

Perseverance

Church Answers - Thom Rainer - pastors quitting church/ministry

<https://churchanswers.com/blog/six-reasons-your-pastor-is-about-to-quit/>

1 Giving up is a real danger

Pastors in danger giving up

Fear

Frustration - going backwards not return to normal

Fractionalism - disagreement rather than unity

Factionalism - within church - attitudes to COVID what should do

Fatigue - physically and emotionally as result pressure/change

Fragility - personally weak and vulnerable

Futility - what doing not making a difference - not fixing problem

Fury - gives way to anger - at others, self, God

Reveals our idolatries - we want to be:

In control

Successful

Liked

Blessed

Much of Bible written to encourage us to persevere - especially leaders

Moses - number times gave up - Exodus and Wilderness

Numbers 11v14-15 - "I cannot carry all these people by myself; the burden is too heavy for me. If this is how you're going to treat me, please go ahead and kill me - if I have found favour in your eyes - and do not let me face my own ruin"

Psalms - David tempted to given up - opposition - inadequacy - scale task

Paul

2 Tim 4v7 - "I have fought the good fight. I have finished the race, I have kept the faith."

2 Why do church leaders give up?

What we might say in our hearts:

It's not worth it

It's not possible

It's not working - don't see results expect/deserve

I can't do it - personal inadequacy

It's not fair to my family

I can't stand it

These are normal ministry experience - would be worrying if didn't feel this way from time to time

3 What will enable us to persevere?

Accepting you are not God - don't have to be - He doesn't expect to be

Easy to say but difficult to do

Faith - trust in God not self

In God's sovereignty - in control

In God's goodness - working out good purpose

In God's promises

In God's power - sufficient

In God's pleasure in us - not by performance but by grace

In God's Fatherly care - hardships; is discipline

Faith enables to cast our anxieties on him - he cares for us

Moses - the burden is too heavy for me – don't have to bear it

Focus - what really matters

On goal - eternal destination

On mission - make disciples

On task - shepherd God's people

On reward to come - crown of glory

On present - worrying doesn't change anything - Jesus' teaching each day has enough trouble of its own - leave future to God

Fix our eyes on Jesus

Hebrews 11

Heroes faith - how endured and persevered

Contrast wilderness generation

Ultimately on Jesus Hebrew 12

Does not ask us to do anything he hasn't done

Interceding for us

Seek his help in time need - great high priest understands our weaknesses

Fear

We need a right fear

Fear God - reverence and awe - please not displease - God far greater than our problems

Fear falling away - giving up/dishonouring God

Message Hebrews - not turn away or shrink back

Moses - frustration led to lack faith - did not enter PL

Warning to us

How shall we escape if we ignore such a great salvation

Will result in - Flexible Faithfulness

Uncertainty - fixed plans won't help

Unexpected change - short notice

Change plans, patterns priorities

Paul ministry - plans - don't work out - have to change

Perseverance not just keeping going - fulfilling calling

Paul - 1 Cor 9v24 - imagery race - "run so as to bet the prize" - not aimlessly
Context - gospel ministry - all things to all men so that might save some

Current situation an opportunity

Immediate - evangelistic opportunity - needs community
Everything stopped - change to change - ministries, activities, people - not just back to normal
Time to experiment and adjust
Future - reshape ministry and church

4 How can you persevere?

God will keep us - uses means to keep us
Perseverance is result of decision, determination and discipline

Renew your spiritual life daily

Feed your own soul
Listen to God's word
Pray
Worship

Remember God's blessings

Past and present
Great acts redemption
Smaller personal mercies
Provision and care - faithfulness
What has not changed - isn't changeable
Thankfulness

Rest sensibly

Tiredness and cumulative exhausting
Day's off - time with the other
Exhaustion - Jesus tired and slept
Paul - sent to Athens for a break
Pace of itinerant ministry - travel took long time - shops, roads etc
Gospel and Acts don't record dead/inactive time - massive amounts

Receive help from others

Own worst enemies - pride and individualism
Not meant to be in this alone
Support and encouragement others
Other ministers - same experience
Hebrews 10 p let us not stop meeting together - spur on to love and good deeds - not just church meetings - spur other but who spurring you on?

Resist the lure of news and politics

Easy to get drawn in and distracted
24hrs news cycle - nothing changes
Govt policy - very little can do
Cut out all news - except one 30 minute slot - read papers (in your control)

Retain a sense of proportion

History and rest world
Not being persecuted - inconvenienced
Wealthy - have access to free health care
Government largely benign - seeking to act for common good
Risks - real but relatively small

In a sense nothing special - said nothing new

Christian life all about perseverance - not giving up
Gospel ministry/church leadership - all about perseverance
Specific context - but principles the same

Resources:

<https://churchanswers.com/blog/six-reasons-your-pastor-is-about-to-quit/>

<https://www.9marks.org/article/pastoring-with-certainty-in-uncertain-times/>

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/reviews/post-quarantine-church-thom-rainer/>

<https://www.thepastorsheart.net/podcast/heart-head-or-health>

<https://www.thepastorsheart.net/podcast/calmpresentleadership>