

Pastor, Son Die of COVID-19 Within Days of Each Other

A Detroit pastor and his son have died of COVID-19 within just days of each other.

Rev. Nathaniel Slappey Sr. died on April 30 after serving in ministry for 50 years. His oldest son, Nathaniel Slappey Jr., died a few days later on May 2. The Detroit Free Press reports that both were dealing with complications from COVID-19 at Henry Ford Hospital in West Bloomfield.

Slappey Sr. pastored New St. Luke Missionary Baptist Church of Detroit during his 50 years of ministry. His son was a graphic artist and designer as well as a girls' basketball coach at Detroit Country Day.

Josephine Slappey—along with her remaining four children, six grandchildren and four great-grandchildren—never thought she would bury her husband and a son on the same day.

The church conducted a memorial service in an empty church as they livestreamed the somber event.

Bestselling author Jason Wilson served as a pallbearer in the funeral. He posted two photos of the event, sharing how difficult it was to see a father and son honored in the same memorial service.

"I thought I was ready, but I wasn't," he wrote. "To see a father and son side by side in caskets is heavy on so many levels. I was trying to 'stay strong' but I need a strength that I could never muster, so I have allowed myself to be weak so I can experience Yahushua's power (2 Cor 12:9). I am humbled to be a pallbearer because these two men were beloved by so many. Rest In Peace, Pastor Nathaniel Slappey and Nate Slappey Jr."

Nate Slappey III, son of Slappey Jr., said his father coached his entire life and loved it, according to reports.

“He just loved nurturing people in his way,” he says.

Nate says because of his father and grandfather, he’s proud to carry on the family name.

“Our foundation of faith and all of those values we carry today were instilled by him,” he says.

Slappey Jr. was supposed to turn 50 on May 9, so to honor him, Nate’s wife organized a surprise celebration for the family that drew 100 people.