

Future Planning Webinar #1
Spiritual: Shifting from “Working” to “Contributing”

Thank you for your interest and participation today. You represent the significant diversity of our NWD leaders. Some of you are retired pros – role models and mentors. Others are years from retirement and want to plan well. Some of you may be in a transition from carrying a full load toward fewer responsibilities. In the discussion breakouts you can address your situation.

Let’s start with a brief overview of these six webinars. First, we will identify the top areas of interest for NWD ministers as they think about the future. Second, we will make a short presentation on one of the topics. Third, you will discuss questions with a few other participants in a breakout group. Finally, we will wrap up with shared discoveries and recommended resources. Ann and I will each take the lead on various sessions.

We are Ann and Jared Roth, Foursquare planters and pastors for 47 years. We retired three years ago from Evergreen Christin Center in Hillsboro, OR. As part of our participation on the Third/Third team Ann recently completed a Harvard Medical College Certificate course by Dr. Waldinger called *Building a Life of Wellness: The Science of Fostering Happiness and Health Span*. Jared is a certified professional retirement coach and a licensed financial advisor. Most importantly, we are fellow adventures with you on the path of Third/Third season discovery.

As we talked with Foursquare leaders about “Retirement” we heard these comments: I still have fire in my tank. I still have vision. My gifts and calling have not changed. I love what I’m doing! I am still effective. No one is asking me to go. I don’t know what I would do. The church isn’t ready. I haven’t found my successor. I’m not financially prepared.

What if we shifted the topic from “retirement” to one of Jesus’ favorite topics - Freedom?

1. *If the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed John 8:3.*
2. *Jesus went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil. A 10:38*
3. What if we shift our focus from “retire” to “free to do good.”

How does this sound as a future state? *“I am an Elder who is free to do good without needing anything in return.”* When would you like to be free in that way? What areas are you not “free” in?

We believe that planning for your future is about being free. Free to be a steward of your gifts and callings without the need for role, remuneration, or reciprocation.

The Third/Third and NWD team conducted four surveys of licensed ministers. We wanted to identify top interests of those 50 years of age and older. You were clear about these six topics: spiritual, mental/emotional, social, physical, financial, and timing.

The purpose of these webinars is to: *Equip ministers to be spiritually faithful, emotionally healthy, socially connected, physically strong, and financially free.* What we mean by “retirement” is being “Free to serve without needing money, roles or an organizational platform”. Our six sessions:

- 1 Spiritual – Shifting from working to contributing
 - 2 Mental – Emotional: Navigating inner changes
 - 3 Social: Connection is crucial
 - 4 Physical: Taking care of your tent
 - 5 Financial: Preparing for a generous future
 - 6 Timing: Discerning when it is good for God, the church, and me
- Today we tackle the first area: Spiritually Preparing for Retirement.

To experience Spiritual well-being, we need spiritual vitality and purpose. One way to state this is, *“My purpose is to grow and give, stewarding my gifts and callings”*. Retirement isn’t just about money; it’s also about purpose, meaning, and contribution.

It may require an identity shift. Ministry often defines who we are. Retirement invites us to ask, “Who am I without my job?” It takes courage to name the challenges which may include loss of identity, loss of routine, fear of irrelevance.

These are some challenges of Identity Shift:

- For many, work = identity (“What do you do?” defines us).
- Retirement can feel like a loss—loss of status, rhythm, purpose, and opportunity.
- Transition is an invitation to rediscover being over doing.
- Continuing stewardship of gifts and discovering fresh calling without a platform or role may require creativity and self-initiative.
- Ask yourself this question: “Who am I beyond my role or ministry”?

Consider a shift from thinking about work to focusing how you want to contribute to a variety of areas. How can you shift from a “working” mindset to a “contributing” mindset?

Our goal has two parts: 1. We want to keep growing in Jesus and, 2. We want to be good stewards of our gifts and fresh callings without needing a role or organizational platform.

