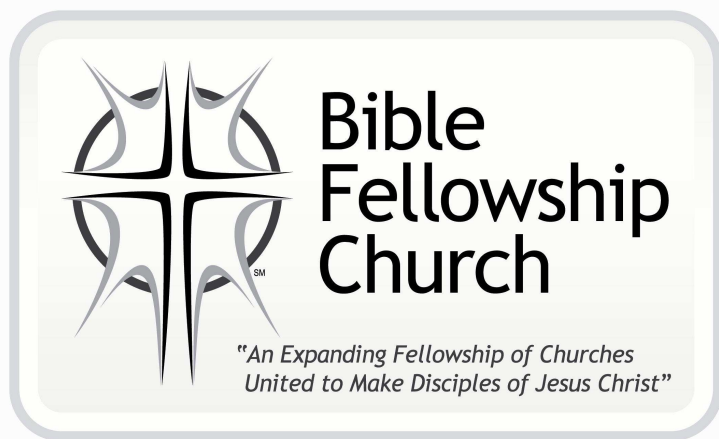


Guidelines for the Pastoral Relations Committee



**Produced by the Ministerial Relations
Committee of the
Bible Fellowship Church**

2009

INTRODUCTION

This booklet is provided for use by the Pastoral Relations Committee (PRC) of each Bible Fellowship Church. It has been prepared by the BFC Ministerial Relations Committee in order to assist the local churches in their ministry of encouraging, developing, and providing for the under-shepherds that God has placed among them. The materials included here are intended to facilitate the work of the PRC and provide for healthy and harmonious relations between the pastor and the church. They are accompanied with the sincere prayer that the Lord Jesus Christ as Head of His church will bless the Bible Fellowship Church and its pastors for His glory and our good.

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FAITH & ORDER LEGISLATION

The Faith & Order of the Bible Fellowship Church establishes the Pastoral Relations Committee as the only required committee in each local BFC. The legislation for the Pastoral Relations Committee is as follows:

402-1 Required Committee

402-1.1 Pastoral Relations Committee. The Board of Elders of every church shall designate a Pastoral Relations Committee composed of elders.

Purpose

- (1) Encourage the pastor in his endeavor to minister to the congregation.
- (2) Promote good relations between the pastor and the congregation.

Duties

- (1) Meet at least twice annually.
- (2) Conduct an annual review with the pastor. The annual review (1994 Yearbook, p 172-177) may be used as a guideline.
- (3) Receive communication and be a liaison between the pastor, his staff, and the congregation.
- (4) Annually review with each member of the pastoral staff the adequacy of his compensation and submit a proposed budget for salary and benefits.

In fulfilling its responsibilities, the Ministerial Relations Committee recommends that the Pastoral Relations Committee meet with each of its pastors at least once each year to evaluate the pastor's ministry and any mutual concerns, and at least once each year to discuss the adequacy of the pastor's compensation package.

MATERIALS FOR EVALUATING THE PASTOR'S MINISTRY

The Pastoral Relations Committee should meet as often as necessary to address concerns and problems that exist in the relationship between the pastor and the congregation. But even in the best of times it is wise to meet regularly with the pastor to provide understanding and support for his ministry. The PRC may be assisted in its work by occasional surveys of key church leaders or the congregation as a whole. The following questionnaire is a sample Pastoral Evaluation Form:

In an effort to strengthen the ministry of Pastor_____, do you have any questions, concerns, or input (positive or negative) that you would like affirmed or addressed in the following areas of ministry:

1. Pulpit and Teaching Ministry
2. Counseling & Discipling Ministry
3. Visitation
4. Administrative Responsibilities
5. Family & Personal Life

Signature

Date

(See appendix for a longer sample evaluation questionnaire)

The Pastoral Relations Committee should use any such evaluations in a discreet manner in bringing concerns to the attention of the pastor. The PRC should look for trends in the evaluation forms, avoiding isolated remarks and not passing offensive quotes on to the pastor. The goal is constructive criticism.

