because one equipping church is doing something doesn't mean we should do it as well. Every church is uniquely gifted to fulfill God's agenda in the place and time He has them, and we do a disservice to the Body when we don't fulfill our unique role. Do we understand our uniqueness? A prayer throughout Scripture was that God would open the eyes of people to see what He is doing and wants to do. I want to hear from God for even greater effectiveness as Frontline.

I am so thankful for the leadership here at Frontline that is fully supportive of me doing this. They are giving me the time and space to take it, and I am responsible for raising the necessary funds. You are receiving this letter because I'd love to have you partner both with me and Frontline Bible Church to make all this happen.

The total cost for everything will be \$16,000. This amount includes the two trips as well as funds for resources and expenses here. I know this amount seems like A LOT of money – way more than I've ever asked for – and yet I have felt tremendous peace since the beginning that God will provide.

Even if all you can give is your prayer support both for me and Frontline in my absence, trust me that will be so appreciated! If God is leading you to contribute financially as well, I would be so grateful. For the record, each gift is tax-deductible since everything will be given through Frontline.

Gifts can be given... *(our treasurer is helping me craft this section)*

If you have any questions about my sabbatical, I would love to talk further about it. It has been quite the journey even to this point since I've never taken one before and no pastor at Frontline ever has either. We are all learning new things as we go!

Thank you for reading this letter and for considering what part you may play in my sabbatical. I don't take that for granted.

In His service,

John Lowder
Lead Pastor, Frontline Bible Church

