

HPU: The final countdown

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As the end of the semester approaches and I talk to students, the main concern is how many finals are left and when they leave for summer. The students are all reaching the final countdown, where all they see ahead is the end.



Kim Garner I'm wrapping up my time as a campus ministry intern, and I'm on the final countdown, too. As I sit in the office, watching students moving heavy bags and shoving everything into their cars, I have to sit and reflect on the year and the lessons I have learned. It is hard to sum up all that I have learned about myself and about ministries through my campus internship, but there are some things I will never forget.

I learned that just because you love something doesn't mean it will always be easy and fun. When I entered my first semester as campus intern, I thought that because I loved Baptist Student Ministry and loved people, the job would be all sunshine and flowers. That's not the way it works. Lesson No. 1: Ministry isn't always fun. I know that seems like a given, but I thought that I would love every single day of my job.

The need to push through

When I was tired and frustrated the first semester, there were days when I didn't love it, and that was disappointing. But I learned it's OK, even in ministry. I am still human, and there are days I still don't want to get up or deal with people. The challenge comes in accepting that and dealing with the day anyway. God pushed me to get over it and deal with people and things that came up, even though I wasn't in the mood.

Second life lesson was that even though I'm called to push through days, there are times when a break is absolutely necessary for my well-being and to keep sane. I learned this the hard way. I thought that because I was in ministry, I had to be at everything and available for anything that anyone might ever need, any time of the day. "No" is a small word that becomes extremely difficult to say at times, and it caused me some hard times by refusing to use it. I have never understood the need for a Sabbath more than this year, and sadly, I never really took advantage of it.

The need for a break

There are times and circumstances when people need you right then, but there are also times when things can wait. We all need a day to do things that are relaxing or sometimes do absolutely nothing at all. I could really begin to tell when I was overworking and pushing myself over the edge, and sadly, I just kept going. So in the future, I plan to say "no" sometimes and take time to recover from the chaos that is our lives.

So, my career with Baptist Student Ministry ends, at least for now, and the completion of graduate school awaits. If it's God's plan, maybe I will be back on a college campus later, hanging out with students. But I know that the lessons I learned this year go farther than the campus I am on and into my everyday life—no matter what the job. As I look back, I wouldn't change anything about this year. Sure, there are things I wish I had learned faster or done differently, but the overall experience has been amazing.

Kim Garner served [Go Now Missions](#) as a campus ministry intern at Howard Payne University.