

PastorCare

West Michigan
Helping Pastors Soar

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Older Pastor to Younger Pastor

By Pastor JR Pittman of Ignite Fellowship Church

1 Samuel 9:16

"About this time tomorrow I will send you a man from the land..."

I was at a crucial time in my life when things could have gone from bad to worse; but it was also a time when God was allowing me to go through what I call T.N.T (Testing & Training).

In August of 2005 I was just hired as an Associate Pastor of a church in West Michigan. This was the year I met John. John came to our church introducing his services for pastors. After hearing about his ministry it became obvious that God called John for such a service. Even though I didn't know much about PastorCare I truly believed in its divine purpose and mission. The reason I believed in John's ministry was due to my father being a pastor. I understand the pains, challenges and frustrations of pastors. The "Calling" takes its toll on the families of pastors; but little did I know that God's timing would be impeccable.



Pastor John Smith with Pastor JR Pittman
Ignite Fellowship Church (www.ignitegr.org)

Six months into my work it was discovered that the lead pastor was engaged in an affair. While the leadership of the church was dealing with the sting of this problem, I found myself in unfamiliar territory. I was new to the congregation as well as the denomination and didn't understand its government or protocols. I was a young African American pastor in a white suburban church surrounded by a church board who did not know me nor I them. I felt very much on my own, unaided, betrayed, and trapped.

It was a Monday morning and I remember sitting in my office and the church secretary announced to me that John Smith was waiting to see me in the lobby. Immediately I knew that God sent John for me for such a time as this. God knew this problem was coming and I would need a man like John to pour into me in such a difficult time.

John heard about the situation and came to see how I was doing. He took the time to listen to my heart and immediately knew how to pour into my cup. I remember sharing with him how I wanted out of the calling but he strongly encouraged me to endure. It was the “older pastor nurturing the younger pastor”. John lavished the simple yet profound wisdom that God gave him through his journey and experience. His guidance kept me following God’s purpose faithfully.

That guidance has continued for eight years. John has mentored me through two church plants. He has genuinely encouraged me, held me accountable and cheered me on as I follow the Lord’s calling. Yet, he graciously continues to challenge me with the most difficult questions that older pastors need to be delivering to younger pastors.

What John is doing is unorthodox, unpopular and rare in our present church culture. It’s basically called discipleship; but this is a discipleship for pastors. I am a true believer that younger pastors should be chasing older pastors but it’s a lost tradition that we need to return too. John is not just my friend or brother in Christ – John is my “Elder Pastor” who loves me and cares for me. He walks with me as a pastor to a pastor with my calling never being questioned when it comes to dealing with sin issues in my life. We need more “Johns” in the life of young pastors such as myself.



Pastor John Smith with Pastor JR and First Lady Evette Pittman, Ignite Fellowship Church

Please know that there will be a part 2 to this article that will go even deeper. I will describe a paradigm shift of discipleship for young pastors; John has been a huge part of walking with me in this unique methodology.

I praise God for my Elder Pastor, John Smith.



Sue and I depend on your prayer support and financial support to make our ministry possible. I invite you to prayerfully consider becoming **monthly financial supporters**. No amount is too small to be helpful.

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Mail to: **1632 Waterbury Dr. SE Grand Rapids, MI 49508.**

Sue and I thank you with all our hearts for your partnership with us!

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