

## PASTOR EVALUATION PROCESS

### Preamble

Reviews of Pastoral staff can happen have different objectives. The following list may help identify the different kinds of reviews that Leadership Teams (Elders) undertake.

#### Level 1:

A friendly affirmation review designed to affirm the Pastor and his relationship with the Leadership Team (Elders) and the congregation. It includes collegial conversation about how to become increasingly effective together. The ministry of the pastor is positive and the time is designed for celebration together.

#### Level 2

A review designed to improve the relationship between the Pastor and the Leadership Team (Elders) and/or the congregation and to enhance ministry effectiveness. This type of review can be a positive relationship building time. Honesty and openness are key ingredients where some minor things, need to be addressed either by the Pastor and/or the Leadership Team.

#### Level 3

A review where a restructuring of the Pastor's role (and perhaps the roles of others) needs to happen to bring his ministry in line with his giftedness. A thorough assessment and agreement on the Pastor's gift mix is vital to this kind of review.

#### Level 4

A review to determine if the Pastor is a good fit for the congregation. This is one of the toughest kinds of reviews because it requires a complete analysis as to why the fit may not be working.

#### Level 5

A meeting to deal with a Pastor's violations of the moral, philosophic or theological boundaries of the church. An action plan will be developed that will be rehabilitative and restorative in nature, if at all possible.

### **A. Evaluation of pastoral staff is a complex process for several reasons.**

1. It is hard to be straight forward in focusing on a Pastor's liabilities when you know that he has a vulnerable role and may find it hard to hear the negatives.
2. Often Leadership Teams (Elders) are not fully aware of what the Pastor does which makes it difficult to do an effective valuation.
3. Very often a Pastor feels reticent to admit his weaknesses for fear of jeopardising his ministry role.
4. The Leadership Team (Elders) may not have developed an atmosphere of nourishment and protection of the Pastor which results in him not feeling safe.

5. The Pastor may be a strong articulate person that unknowingly intimidates Leadership Team members (Elders)
6. For pastors, their ministry is their life. To challenge or correct his ministry role as a Pastor is to cut at the heart of the Pastor's life and vocation. Love must pervade the process. (1 Corinthians 13)
7. It would be helpful if the Pastor and members of the Leadership Team (Elders) meet on an ongoing basis for prayer, encouragement, accountability and pastoral care. The role of Pastor can be a lonely one, especially if there are no other pastoral staff. This process will reduce this feeling of aloneness. It will also allow concerns to be addressed in the beginning stages rather than allowing them to grow to a much larger problem.

## **B. Preliminary steps**

1. Establish in advance the nature of the review process so that the Pastor will not be taken by surprise. Be careful to identify the areas that will be reviewed.
2. Both the Leadership Team (Elders) and the Pastor should consider every review as an opportunity for the personal growth of both the Pastor and the team. Both should submit to one another in love. (Ephesians 5:21)
3. The Pastor should be careful to not perceive the review as criticism and the Leadership Team (Elders) should be careful not to conduct it as such.
4. It may be helpful for some of the key members of the congregation to give confidential and constructive input to the Leadership Team (Elders) simply to determine if their perspective is accurate regarding the Pastor's role and areas that need to be sharpened and improved.
5. There should be a reviewable job description that identifies duties and responsibilities. (See Exhibit A for a sample Job Description.)
6. The Pastor should maintain a general record of his activities and time spent in major areas of his Job Description, both for his own personal interest and for review purposes.

## **C. Possible areas to be covered in the review. (See attached questions)**

1. Personal spiritual growth
2. Relationships within and without the church
3. Personal spiritual giftedness (i.e. what areas need to be supported by others?)
4. Ministry (Preaching, Pastoral Care, Connection with the congregation, etc)
5. Leadership (Vision Casting, etc)
6. Review of duties
7. Facing the future

## **D. Review process in Levels 1, 2 and 3 above.**

1. The review should take place in a relaxed and non threatening atmosphere.
2. The whole Leadership need not be involved. It is best to have the Pastor meet with the chairman of the Leadership Team (Elders) and one other member who has been close to him relationally but also has earned the right to be straight forward in the review. A larger group with differing opinions can easily mar the review process.
3. The Pastor should review the highs and lows of ministry and express what has been going well and what needs attention. Very often when the pastor speaks about the "lows" of ministry, he will identify the very things that are of concern in the review process. The ideal is when the Leadership Team (Elders) and the Pastor agree on what needs improvement and they work together to make it happen.
4. The Leadership Team (Elders) should first affirm the Pastor. Everyone needs to feel appreciated and affirmed. The things that are going well should be gratefully acknowledged.

