

Bryant Wright discusses the unique benefits, challenges of longtime pastorates

By Chloe Newton

Staff Writer

Bryant Wright, President of Send Relief, joined "Around the Table" podcast host Tanner Cade, MBCB Director of Communication Services, and guest host Sam Ivy, MBCB Director of Collegiate Ministries. Wright shared about his unique experiences as a longtime pastor and president of Send Relief.

Bryant Wright began his career as a businessman, then the Lord called him to ministry. After serving at Second Baptist Church, Houston, for two and a half years, Wright moved to plant Johnson Ferry Baptist Church in Marietta, Georgia, a now thriving church with two locations. Wright asked the Lord to allow him to stay at one church during his pastoring years. Turns out, that's exactly what the Lord had in mind, because Wright pastored at Johnson Ferry for 38 years.

"I saw visiting churches around the country that one common denominator of growing churches was long tenured pastors," Wright said. "It's not just meaningful in the trust you build in the local church. It's the trust in the community. People begin to look to you from outside the church in a lot of ways that surprises you just because of the longevity and associating you with that congregation."

The longtime pastor learned the pitfalls into which tenured pastors can fall, such as failing to dig deep into the Word of God and not letting go of things when the time comes.

"I just kept going through the scriptures and knowing I had to keep digging to stay fresh," Wright stated. "Then, you have to

let go. I loved student ministry and used to go on all the student ministry retreats. I was the children's minister, the youth minister. But I had to give those things up that I enjoyed to focus on the preaching role and the leadership role, and then zero in on the leaders of the church to pastor them, because you just have to multiply yourself through other people or you will hinder the growth of a church."

When asked about what advice he would give to young pastors, Wright began with the family. Recently, Wright celebrated 50 years of marriage to his wife and partner in ministry, Anne. However, the husband and father of three children mentioned the unique position into which the pastor's kids are placed.

"[Our kids] have shared in the last few years with us that they just felt this unspoken pressure of being the pastor's kid. Everybody felt they knew them, but they didn't know them. And because I was not a [pastor's kid], I wish that I'd had a greater sensitivity about that," Wright said.

Currently, Wright serves as the President of Send Relief. The Send Relief website describes the ministry as "a collaboration between the International Mission Board and North American Mission Board...the Southern Baptist one-stop shop for compassion ministry at home and abroad."

Send Relief focuses on five areas of ministry – strengthening communities, caring for refugees, protecting children and families, fighting human trafficking, and responding to crises.

"We are a gospel ministry, first of all. We can help hurting people on their journey to hell and miss the greatest need of their life, which is the gospel of Jesus Christ, salvation in Jesus Christ," Wright added.

To learn more about Send Relief, visit their website [About-Send Relief](#). To listen to the full "Around the Table" episode visit [Podcasts – Mississippi Baptist Convention Board](#)

(mcb.org).