

## A Mutual Friend Referral

True friends know when to make a referral to a mutual friend. That's how I received the help I needed from the right person, when I needed it most. I didn't know who to turn to for help and wisdom, but my friend did. I am always honored and thankful when one of my friends, makes a referral to me, to help one of their friends. A mutual friend referral to PastorCare West Michigan, came at exactly the right time for Michael and Pamela.

I asked Michael if he and Pamela would be willing to share some of their story as an endorsement for our ministry with PastorCare, and a message of encouragement to everyone who reads our Newsletters. They graciously agreed.

*My wife Pamela and I were introduced to John at PastorCare in early 2017 through a mutual friend. Our circumstance was somewhat unique as I had been in a career in law enforcement for over 15 years at the time we met. I had also been in leadership at our church community for several years. Our previous pastor suddenly passed away leaving a hole in the leadership within the community. To fill the vacancy of not having a full-time pastor, we as Elders shared the responsibility of the weekly teachings within the community. As time went on, I had the opportunity to leave the career I loved and worked so passionately in for so long and begin a new chapter in full time ministry as the full-time pastor.*



*The struggle with this decision was weighing heavily on both Pamela and me as we both perceived my role as a police officer as a ministry as well. It was a career that had supported our family of six and I loved going into work every day with the opportunity to be a part of bringing Kingdom principles into the world through that role. On the other hand, I also thoroughly enjoyed studying the word of God and teaching what I learned through that study to the community we were a part of. I was just as passionate about that ministry as I was about my career in law enforcement. This was a very difficult and weighty*

decision that was going to affect not only myself, but my spouse and our four children in a significant way. Our heart's desire was to make the right decision and pursue the direction God "wanted" us to go. After many months of prayer and seeking God's face in this decision, Pamela and I felt we were not experiencing any clarity at all in which direction to go. This is when we were introduced to John Smith at PastorCare.

Pamela, myself and John met in his office for several hours. John did what he does best, listened! He listened to our situation, our struggle in making this decision, our struggle in a lack of clarity in knowing which direction God "desired" or "wanted" us to go in. Were we missing something? Were we not listening or hearing God in what direction he might be leading us to go in? We were so intent on knowing that we had to choose one of the options and expressed fear in what might happen if we make the wrong choice and not being in God's will for us. After several hours of us pouring out our hearts to John and our desire to make the "right" choice, John gave us some of the most valuable advice Pamela and I ever received.

John challenged us in our perception that we had to make the "right" decision and if we didn't, we would be outside of God's will as we expressed a degree of guilt about possibly making the wrong decision. In that challenge, John made us aware that God's will is not always just one small tiny dot, and that if we are not exactly on that small tiny dot by making the "right" decision, we could not possibly be inside of God's will. God has given us free will, and in that, we may have several choices at any given point in our lives where no matter what choice we make, we can still be inside of God's will. Pursuing the Kingdom of God here in this present world as a police officer, or pursuing the Kingdom of God here as a full-time pastor can both be inside of God's will for His Kingdom. In John's challenge to us, we were able to see that God is much bigger than either of these choices, He is about His Kingdom, and He partners with us, His children, to be a part of bringing the principles of that Kingdom to this world in order to glorify Him and His son, Jesus Christ. We experienced freedom in understanding that no matter what choice we made, we were not making a possible "wrong" choice that would bring guilt upon us if we made it. He challenged us in that whatever decision we made, God is big enough to fill in the gap of whatever direction we chose not to pursue. This was humbling, and freeing at the same time.

Pamela and I ultimately came to the conclusion that I would stay in my career as a police officer, and continue to pursue God's Kingdom in that role. God has been so faithful to us in that decision, both in respect to my role in law enforcement and to the church community we were a part of at that time.

John, through his role at PastorCare was such a blessing for our family. There is no doubt that God has used him and the giftings that he has to give wisdom, perspective, support, and so much more to individuals who are pursuing God's Kingdom here in this present world in many different capacities. Pamela and I have been so grateful to God for connecting us with John and PastorCare and pray that He uses this ministry in His Kingdom to provide the support many in pastoral leadership need.

Blessings,  
Michael and Pamela



**Thank you for your prayers and financial contributions!**

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**Pastor John Smith, President, Chief Encouragement Officer, Confidential Coach**

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