



Dear Friends,

Last year, RPC's staff team – Annette, Christyn, Kevin and I – spent three days together in the Blue Mountains for our annual staff retreat. Going on retreat helped us get to know each other better so that we work well and have fun as a team. Stepping outside of the hurly-burly of week-to-week ministry at RPC also gave us the time and space to devote to ministry training, reviewing our own ministries, and doing big picture thinking and planning.

Relocating for a few days from our usual environment also helped us to focus on doing things we often don't have the time for. Being in a different space also facilitates creative thinking.

We get to do the same again between 1st and 3rd September. Thanks to the generosity of a couple at church, we will stay in a house in Katoomba. We are also grateful to our families for releasing us, especially Jenny and Adam, who will look after the kids while Kevin and Christyn are away with the team.

What have we got planned for our retreat this time around?

Kevin will lead a discussion on a book, *Embodied*, by Preston Sprinkle. It's a book about transgenderism from a biblical, cultural and pastoral perspective. It's vital that we read books on contemporary issues so that we are clear headed about what the Bible has to say and are pastorally sensitive as we teach and relate to those who face these issues.

We will begin each day with time in God's word in 2 Corinthians. Paul's second letter to the Corinthians has much to say about the challenges of ministry. We will focus on the start of the letter where Paul talks from his own experience about how difficult Christian ministry can be, and that pastors like us must act with integrity. We need to be constantly reminded that Christian ministry is more than a job where you "clock on" and "clock off." Ministry comes wrapped in the package of the life of the pastor. There is no clocking off from being godly.

We will plan and think about our respective ministries so that what each of us does aligns with what God is doing, and wants to do at RPC. The staff team are servants of the church. We don't only do what most excites us, or what we're best at doing. Of course, we do lots of things like that. For example, I love preaching and spending time catching up with people over a cuppa. But we also want to serve in those areas that God wants us to, where the church needs us most, so that RPC is a united church that knows Christ and grows in spiritual maturity. Ephesians 4:11-13 says:

So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

We will pray. We will pray for the Lord's work and people at RPC, for the lost the Lord wants to save through RPC, and that we will serve faithfully, lovingly, skilfully and prayerfully. And we plan to enjoy our surrounds, share meals and have fun.

So, please pray for us. Pray that the Holy Spirit will empower and excite us for ministry at RPC, and for wisdom for how we can best serve the Lord and you, his people, to the praise of his glory and grace.

God Bless.

Mark Adams