

Interview with Rev. Mari Curry, Head Pastor Family Church of South Florida

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Rev. Mari Curry

1. Tell us about yourself!

I've been living in South Florida for last 3 years, but I also grew up there. Richard and I were blessed in 2005. We have two children: William (3.5) and Lianna (2). I've been a pastor for 2 years, but also have had many years of experience in leading youth group and other roles. I also studied for my Masters at Cheong Shim Seminary in Korea. Both Richard and I worked at the GOP program in Seoul.

2. What motivated you to apply to the doctoral program at UTS?

I wanted to fine-tune my skills to become a better pastor. Mentoring from local leaders and church member has helped me, but it didn't expose me to everything that's possible. At UTS I can benefit from the insights and experiences of other pastors and of course the professors.

It's easy to lose sight of the bigger picture and principles when you're dealing with all of the daily challenges and emergencies. You become less effective at problem-solving. At UTS I can gain practical and theoretical skills that will have better long-term results.

3. How has your experience been so far?

It has completely exceeded my expectations. The environment, the classroom experiences and the professors are all wonderful. It's given me time to reflect not only on my pastoring and ministry, but also on my personal spiritual journey as well. It's been like a spiritual retreat for me because we get to spend time engaging with other pastors and get back to the Word, to our theological roots.

After even one class, I already feel that my perspective has broadened beyond just one community. I have universal tools to use wherever God calls me.

I appreciate the way we are approaching the dissertation. Get a chance to reflect on a problem I'm facing in ministry, to think about it, find a solution and implement it. It's very practical. It's real life.

4. What kind of person should consider attending UTS?

Anyone who is serious about developing their ministry and leadership skills and to deepen their theological understanding should consider coming to UTS. It really helps to take a step back from one's immediate responsibilities. It's difficult to learn when you are problem-solving all day. You have an opportunity to communicate with other leaders and reflect on "what I am doing, how I am doing it, where I want to go and how I'm going to get there."

The doctoral program is feasible for working people. You spend 4 weeks out of the year in Barrytown and do the rest of the work at home. That is doable even for a working mom like myself!

5. Any final advice?

We all know that we can be better. This is a way to do that!