



PEOPLE REACHING PEOPLE

**A MINISTRY OF BISHOP TODD
& REVEREND PATSY MCGREGOR**

Engaging Partners in Evangelism,
Education & Economic Development

Sabbatical Stories

Sabbatical: a period of leave for study and reflection

Why take a sabbatical?

What happened during our time?

What are some of the takeaways?

Over the next several weeks, Patsy and I will share reflections on our experiences during our long overdue sabbatical with answers to the questions above. As we bring you along on our journey, we trust you will see this as a time of reflection in your own lives and encourage you to devote time for prayer and meditation, opening yourselves to what God has in store for you.

Blessings,

+Todd

What Happened During Our Time?

A reflection from +Todd:

So, What Happened on our Sabbatical?

Curious and inquisitive, people asked what I was going to do on sabbatical. Some asked me, "Was I going to study in order to help in my ministry?" Others asked, "Was I going on retreat?" Some with easy-going personalities asked, "Was I going to do something fun - like fishing or play some kind of sport?" Others wondered, "Was I going to spend time with my family and children?" or "Was I just going to rest?"

The great news about all of this was I could make up my own mind! For my sabbatical it was suggested to do things which would bring me joy. Then, I had to ponder this myself: *What*

are the things that bring me joy? Spending time with Patsy and with other members of my family and extended family, exercising, fishing, grilling, resting, and going on retreat were all on my list, rejuvenating my body, soul and mind.

Patsy and I were able to spend time together in a number of capacities. We spent time reading together, going on long bike rides (up to 25 miles!), walking along the intracoastal in West Palm Beach, going out on a date night to restaurants, going to a Tuesday matinee to watch new movies, kayaking in the intracoastal, playing Pickleball at the local public courts, and playing cards even though it was very humbling for me when I played against Patsy.

The sabbatical gave us time go to the deep places and process our marriage: where we have come from these past 34 years, and where we are going? It allowed us time to set up a couples' strategic plan for the next 5-10 years with post-it notes stuck to our living room walls for 4-6 weeks for us to process what we were doing. It was tough work, and we had to stop a few times to breathe and process our journey, but the end result was a victory for us. We agreed (!!!!!) and wrote a vision statement, mission statement, and recorded goals and core values.

After spending quality time with Patsy, I realized what a joy it is to be with her! Being over worked had caused me to forget this and left our marriage neglected. The time of sabbatical allowed us to be together without demands, and resulted as if we were falling in love all over again.

I thank the Lord that I was able to spend time with our daughters and family, Corbi, Joe, Jabin and Charese during this sabbatical. I thank the Lord for my daughters and the time I had with them during the Christmas season. As always, we had a great time with Corbi, Joe and Jabin. It was such a joy to be with Charese in Connecticut for 10 days during this season, to be in her home, hanging out and spending time with her. It was a special blessing for me. But I must confess, I still felt the urge to want to be leading people during this holiday season.

Being in Florida allowed us to spend time with my in-laws, Mom and Dad Cox. Nearly every weekend, we had them up to our place for a grilled dinner. I really enjoyed spending evenings with them; also aware that time was very special, knowing that both mom (88) and dad (89) are elderly, and Dad is in later stages of lung cancer treatment. Thanks be to God for blessing our extended time together.

I was also able to spend time with some of my family including my brother Tim and his wife Lisa, my sister Debbie and her husband Todd, and Starr (my late brother's wife). The Lord has blessed me with an incredible family.

Boy, did I get plenty of exercise during my sabbatical! It seemed nearly every day I was doing some form of exercise. I took up the new sport of pickleball. It took some getting used to, but I think I was doing okay by the time I returned to Madagascar. I could hold my own. I also spent a fair amount of time biking. It's nice to have sidewalks and wide roads to safely bike ride and was especially beautiful riding along the intracoastal. Patsy and I would usually take a bike ride once a week which was very nice and relaxing for us a couple. It was such a different environment than in Madagascar, where we don't even feel comfortable bike riding because of the rickshaws, cars, motorcycles, animals and people along the road.

Fishing was a highlight for me. I was able to go fishing with a good friend in the Florida Keys as well as in the Bahamas. There is nothing nicer than being on the ocean and having the opportunity to fish. My friend Will and I caught plenty of fish – especially in the Bahamas. The only problem was that we had to reel quickly, getting the yellow tail into the boat before the sharks, barracudas or something else bit off half of their body! It was huge fun, releasing lots of testosterone.

Finally, my Ignatius silent retreat run by a Jesuit Society in Louisiana was a supreme highlight, helping me to discern the Lord's will in my life. Meeting with a Spiritual Director for 45 minutes each day was my only form of talking, except in prayer to God. My Spiritual Director asked pondering questions, stirring me to listen to God. It was an incredible time for me physically and spiritually. Before I went, I was a bit concerned about what I was going to do with my time for this 8-day period? But it became filled with exercise, meditation, personal bible study, reflection, reading, listening to Christian music, and sleeping. One huge take away for me was about listening to God in every aspect. I came away healed, restored and refreshed by the grace of God! I highly recommend this to others.

My sabbatical was great, giving me time with Patsy, my family, exercising, fishing, and going deeper with God on a spiritual retreat. Taking a time of extended rest on sabbatical gave me time to do the things that are important to me and bring me joy.

With the Joy of the Lord,

+Todd

The Right Rev. Todd McGregor

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