

Serving from a Place of Fullness

If you've spent any time serving in ministry, you know the pressure can be immense with endless to-do lists, constant problem solving, and the weight that comes from caring for others.

Pastors, ministry leaders, staff members and volunteers are often the first to respond when someone is hurting. They celebrate victories, walk alongside families through crises, and help guide people through life's most difficult seasons. Yet while they're caring for others, many struggle to find the time and space to care for themselves.

For churches and ministries looking for ways to care for their staff – the people carrying the mission forward – that reality raises an important question: How can ministry leaders be supported before stress and exhaustion reach a breaking point?

"It's a challenge that's becoming increasingly difficult to ignore," said Bryan Stine, a director with Brotherhood Works, which is focused on helping ministries with their employee benefit options, including well-being.

Recent Barna research found that 24% of pastors have a high risk of burnout.¹ In addition, emotional and mental health among ministry leaders is lower than the general population, and leaders are often less likely to identify well-being as an area of need.

"Ministry leaders often manage stress and compassion fatigue in silence. They sometimes think because they are the caretakers, they cannot also proactively seek support," said Stine. "This is something we've been working with ministries on, so they know there are resources available to them as

employers that they can offer their employees.”

Defeating Burnout Proactively

One resource, new on the scene, is “mental fitness.” While traditional mental health services, like counseling and employee assistance programs are more reactive in helping ministry employees during a crisis or difficult season, mental fitness is proactive and preventive.

“Our team believes that healthy church communities begin with healthy church leaders. That’s why we’ve been working closely with the folks at Forte to provide an avenue for ministry employers to offer proactive mental fitness support and coaching in a confidential, accessible way to help their employees stay fulfilled and passionate in their calling,” said Stine.

According to Forte, mental fitness is about building resilience, emotional strength and well-being before challenges arise.

“Think of it this way: physical therapy, like counseling, helps you recover after an injury. Mental fitness is like regular physical fitness. It helps you avoid injury in the first place,” explained Vineet Rajan, co-founder and CEO of Forte. “It’s continual training of your mental and emotional life, strengthening you to meet each day’s challenges with clarity, drive and focus, while allowing you to be fully who God has called you to be.”

The need for that kind of preparation is especially important in ministry.

Ministry work often means pouring out to others without taking time to refill your own well. The reality of living in a fallen world can eventually lead to compassion-fatigue and burnout.

“Mental fitness reminds individuals of their worth and equips them to process life’s challenges before they become overwhelming,” said Rajan.

He explains that providing mental fitness for ministry teams is essential for three reasons:

1. It shows care. Ministry leaders and staff are human, with hopes, fears and struggles. Mental fitness conveys love and support in a proactive, personalized way.
2. It builds resilience. Ministry is demanding, and mental fitness equips individuals to face challenging seasons head-on, rather than reacting after burnout occurs.
3. It impacts ministry effectiveness. Those serving in ministry deliver the very experiences that shape lives, from sermons to children’s programs. When they are healthy and whole, their impact multiplies.

Making Support Accessible

“One of the challenges ministry leaders often face is finding support that fits within an already busy schedule,” said Stine.

Forte makes mental fitness simple and accessible through its online platform. Ministry staff and volunteers can connect through the web or mobile app, choose a certified coach, and schedule session times that fit their individual schedules.

“From day one, we wanted to put the ministry member in the center. We designed this to be easy and accessible for every single person on the platform,” said Rajan.

The coaches are the heart of the service. Many of them are pastors or have served in ministry, and they offer confidential, personalized conversations to help members process everyday moments before they escalate into crisis.

Sessions can be 30, 45, or 60 minutes, and you can book as early as the next day. No topic is off-limits and every interaction is designed to strengthen mental, emotional and spiritual health.

“The results speak for themselves. Our data shows that 97% of Forte participants report being more productive in their calling,” added Rajan.

Ministries can learn more by visiting the Brotherhood Works dedicated landing page at

1Barna. Pastors Quitting Ministry: New Barna Data Shows a Shift. Published January 27, 2026. Accessed February 10, 2026, from

Note: The Brotherhood Mutual enterprise has formed a strategic alliance with Forte to provide mental fitness services to Christian ministry employers.

Some insurance coverages, including employee benefits products, may be underwritten by other insurance carriers and sold through Brotherhood Works Insurance Services, LLC and its licensed agents and partners. CA license number 0F60680. Licensed in 50 states. Certain services may not be available in all states.

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