

5 Myths and Realities of Bivocational Ministry

1. Bivocational Ministry Is Not Rare

Most of the pastors in the world are bivocational. Always have been. If you live and minister, in certain segments of the world where there are larger churches with full-time staffs, it's easy to start thinking of that as the normal church and pastor experience. It's not. It's fine, but it isn't normal. Bivocational ministry is how most of the world's Christians are pastored.

2. A Bivocational Pastor Is Not Half a Pastor

When 1 Timothy tells us "elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor," it's not because pastors are more important than others. It's because bivocationality was so universal for leaders in the early church that the believers were encouraged to give an extra blessing to those who were making such extraordinary sacrifices for the church body. Double the sacrifice, double the honor.

3. Bivocationality is not a Problem that Needs Fixing

The Apostle Paul was a bivocational pastor. In fact, some people still refer to bivocational pastors as tentmakers because it was Paul's profession. Obviously, Paul's ministry didn't need fixing. There's nothing "less than" about a bivocational ministry.

4. Bivocational Ministry Is Not Always Temporary

Many, maybe most of the bivocational pastors are not bivocational by choice, but out of necessity. And most are hoping it will be a very short temporary situation. But, just like many Small Church pastors expect their small size to be temporary, it often ends up being their regular state of ministry. We need to get used to the idea that bivocational ministry is more than a pit-stop along the way to full-time ministry.

5. Bivocational Pastoring Is Likely to Become the New Normal

Bivocational ministry may be a financial necessity for the survival of many small- to mid-sized churches in the coming years. That's always been true for many churches in small towns, but it's going to be more common in large population centers too. Demographic shifts and changes in why and how much people give will make bivocational ministry a necessity for many city and suburban churches if they hope to survive and thrive.

It's Time to Sing the Unsung Heroes

Bivocational ministry has always been with us. And it always will. In fact, some of the greatest heroes of the faith, like the Apostle Paul, were and are bivocational pastors. We'll never know most of their names. But we can learn a lot from their sacrificial examples.

They deserve our support, our prayer and our fellowship.

If you're BiVo, on behalf of the church I thank you for all you do.