5. The areas requiring improvement should be discussed in the context of how the Leadership Team (Elders) can best help the Pastor be more effective. This review should not be a session of criticism and negative talk. The environment of the church is not the same as the environment of the business world and therefore the review processes resorted to in business often is unacceptable in the Christian environment. Seldom are businesses concerned about rehabilitation and spiritual health of the individual, which is the primary concern of the Church
6. When the review is finished the Pastor should leave still feeling safe and eager to improve in the areas agreed upon. Make sure he still feels part of the team and is still free to use his leadership gifts for the benefit of the body and the Leadership Team (Elders).
7. The form used for the review should be signed by both the Leadership Team (Elders) and the Pastor indicating that it has taken place. Each should have a copy.
8. If there are critical areas that need to be improved in order for the Pastor to be effective, the member(s) of the Leadership Team (Elders) that are closest to the Pastor and are capable of being straight forward should be mandated to address these areas with him. By this stage they will have developed a kindred spirit with him and will be able to help him rise to a higher ground of effectiveness.

**E. And what if it is determined that the pastor is not a good fit for the congregation? (Level 4)**

1. Evaluate the Pastor's strengths.
2. Draw up a ministry profile so his strengths can be clearly identified
3. Identify and agree with the Pastor on the reasons why this arrangement has not worked as well as anticipated.
4. Help him transition to another ministry by working with such support organizations as Vision Ministries Canada.
5. The Leadership Team (Elders) should be as proactive and positive as possible in the termination process. It's much better for them to facilitate a positive transition than to be responsible for a destructive memory that provides a foothold for the evil one both for themselves and for the departing Pastor.
6. The following termination details need to be worked out together:
  - If possible, the length of notice should be long enough to provide time for transition, both by the church and by the Pastor.
  - Unpaid vacation pay
  - Career counselling (where it might be helpful)
  - Termination and severance pay. For the legal distinction between termination and severance see:

[http://www.gov.on.ca/LAB/english/es/factsheets/fs\\_termination.html](http://www.gov.on.ca/LAB/english/es/factsheets/fs_termination.html)

In arriving at the amount of termination pay consideration should be given to length of service, ministry transition time, family requirements, etc. For a review of the minimum legal requirements refer the "Employment Standards" website for the appropriate province. Examples

- Ontario: <http://www.gov.on.ca/LAB/english/es/>
- Alberta: <http://www3.gov.ab.ca/hre/employmentstandards/>
- Etc

7. Communication to the congregation is very important. The announcement should be as brief as possible, with the following considerations:
  - The wording should be agreed upon by both the Pastor and Leadership Team (Elders).
  - The wording should be honest and express the real reason for termination.
  - The announcement should reflect that both the Pastor and the Leadership Team (Elders) have agreed upon the content.
  - Identify the next steps for the congregation and for the departing Pastor.
  - Pray for the Pastor and for the church that God's hand will be on the transition period for both.

#### **F. What about moral failure? (Level 5)**

1. Be very thorough in the investigation process and make sure that the problem areas are identified.
2. The Pastor and the Leadership Team (Elders) should be in agreement as to what the problems are or are related to.
3. The Pastor and the Leadership Team (Elders) ideally should together establishing an agreed upon process for addressing the issues that is acceptable to both.
4. Whatever the reason for having to release a Pastor, rehabilitation and restoration should be the goal.
5. Make sure the resources available in the Christian community are made available to the Pastor. (Counselling; Spiritual Retreats; Accountability Groups, etc)
6. Restoring is hard work but it is vital to the health of the body (Galatians 6:1)
7. The comments with respect to the termination process as shown in Section E above – items 6 and 7 – would also apply in this scenario.
8. If there is a “termination for cause” the Leadership Team (Elders) should review the situation and their proposed process with a solicitor to make sure all the procedures necessary under law are carried out.

## **SOME QUESTIONS TO BE CONSIDERED IN THE PASTORAL REVIEW PROCESS**

### **Personal Spiritual Growth**

1. Growth or developments in prayer or in time with God?
2. Any new self-understanding (of which God has made you aware) that is helping you work more effectively?
3. Are there any new family issues?
4. Do you have any financial concerns?
5. How are you handling stresses or pressures?
6. Are you managing time off well? Are you taking the holidays you intended?
7. Are there any struggles, personal temptations or dangers that we can help you with?
8. Are there pastoral development courses that you would be interested in taking?

