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# Over 30 Pastors and Students Attend the Annual Pastors' School Hosted by GWU

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Office of University  
Communications

June 7, 2017

*Guests learn about “The Minister and Self-Care” From Several Speakers*

**By Emily Eidson ('18), GWU Intern for Communications**

Even pastors require a day of Sabbath. Self-care may seem like an obvious human need, but when you work at an around-the-clock job such as ministry, finding time to take care of yourself can become lost between the many tasks of leading a church.

a speaker at Pastors' School

Recently, pastors gathered at Gardner-Webb University for the annual Pastors' School, an educational retreat for pastors and students of ministry and theology. This year, the event focused on the topic, “The Minister and Self-Care.” Over the course of three days, attendees learned about topics such as the importance of finding rest, avoiding ministerial burnout, and balancing family-life and ministry.

Speakers at the School included Dr. Al Cadenhead, a recent ministry retiree and assistant vice president for church advancement in the Office of Church Relations at GWU, who has 46 years of experience as a pastor; Dr. Lamont Littlejohn, pastor at Mt. Calvary Baptist Church in Shelby, N.C.; and Rachel Hill, director of Supportive Services for Hospice of Cleveland County. The diversity of the speakers who attended the retreat offered a variety of perspectives, giving the attendees an opportunity to learn about each speaker's unique personal experience within ministry.

Activities such as the daily morning devotion, given by Dr. Tracy Jessup, senior minister of GWU, as well as group meals and free time for relaxation, gave guests a chance to meet, converse, and enjoy fellowship with other pastors and students.

The experiences shared by the speakers contained themes that are universal. A key subject at this year's event was bringing awareness to the importance of taking a mental

break. As Littlejohn described, serving others is a wonderful thing, but it requires a lot of self-exertion, and if one isn't careful, he or she will soon become "empty" much like he did in 2006, when he was on the verge of quitting ministry for good after years as a minister. "I was so worn out on 'doing,' described Littlejohn, "that I failed to simply 'be.'"

A pastor's job is not finished when the church doors close, and finding time for relaxation can be difficult, especially when the signs of fatigue go unnoticed. "I did not even realize how tired I was," Cadenhead explained during one of his presentations. "If we are to take better care of ourselves, we need to be aware of the dynamics that push us and often blind us."

Over 30 pastors and students from a variety of denominations and cities attended; however, it was not long before they realized just how much they had in common with the other participants by the end of the event. "It has made me realize that we are all in this together as ministers of the Gospel," an attendee described, "We are all in the same boat."

The participants look forward to returning to next year's event, which will once again be hosted by GWU in the summertime.

For more information about the Pastors' School, contact Lisa Hollifield at (704) 406-3855 or [lhollifield@gardner-webb.edu](mailto:lhollifield@gardner-webb.edu).

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