



MAY 2022

- 75% of Christian Workers report being “extremely stressed” or “highly stressed” (1)
- 90% work between 55 to 75 hours per week (2)
- 90% feel fatigued and worn out every week (1)
- 70% say they’re grossly underpaid (2)
- 90% say they feel financially stressed.
- 80% will not be in ministry ten years later and only a fraction make it a lifelong career
- 91% have experienced some form of burn-out in ministry and 18% say they are “fried to a crisp right now”

These are admittedly bleak statistics, but they tell a story that Clay and I are all too familiar with. Many people we know have burned out of ministry work, or had to leave because of a chronic lack of funding that was causing extreme financial stress.



The job of a Christian worker, like many “caring professions” can be exhausting and wearying in unique ways. The work is never done - there’s always one more person who we could reach with the gospel. The hours are long and odd - it takes time to cultivate relationships, and the best hours to meet with people are evenings and weekends. The pressure of failure can feel high - who wants to let down teammates, donors, or, perhaps more importantly, the Lord? Not to mention the blurred lines that can sometimes result in your spouse feeling like your co-worker, your friends feeling like employees, or God feeling like your boss.

The financial pressures are also unique. Very few jobs require you to not only work your job, but raise the funds to pay yourself and fund your benefits as well. It is an ongoing task that is never done, as inflation takes its toll, ministry partners have to cease their giving, and family financial needs grow. We very rarely, if ever, speak about these pressures to you, our ministry partner, and even more rarely mention them in a prayer letter, but it is something we think about daily.

In light of these two realities, we have realized two things. 1) We need intentional times of rest. 2) We need to raise a lot more financial support this summer in order to be in a secure place financially to continue ministry long-term. This summer, we are attempting to address both of those needs in tandem as a part of our summer assignment.

Cru allows every full-time staff member to take a sabbatical every five years. I (Emily) have now been on staff with Cru for going on nine years, and I have yet to take a sabbatical. This summer, I will be on sabbatical for the months of June and July. We have arranged some childcare along with Clay taking the kids in the morning, so that I can spend intentional time exercising, reading my Bible, praying, reflecting, and feeding my soul by creating art. I am also spending a week backpacking on Isle Royale National Park as an intentional retreat. (Contin on back side.)

(1) David Ross and Rick Blackmon’s “Soul Care for Servants” workshop reported the results of their Fuller Institute of Church Growth research study in 1991 and other surveys in 2005 and 2006. (2) Francis A Schaeffer Institute of Church Leadership Development research studies in 1998 and 2006

Clay is addressing our financial needs by spending the majority of the summer in intentional Ministry Partner Development (aka fund raising). He will also be taking a course on Church History. (And for those wondering - yes, Clay will get to take a sabbatical sometime as well. If not next summer, the summer following will be for him!)

We pray that this summer would be a time of refreshment, renewal, and provision for us and our family. We desire to be in ministry for the long-haul, if God wills it. Please pray for us over the next few months as we pursue these things.

Ps - As I will be on sabbatical, Clay will be taking over our prayer letter. You may notice a change in formatting during this time.

Yours in Christ,

*Clay + Emily*

## FAMILY UPDATE

Elliott recently celebrated his 4th birthday and has officially finished his first year of pre-school! He currently loves cars of any kind, legos, playing outside, bugs, and being incredibly rambunctious. Judah is growing perfectly, and is picking up a variety of new words, his favorite of which seems to be “trucky!”

We also spent a week in Gatlingburg, Tennessee camping in Great Smoky Mountain National park along with our best friends (who we met in college through Cru!) It was a relaxing way to begin my sabbatical, and we enjoyed our time as a family exploring the beauty of the National Park.



## PRAISE + PRAYER REQUESTS

- Praise God for the gift of rest, recovery, family time and time with Him.
- Praise God for the way you and the rest of our ministry partners provided for Judah's medical bills. We are so grateful!
- Pray for our summer assignments - sabbatical and support raising - that the Lord would bless our intentions and our efforts.
- Please begin to pray for our ministry next year. Pray now especially for incoming freshmen. Pray that the Lord would begin to work in their hearts to prepare them, so that when we meet with them in the fall they are fertile soil for the Good News.