

Jason Atchley: The home is the primary place for family ministry

October 16, 2019

Jason Atchley has been the lead pastor of [Bacon Heights Baptist Church](#) in Lubbock since 2015 and is the second vice president of the Baptist General Convention of Texas. From deep in the heart of one Texan, he shares his background and thoughts on church and ministry. To suggest a Baptist General Convention of Texas-affiliated minister to be featured in this column, or to apply to be featured yourself, [click here](#).

Background

Where else have you served in ministry, and what were your positions there?

Prior to arriving at Bacon Heights Baptist Church, I served as discipleship and family pastor at First Baptist Church in Decatur, student pastor at First Baptist Church in Round Rock, student pastor at First Baptist Church in Canyon, youth and music minister at First Baptist Church in Hamlin, and youth and music minister at Jonesboro Baptist Church in Jonesboro.

Where did you grow up?

I grew up in Midland and was a part of the faith family at Crestview Baptist Church.

How did you come to faith in Christ?

I came to faith in Christ at church camp when I learned that faith in Christ

was not tribal faith. I grew up with amazing Christian parents, and we were heavily involved in our local church. I simply thought going to church and having parents who love Jesus meant I could go to heaven. After riding the coattails of my parents faith for 11 years, I gave my life to Christ at the age of 12 and received his grace and mercy, and my life has never been the same.

Where were you educated, and what degrees did you receive?

I am blessed to have received an outstanding education and represent two of our best Baptist universities. I hold a Bachelor of Arts degree in religious education from Howard Payne University. I received my Master of Divinity and Doctor of Ministry degrees from Hardin-Simmons University.

Ministry life

Why do you feel called into ministry?

I feel called into ministry to serve the local church and to equip families to reach the next generation of leaders and ministers and leave a legacy of faith.

What is your favorite aspect of ministry? Why?

My favorite aspect of ministry is proclaiming God's word through preaching and teaching. I believe God's word is powerful and applicable to every situation we encounter. Having the privilege and enormous responsibility to share truth from the Bible is exhilarating but also scary.

What one aspect of ministry gives you the greatest joy?

My greatest joy is working with the amazing team of ministers at Bacon

Heights.

What one aspect of ministry would you like to change?

I would love to change the aspect that pastors have it all together and so do their families. I don't know how to change this, but I know being a pastor puts a lot of pressure and stress on one's spouse and children.

How has your ministry or your perspective on ministry changed?

My ministry has changed simply by changing roles, but my perspective on ministry has changed from seeing the church as the primary place for families to viewing the home as the primary place for families. I am a huge believer in the [D6 movement](#)—from Deuteronomy—and the partnership shared between the local church and the home, what we call the “Domestic Church.”

About Baptists

What are the key issues facing Baptists—denominationally and/or congregationally?

Two key issues I see are, first, women and ministry and clearly defining their importance and value in the life of the local church, and second, speaking into and getting involved in the immigration crisis. The church is the answer!

What would you change about the Baptist denomination—state, nation or local?

Dr. David Hardage has done an amazing job telling the story of Texas Baptists, but I pray for the day when Texas returns to one state convention.

About Jason

Who were/are your mentors, and how did/do they influence you?

I am beyond blessed to have been influenced and mentored by men I consider giants of our faith and denomination.

My father, Richard Atchley, is by far my greatest mentor. He always has provided me sound wisdom and advice.

Jon Randles spoke life into my ministry and gave me the courage to stand on principle.

Dr. David Lowrie modeled how gentleness and kindness can conquer any conflict.

Dr. Gary Gramling and Dr. George Gaston taught me how to be transparent and honest in speech, action and emotion.

What did you learn on the job you wish you learned in seminary?

I wish the business aspect of ministry was taught in our seminaries and the different financial information required to lead the church. Managing the budget and financial stewardship would be helpful to young ministers.

What is the impact of ministry on your family?

The impact is hard on all families, and pastors must protect their families' time and privacy. Establishing boundaries will help soften the blow on spouses and kids.

Other than the Bible, name some of your favorite books or authors, and explain why.

The Cost of Discipleship by Dietrich Bonhoeffer and most works by him are treasures of mine. His love for the church and ability to learn and express joy despite his circumstances is incredible.

Canoeing the Mountains by Tod Bolsinger is a fantastic book on leadership. Everything rises and falls on leadership and providing organizational leadership is critical.

Church + Home by Mark Holmen is a great resource on how to establish a viable family ministry.

What is your favorite Bible verse or passage? Why?

My favorite Bible verse is Isaiah 7:9b which says, “If you do not stand firm in your faith, then you will not stand at all.”

I think it is the challenge all of us need and the reminder that our faith, not our political talking points, is where we stand.