

# You Couldn't Pay Me Enough

By Todd Pruitt

I was moved by Jason's words to Metro East on Sunday February 11 when he announced his resignation as our associate pastor of worship. After almost seven years of serving in that role Jason believes that the Lord has led him to a change of vocation. Fortunately, Jason and Erin are staying in Wichita and Metro East so we will continue to be blessed by their friendship and service. What is more, Jason has agreed to continue leading us in worship and updating our webpage during the interim period. That says something special about the fellowship we share at Metro East. I love serving as pastor of this church along side other men who love this church as well. But honestly, you couldn't pay me enough to be a minister of music.

Would anyone desire a job where they have hundreds of bosses who offer weekly critiques of their performance? Furthermore, can you imagine how frustrating it would be to receive conflicting evaluations from your various bosses? Do you know anyone who could thrive emotionally in a situation like that? All men in pastoral ministry have to face this dilemma but perhaps none more (depending on the church) than the minister of music. He is too upbeat and not upbeat enough. He uses too many choruses and too many hymns. The music is too loud and not loud enough. It is too contemporary and too traditional. And this all on the same Sunday! Does anyone want the job yet?

In his book Leading With a Limp Dan Allender writes these words about pastors, but they can apply at least as well to ministers of music:

*Every week he enters the pulpit with a rope around one arm and another around his leg, and perhaps one around his neck. When he begins his sermon, clusters of his community gather around one rope or another and begin to tug and pull. By the time this pastor finishes a half hour sermon, he has been drawn and quartered, but he still must greet his people at the end of the service. We require our leaders to be perfect – or at least much more perfect than we are – and then we reserve the right to pick them clean like vultures that have patiently waited for the wounded beast to stop twitching.*

There have been many moments during my years in ministry when I have been shocked by the lack of charity that I have witnessed in the words and actions of many laypersons toward those whom God has called to lead them. The meanest, most critical people I have ever met have been within the body of Christ. I am so thankful that Metro East is not the kind of place where those kinds of attitudes thrive. But I do not believe for one moment that we are immune

from that sort of thing taking root. We are all sinners and therefore capable of doing and saying things that hurt the body of Christ. However, when someone within the church is critical and divisive it is up to his or her brothers and sisters in Christ to lovingly but clearly correct them.

I say all of this because as we look for a man to take the baton from Jason we will need to strive for unity. That does not mean we cannot disagree or ask questions or make requests. However, we must do these things in love and with patience. Music is an emotional issue for most of us and all of us seem to have strong opinions about what is supposed to happen in worship services. We all know that whoever becomes our next worship leader is not going to please everyone. But what will you do if the person he does not please is you?

Please be patient with the process. We will be in no hurry to merely fill a position. We will be looking for the Lord's man, not a singing hairdo. Obviously, whoever serves as our worship leader will need to have a philosophy of worship that fits my own. I will have to work closely with this man planning worship services and strong sense of harmony between us is essential. He will also have to work well with the other pastors. God has been very kind to give Metro East a pastoral staff who love each other and work well together. This is a rare gift and we must not take it for granted.

I covet your prayers for me, the pastoral staff, and the personnel team as we begin to search for a man to lead our ministry of worship music. Pray also that you will have an attitude that is teachable and patient. You may also want to thank Jason for serving in the crucible of music ministry for almost seven years.