First, growing in Jesus - Story of keeping fresh spiritually

My mom who is 96 years old, has lived with us for 28 years. A nurse for 50 years while raising six children, she has provided a front row seat for us on what it means to move from working to contributing with Jesus leading the way. In retirement, she has continued to grow and positively contribute. In her 80’s she was still serving at community outreach events, providing in-home care for siblings, inviting people to church, encouraging friends over lunch dates and making new ones! She has adjusted her time with Jesus to include meditation using an app to help with that and following her Bible reading plan. She is just now considering changing from reading to listening to the Bible via an audio version.

Whatever season of life I am in, one thing, one main focus remains—to follow Jesus, to listen to Him and learn from Him. I engage with Him about life, relationships, provision, purpose, the challenges, the joys, all the stuff that comes my way and to embrace His path through it with His direction and help. Two things that help with that!

Be a learner – this means we choose an open mind set...I say choose because sometimes that is necessary. Three years into our retirement and my latest reads (besides daily Bible reading & novels) are:

Practicing the Way of Jesus- John Mark Comer

The Deeply Formed Life – Rich Villodas

A Teachable Spirit – AJ Swoboda

Remember the experience Jesus' three best friends had on the Mount of Transfiguration? They had an incredible experience seeing Jesus conversing with some of their heroes in the faith from the past (Elijah & Moses). They wanted to camp there –what happened? A cloud covered them and a voice said, this is my Son, whom I love with Him I am well pleased. Listen to Him.

Don't camp on past great experiences! Choose an open mind set that continues to listen to and learn from Jesus for the season ahead.

Jared and I each thought the other would never retire! As I was listening to Jesus about our retirement, I heard the Lord say, "Come play with me". Play is a wonderful word, one we usually associate with children! Play is doing something for the sheer joy of it. Jesus was inviting me to play with Him, interact with Him, spend time with Him for the sheer joy of it, approach life with more childlikeness less "production" and I said yes! I am loving it!

Be optimistic: We can choose to look for the good God is doing in His big world. It was said of Jesus that He went about doing good and healing all those oppressed by the devil. (Acts 10:38) We want to look for the good God is up to around us. It can be easy to become bitter, disappointed, or pessimistic if we focus on the negative things happening. (retired does not have to mean grouchy!) Jared and I get to remain part of the church we retired from...what a joy it is to be the cheerleaders for our pastors, to embrace the changes that they implement, and look for all the good God is doing in the midst of it!

Second, using gifts to make contributions - Story of Sprout Digital

Retirement may be a new calling offering new ways to contribute through our gifts. Retirement is not just the "end of work" but can be the beginning of a new calling.

Breakout Group Discussion

As you are moved into a discussion group be prepared to give a 15 second self-introduction: Name. Location. Current role. You will find discussion questions in the chat

box. Jump in and share your thoughts. In 20 minutes, you will be back in this large group and we'll take a few minutes to hear great insight from a few groups.

Discussion Questions:

1. How will I (or have I) engaged with Jesus about when I retire or my retirement?
2. How do I want to (or, currently) share my gifts, time, and wisdom in this new chapter?
3. When you imagine(d) retirement, what excites(ed) you most and what worries(ed) you most?

Invite a participant from each breakout to share one key takeaway.

Closing reflection and prayer. *"Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus". Phil. 3:14*

This isn't a call to ignore your past but to refuse to let it define your future. Loosen your grip on old identities. Paul invites us to fix our eyes on Jesus and toward the calling God has for us. Now is the time to renew your sense of purpose. Let your focus not be shaped by who you were, but who God is creating you to be.

Three Resources to highlight from the Lattice [*Host post these titles and link to the Lattice in chat*]

[From Strength to Strength by Arthur Brooks, 2022.](#) In the second half of life, we can find great satisfaction and happiness. We can go from strength to strength using both our strengths and weaknesses to give us purpose.

[The Gift of Years: Growing Older Gracefully by Joan Chittister, 2008.](#) *The Gift of Years* reframes aging as a liberating and transformative period of life, challenging societal myths about decline and encouraging readers to see later years as an opportunity for profound personal growth and spiritual enrichment.

[Retirement Devotional: Biblical Wisdom for Life After Work by Robert Laura, 2021.](#) This devotional offers biblical insights and reflections to help individuals find purpose, meaning, and spiritual strength in their retirement years.