



I dropped out of Bible school, thinking God couldn't use me in pastoral or camp ministry because I feared public speaking. Then my pastor asked if I had considered becoming a pastor.

I said, "No! You got the wrong guy."

Later, I asked myself, "What does he see in me that I don't?"



One year later, I asked him if the position was still available. The question never left me from the day he asked. I was worried that I might miss out on the opportunity of serving the Lord if I said no to Him.

Rural ministry was exactly where God wanted me. He led my family to Village Missions and Marysville Community Church.

A Rural Pastor and Pastor's Wife

One of my early ministry goals was to launch a men's ministry program. Men's ministry had helped turn my life 180 degrees and caused me grow in my faith—and helped prepare me to be a pastor.

The men's ministry in Marysville took a few years to establish and began with two men. Now we have a group of 6-10 who come faithfully every two weeks for breakfast and Bible study.

This ministry has overflowed into our community as we participate in Marysville Daze. We have a BBQ in front of the church, creating conversations with people attending park events across the street.

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Another way I'm involved in the community is through men's hockey. I play goalie for three local teams throughout the winter. I've had many conversations with other players about the church and faith. A few men have watched my sermons online and come to church.

Laura is also building strong relationships within the community. For example, she watches our neighbors' special needs daughter once a week. We have an autistic daughter, so Laura knows how to connect with and love those with special needs. She has formed a close bond with this girl, and we see God working in her family.

Rural ministry offers many opportunities.

Pace: Rural ministry will have a slower pace than urban ministry. Don't rush through things. Learn how to adapt to the culture like Paul in the epistles, and in due time, those projects and ministries will come to fruition.



Space: There's no better place to raise a family than in the country, whether in the prairies, mountains or on the coast.

Community Feel: Small communities are proud of their area. For example, the East Kootenays in B.C. are an outdoor enthusiast's dream with places to hike, fish, ski, bike, and camp. Our family enjoys forming friendships through these activities.

We have had many kind, hospitable neighbors over the years. We try to be that kind of neighbor, too, and point them to our hope in Christ (1 Peter 3:15).

Rural ministry is vital ministry. No matter where we live, people need the Lord (Romans 10:13)! I've learned that the key is loving the people and God's Word. Shepherding the people of God anywhere is an immense privilege, but I'm thankful the Lord placed us in a rural context.

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After completing a 2-year internship through Contenders Discipleship Initiative in Gold River, B.C., Joe & Laura LeTourneau moved to Kimberley, B.C. in 2016. They've been serving Marysville Community Church for nine years. They have been married for 19 years and have two teenagers.



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