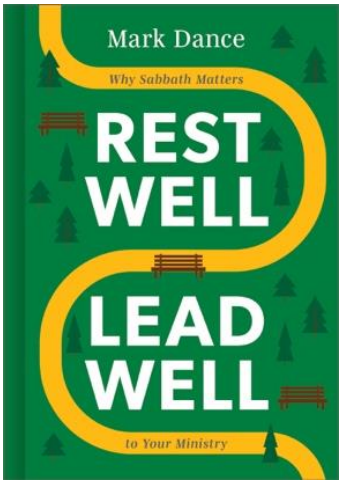
"Rest Well, Lead Well" by Mark Dance
Publication Date: June 02, 2026
Media Contact: marissa.sullivan@lifeway.com

'Rest Well, Lead Well' challenges myth that faithfulness requires exhaustion



BRENTWOOD, Tenn., April 1, 2026 — Almost 3 in 5 pastors (57%) say their role is frequently overwhelming, according to Lifeway Research. And managing their time and finding time to rest are particularly challenging for pastors.

In a culture that rewards exhaustion and celebrates nonstop productivity, "Rest Well, Lead Well: Why Sabbath Matters to Your Ministry" offers a timely and provocative invitation: stop. Written by longtime ministry leader Mark Dance, this book reframes Sabbath not as a luxury or an antiquated rule but as a critical leadership discipline for anyone who wants to finish well.

According to the Greatest Needs of Pastors study from Lifeway Research, 64% of pastors admit they need to practice consistency in taking a Sabbath, and 55% say they find avoiding over-commitment and overwork to be challenging in their ministry.

Drawing from three decades of pastoral ministry, national ministry leadership experience and his own hard-earned lessons with burnout and depression, Dance speaks candidly to pastors and ministry leaders who feel stretched thin, spiritually depleted or trapped in an unsustainable pace. With theological depth, personal storytelling and practical wisdom, "Rest Well, Lead Well" challenges the myth that faithfulness requires exhaustion and argues instead that rest is an act of trust, obedience and resilience.

This is not a time-management book or a call to work less out of convenience. It is a leadership message rooted in Scripture and lived experience, offering a hopeful alternative to burnout culture and a compelling vision for long-term faithfulness.

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To request an interview, please contact Marissa Sullivan at marissa.sullivan@lifeway.com or 615.933.5996.

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ABOUT MARK DANCE

Mark Dance is the executive director of the Arkansas Baptist Convention. He pastored and planted churches for 30 years before leading pastoral ministries at GuideStone and Lifeway. Dance earned degrees from Howard Payne University (BBA), SWBTS (M.Div) and SBTS (D.Min). He is the author of "Rest Well, Lead Well" and "Start To Finish" and a contributor to several other books. Mark and Janet have two adult children and live in Conway, Arkansas.

TALKING POINTS AND INTERVIEW ANGLES

- **Ministry burnout:** why exhaustion has been normalized in ministry and why Scripture never endorses it
- **Sabbath as leadership strategy:** Sabbath as self-leadership rather than self-care
- **Pastors and mental health:** Dance's experience with pastoral fatigue, depression and isolation
- **Why "balance" is the wrong goal:** why "balance" is a myth and rhythm is a more biblical and realistic framework
- **Leadership longevity in a burnout culture:** how leaders can stay faithful for decades without sacrificing their soul, family or health

POSSIBLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- What first convinced you Sabbath wasn't optional for leaders but essential?
- How did your own experience with burnout and depression reshape the way you lead?
- How can leaders tell the difference between healthy sacrifice and unhealthy self-neglect?
- Why do you say Sabbath is more about trust than time management?
- How does practicing Sabbath actually make leaders more effective, not less productive?
- What are the warning signs a leader is moving from healthy drive to unsustainable pace?
- What would you say to a leader who feels guilty resting?
- If a leader wanted to start practicing Sabbath this week, what's the first step you'd recommend?
- What does it look like to finish well in ministry, and how does Sabbath make it possible?

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