### **Relationships**

1. Are you and your family finding the relationships you need within the church?
2. Do you have peers outside the church that you can meet and pray with?
3. Are there any relationships that are tenuous
  - In the congregation?
  - Among the pastoral staff?
  - Within the Leadership Team (Elders)?
  - Etc

### **Personal spiritual Giftedness**

1. Are you generally working within the area of your giftedness?
2. Are there areas of your ministry that you feel are not effective because you are not gifted in that area?
3. Can we help bring people alongside you to help in areas where you feel frustrated?

### **Ministry**

1. Are you witnessing transformational experiences?
2. Does your connecting with the congregation feel effective to you? Do you generally feel embraced and loved by the church family?
3. Are you satisfied with the pastoral care that is happening in the church?
4. Can you see exciting or challenging people developments?
5. Do you feel that there is progress in developing expertise related to ministry assignments?
6. What are you doing for “professional development”?
7. How are you connecting to other ministry people outside of our congregation?
8. Preaching
  - Do you get positive responses to your preaching?

- Do you feel that there is a good balance between application and exposition in your preaching?
- Are you continuing to have access to illustrative material? Can we help in this process?
- Would you like a more regular or more formal preaching feedback process?

**Leadership**

1. Is there adequate clarity about how your leadership is integrated with the leadership of others?
2. How would you describe your leadership style? (autocratic, passive, democratic, etc)
3. Do you think your staff and the Leadership Team (Elders) understand and embrace the vision and mission of the church? Are they fulfilled and eager to serve?
4. Are you happy with your relationship with the Leadership Team (elders)? Are your ideas generally accepted and endorsed after discussion with the team?

**Review of duties (as covered in the job description)**

1. What occupies most of your time?
2. What is the approximate time devoted to each grouping of activities?
3. What has gone well?
4. What have been the primary challenges?
5. To what degree are you satisfied with the results?
6. How have others confirmed your satisfaction?

**Facing the future**

1. What would you like to see happening in your own life in the next year or two?
2. What would you like to see happening in the church in the next year or two?
3. If there were one thing I could change about ministry here it would be.....

**Final Comments**

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Name of pastoral staff being evaluated

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Name of person(s) conducting the interview

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Date \_\_\_\_\_

## **SAMPLE JOB DESCRIPTION**

### **POSITION: SENIOR PASTOR**

**(This list of responsibilities assumes a multi staff church)  
Reporting to: The Leadership Team (Elders)**

1. To supervise the ministry staff of the church by day-to-day management, performance reviews, etc.
2. To inform and inspire the Leadership Team (Elders) by keeping them up to date on matters significant to the leadership and ministry of the church. (Examples: articles, books, seminars, etc.)
3. Ensure that a pastoral care program is in place that cares for all ages of people attending the church.
4. Preach approximately \_\_\_\_\_ % of all the church services.
5. Manage a strategy for spiritual growth within the church in cooperation with the elders.
6. Recommend to the Leadership Team (Elders) an annual teaching plan.
7. Manage the ministries of the church through the ministry leaders. This will include reviews of the ministries, providing opportunities for training and development, etc.
8. Perform weddings as requested, including premarital counselling (other staff members could also be involved).
9. Conduct funerals as requested. Help people through the process of grief.
10. Engage the congregation in ministry development according the spiritual giftedness of each person and ensure there are opportunities for ministry.
11. Maintain a counselling program that ministers to people as required.
12. Any other duties that may be required from time to time.

**If a simpler job description is deemed more appropriate the following items should be addressed and described.**

**1. Single pastor**

- a. Preach \_\_\_\_\_ number of times each year
- b. Provide crisis pastoral care
- c. Work with the elders in developing and implementing worship, discipleship and evangelism ministries
- d. Perform weddings and funerals as required
- e. Provide administrative management of church related ministries and activities
- f. Any other duties that may be required from time to time.

**2. Pastor of a multi staff church**

- a. Provide day to day leadership and overall supervision for staff members
- a. Preach \_\_\_\_\_ number of times each year
- b. Provide crisis pastoral care
- c. Work with the elders in developing and implementing worship, discipleship and evangelism ministries
- d. Give particular attention to the discipleship ministries of the church
- e. Leadership development
- f. Any other duties that may be required from time to time.

