

PEOPLE OF PTS



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Every journey begins somewhere.

Keith Sandell's journey as the 2015 Valentour Fellowship recipient began in conversation with fellow PTS students and prior year's travel award recipients Brian Lays '15 and Brendan Ashley '16. The more stories Keith heard from them, the more interested he grew. Keith became curious about the global church and what ways churches in the United States could learn from them.

So off went Keith for two months—to India, Ethiopia, Niger, Burkina Faso, and Brazil, where he focused his studies on pastoral leadership across cultures. He observed how pastors use their time and how they interact with their congregations, and he gained insight into the pastor's vision of what they do.

A major realization for Keith was their focus on spirituality. "Virtually every pastor I spoke to spent some time in prayer every day. For many of them it was a very specific time they would devote to prayer. It wasn't ever, 'I pray when I get to it today,' but rather 'every morning at 8,' or 'half an hour before going to bed.'"

Keith also asked the pastors what were the three most important traits or skills a person needed for ministry. He was expecting a response that highlighted similar characteristics to those emphasized in the US context: being a good preacher, a good teacher, and having good administrative skills.

"What I found was virtually none of the global pastors said those things. They said pastors have to pray a lot, they have to love God, love the people, and be humble."

These global pastors also said that we must have a greater expectation that God is at work and God is going to show up in our daily lives. "They had a greater understanding that God was doing something in the neighborhood and their church," says Keith.

One cannot embark on a journey like this without being changed. It motivated Keith to deepen his prayer life. "Ministry and a strong relationship with God are contingent upon God's constant guidance through prayer."

Keith also seeks to be more aware of God's presence. "The people I met on the trip would see God in everyday experiences. They had the expectation that God was at work in their neighborhood and was going to show up."

Keith's journey has only just begun.

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