

EQUIP:SMC20

“The busiest people in ministry are single staff pastors.” Dr. Larry White spoke those words to me when I was serving as pastor of a smaller membership church in Conway over ten years ago. Pastors, who are the only staff members at their church, are often responsible for everything from preaching the sermons and driving the church van, to printing the bulletins and taking out the trash. Anyone who has pastored a smaller membership church can testify that fewer members do not equate to fewer responsibilities. Over half of the Southern Baptist churches in Arkansas are smaller membership congregations running 150 or less on an average Sunday. The vast majority of those are led by single staff pastors, many of whom serve bi-vocationally. From the pulpit to the pew, life is busy. Can I get an amen?! Life for those serving in ministry is even busier, especially for those who serve in bi-vocational and single staff ministries. EQUIP:SMC20 is designed with the busy, smaller membership ministry couple in mind.

EQUIP:SMC20 is a one day conference designed to encourage and equip those serving in smaller membership churches. The opportunity to fellowship and talk life and ministry with those serving in a similar context can be really encouraging. Couple this time of fellowship with practical and insightful teaching and you have the aim of this conference. Bi-vocational pastors are some of the true heroes in the Arkansas Baptist State Convention. Dr. Sonny Tucker, and all who serve at the ABSC, wants the smaller membership and bi-vocational ministers of Arkansas to know they are valued, appreciated, and loved. The EQUIP:SMC20 conference is offered for those serving in these smaller membership ministries as a cooperative effort of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, Williams Baptist University, and the local associations of Northeast Arkansas.

EQUIP:SMC20 will offer teaching sessions for the pastor on sermon prep, pastoral ministry, and how to develop a culture of evangelism in your church. The pastors' wives will enjoy sessions led by Mrs. Joy Norman, the wife of Williams Baptist University President, Dr. Stan Norman. A time of fellowship with a light continental breakfast will begin at 8:30 a.m. in the Maddox Center common area, and the conference will begin at 9:00 a.m. with a time of worship led by Larry Grayson of the ABSC. Childcare for smaller children will be provided by the Baptist Collegiate Ministry students of Williams Baptist University, and lunch will be provided by the ABSC. While at lunch together, a discussion panel consisting of associational missionaries, WBU professors, and ABSC personnel will discuss some of the challenges of smaller membership congregations and address questions asked by conference attendees. The day will end with a special time led by retired ABSC executive director Don Moore. Dr. Moore will discuss how to enjoy a lifetime of ministry and will lead the group in a time of focused prayer for the ministry families and churches represented at the conference. For more information about the conference and to register you can click [here](#). We hope you will make plans to join us for EQUIP:SMC20, and also help us spread the word about the conference to others serving in smaller membership and bi-vocational ministries. We look forward to seeing you Saturday, February 8 at Williams Baptist University for EQUIP:SMC20.