

Megachurch Pastor Dino Rizzo Takes Sabbatical Citing a 'Spiritually Depleted State'

Dino Rizzo, the pastor of one of the largest churches in the Baton Rouge metro, is stepping away from the pulpit for a season.

"I have not felt myself, spiritually, physically or emotionally for several months now," says Rizzo, senior pastor of Healing Place Church. "My physically exhausted, spiritually depleted state has affected my decision-making, my family life and my ability to lead effectively."

Healing Place is a nondenominational church with more than 7,000 members in 10 locations. Rizzo is widely known for his concept of starting a church revolution through serving, which he calls a "Servolution."

Rizzo and his wife, DeLynn, started Healing Place Church in 1993 with the single focus of being a healing place for a hurting world. Healing Place Church has been named one of America's Top 25 Most Innovative Churches. But the megachurch will have to do without its senior pastor for an undefined period of time.

Healing Place Church did not indicate how Rizzo's state affected his decision-making, family life or ability to lead. But the church offered the following statement:

"Healing is what Healing Place Church is all about. After 20 years of uninterrupted outreach to hurting people, lead pastor Dino Rizzo has found that he also needs a time of healing.

"It has been determined by the spirituality board of Healing Place Church that Pastor Rizzo is in need of a sabbatical rest

for healing, reflection and restoration of spirit, soul and body. Pastor Rizzo has humbly and willingly embraced the board's plan, which does not include a predetermined period of time. That will depend upon the healing process.

"Healing Place Church was never built upon one person or personality, but solely on Jesus Christ. We have a strong team of pastors and leaders who will continue the work in Pastor Rizzo's absence. Healing Place Church will continue in all of its activities including weekly services and a large variety of ministries and outreaches. We will continue to humbly serve our community by being a Healing Place for a hurting world."