



Sixteen months ago I received a phone call from Peru. Not knowing who it was, I inquisitively answered wondering what it might be about. Pastor William Evaristo introduced himself and shared the burden that he had for the health of pastors and their spouses who were struggling deeply in his country. We began to pray!

God answered those prayers and on January 20-28 we held a Pastoral Couples Conference outside of Lima, Peru for over 150 pastors and spouses. They came from 10 different regions all around Peru, from different church organizations, young and seasoned, urban and rural. Our goal was to encourage, equip and engage these couples so they could finish well in their marriages and ministries.



Encourage – So many pastoral couples feel isolated from others and give so much time and energy to their ministries, that they can fail to care for their own marriage and family as they



would like. Getting away from their everyday routines and creating intentional time and space to seek the Lord together as a couple again, was a refreshing encouragement, a special gift and a renewed beginning that was expressed by so many who attended.

One wife expressed it this way. *"It was like I was crawling through the desert, just trying to make it through. My strength was failing and I was parched with thirst for God and our marriage. This week was like making it to an oasis and being refreshed. Thank you."*



Another couple wrote, *"The presence of God healed the wounds of our hearts, fortified our relationship, showed us His great love, His mighty power and wisdom in building up pastoral families and the importance of making time to commune with God as a couple (praying, devotions, worship, etc.). We thank God for this beautiful time together and appreciate the effort that the pastors made to come to our country to be a blessing for other pastors and wives."*

One pastor wrote, *"Sometimes ministry and our secular work drowns us and the remaining time for each other is very short. My wife and I very much appreciate the wise and practical counsel we received. Personally, I have learned to listen more to my wife and be more transparent with her than before."*

Couples had time to pray together, sit and discuss critical issues in their marriages and families together, meet with others who were struggling with similar challenges and be strengthened by God's Word through practical teaching.



Equip – Throughout the large group sessions our teaching team emphasized the importance of keeping Christ first in our lives, marriages, families and ministries, even in the hard times. Believe it or not, sometimes in the hustle and bustle of life and ministry, even this simple truth can get blurred for pastors and spouses.



Will affirmed the importance of our calling to ministry and led sessions on examining our inner life. Marie did an excellent job reminding everyone of God's work each day through her contribution to media support. Sid and Zane taught a practical session on using illustrations as tools for teaching both children and adults. Everyone loved it! Diana and Rick taught on some practical ways to keep marriage strong; true love, a common vision, communication, priorities and forgiveness.



One couple wrote, "For us, this time to listen to the messages from the Word of God was very helpful and a blessing. There are many things that refreshed my mind to keep going in the work of the Lord. My wife shared with me how she is thankful to God for the teaching and how it spoke to her heart to care for our marriage and continue serving in God's work because we are foreigners and sojourners in this world."

Another wrote, "Through the conference, I learned to value my wife, care for her, love her and pray together. I learned that Christ is supreme above everything and He is sufficient. I learned about the five love languages to express with my wife, children and neighbors."





One pastor wrote, "We were blessed by the expositors who were experienced in the topics and especially in living them out. This allowed them to give advice and model not just the principles, but also in the application. We were also blessed by the romantic dinner. Super excellent!!"



Engage - When we bring together pastoral couples from a variety of backgrounds we always see how God enriches their time together as they learn from one another and build new relationships. Then, as they integrate what they are learning, they get excited to go back to their families and churches and teach them what they have been learning - multiplication.

One pastor wrote, "I give glory to the Lord for this event because He allowed me to get to know new servants and friends and to share experiences in life and needs that grew my faith in the Lord. My thankfulness to everyone who made this possible. Glory to God!"



A couple wrote, "We want to thank God for permitting us to come to the pastoral couples retreat because we have found extraordinary marriage tools to strengthen couples. At the same time, we have had time to interact with other couples from different parts of Peru and Lima and had time to evaluate our marriage. We have learned about how we are doing communicating with each other, priorities, our physical



relationship, motivation with our words and establishing boundaries in our lives. All of which summarizes the equipping we have received with tools that help us stay on the right path."

There was one response that echoed throughout our closing time of communion together, **"God is good!"** We are so grateful for the tremendous work of Pastor William, his wife Ruth, and the organizational team from both Doulos and Misiún Bautista International. They did a fantastic job! We are also super thankful for all of those who prayed for us and gave sacrificially to make this possible. Thank you!

[Read more about the trip and comments from the couples....](#)