

Transition to lead pastor requires scriptural guidance, sound counsel

*By Chloe Newton
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Cody Hensley, Lead Pastor of Twin Lakes Church, and Garrett Mills, Lead Pastor of Montgomery Church, joined "Around the Table" hosts Tanner Cade, MBCB Director of Communication Services, and Jon Martin, MBCB Chief Strategy Officer, to discuss the necessity of change and leadership in a large organization.

Transitioning into the lead pastor role comes with a series of unknowns. Cody Hensley, Pastor at Twin Lakes Church in Madison, and Garrett Mills, Pastor at Montgomery Church in Summit, recently made the leap from student ministry to pastoral ministry.

Hensley, originally from Oklahoma, was called to ministry during high school. After working in youth and family ministries for several years, the Lord called him to the lead pastor role at Twin Lakes Church.

Mills grew up in Neshoba County. As a youth, he became the unspoken intern for his church and was allowed to occasionally teach. After working with the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, he was called to First Church, Newton, where he was under the leadership of Senior Pastor Lee Thaler.

From the beginning of their calls to ministry, the Holy Spirit stirred in their hearts that one day the Lord would lead them to shepherd a flock.

"I went into seminary thinking I wanted to do student

ministry, but something about what I was learning really impressed my heart that the Lord was calling me to pastoral ministry... And so I felt like the Lord was also impressing on me to go into student ministry and just learn and to be developed by pastors to see things, how they worked," Hensley said.

"But then [Thaler] left and went back to his home church and that left us without a pastor. In that transition, I quickly became the most tenured person there, so a lot of people were looking to me and I got to preach a whole lot more. For whatever reason, I just feel like God's transitioning [me] to this specific role," Mills said.

Both men sought counsel from their community before seeking pastoral positions. They understood the importance of checking their hearts for any wrong intentions.

"You look at scripture too, the heart is deceitful and we all know that we can want things we shouldn't. We could want power when we're not ready or authority, when we're not ready," Hensley said.

As modeled in Scripture, those in leadership are to be affirmed by the local body. It is not an individual decision.

"I called about three or four guys that I was fairly close with that knew me. The main part was letting other people speak into that calling on my life to make sure it wasn't wanting a title or a position or anything like that, but other people saw that gifting in me as well and affirmed that I was ready for something like that," Mills said.

Having awareness of the young men in the church who are leading and serving is extremely important. These men could be the pastors of tomorrow.

"The faithful men don't get to identify themselves," Hensley said. "They have to be identified by the leadership. And so

having people be able to speak into your life and say, 'You're headed in this direction and we can see it, it's awesome.' It's critical, and it makes you want to pay it forward too as you look into the lives of young men to be able to make that for them."

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