In its meeting with the pastor, the PRC may use a questionnaire such as the following to guide its discussion with the pastor. The purpose of the meeting is both to listen to the pastor and his concerns, and to address any matters of concern on the part of the church.

Suggested Annual Ministry Review Form

A. Continuing commitment to the Faith & Order of the Bible Fellowship Church

1. Are you still in full agreement with the doctrines and policies set forth in the Faith & Order, or do you have any reservations? If so, what are they?

B. Renewal of Agreement made at the time of call to _____ Bible Fellowship Church of *City, State*.

1. Do you reaffirm your original acceptance of the call submitted to you by _____ Bible Fellowship Church?

C. Role and Job Description

1. Which areas of your pastoral ministry have you found to be most fulfilling in terms of your gifts and calling?
2. Which aspects of your job description have you found most difficult or stressful to fulfill?
3. Are there areas of responsibility that you would prefer to have changed?
4. Are there new areas of ministry that you find challenging and would like to undertake?
5. Do you have any plans/ goals either short-term or long-term for a change in position or career?

D. Unity of the Church

1. Are you in harmony with the goals and direction being taken by the leadership of this church? What might you like to see modified?
2. Are you in full compliance with the policies approved by the elders and the congregation?
3. Do you have difficulties in leading and giving directions to your staff members in carrying out policies of the elders?
4. Do you have any interpersonal conflicts among staff members or church officers that need to be resolved?

5. Are there any church members that you find to be difficult to work with? Have you been able to analyze the reason for these conflicts and have you sought to resolve them in a biblical way?

6 Have you been able to develop friendships within the church family without causing others to feel excluded or ignored?

7. Are you aware of any divisions or potential schisms existing in the church body?

The PRC may find it helpful to meet with the Pastor's wife on occasion. If so, the following may be useful:

Role of Wife

1. How do you see your role in the church? Any problems?
2. Do you feel overburdened or underused?
3. How do you view your relationship with church members?
4. Have you been able to develop friendships within the church family without causing others to feel excluded or ignored?
5. Are there any church members that you find to be difficult to work with? Have you been able to analyze the reason for these conflicts and have you sought to resolve them in a biblical way?
6. What do you see as your focus and style in your relationships in the church?
7. What could the church do to strengthen your marriage and family?
8. (For the Pastor) What do you see as your wife's role in the church?

In its annual report to the congregation (either directly or through the Board of Elders) the Pastoral Relations Committee should communicate the fact of its meeting with the pastor, the methods it used to evaluate the pastor's ministry that year and a general summary of its work in seeking to strengthen the pastor's ministry in the church. In most cases it is not wise to include specific problems between the pastor and others in this public report.

MATERIALS FOR EVALUATING THE PASTOR'S COMPENSATION

In the call which every Bible Fellowship Church extends to a pastor, terms are established as a biblical and moral obligation which provide for the regular salary, housing or housing allowance, taxes, health insurance, pension and vacation time of the pastor and his family. (Faith & Order 409-1.3). The final sentence of this call is as follows:

“And we promise and oblige ourselves to review with you the adequacy of this compensation annually.”

The purpose of these materials is to assist the PRC in fulfilling this annual promise and obligation of the church.

In preparing for this meeting with the pastor, the PRC should be aware of the recommended minimum salary adopted by the BFC Conference each year. This dollar amount together with the accompanying explanations is found in the current Yearbook and should inform the PRC in its discussion of the pastor's compensation for the coming year. Although economic realities sometimes override the church's desires, the Ministerial Relations Committee wishes to remind each church of the high scriptural priority of providing for its shepherd. If compensation must be below the recommended minimum, the church should pray and work towards the ability to raise the pastor's compensation as soon as possible for “the worker is worthy of his wages.” (I Timothy 5:17-18, I Corinthians 9:13-14)

The Ministerial Relations Committee recommends that the Pastoral Relations Committee give the following worksheet (adjusted to fit your pastor's compensation structure) to the pastor at least a week before its meeting with the pastor.

Using this worksheet as a guide, the Pastoral Relations Committee and the pastor can discuss the salary proposal for the coming year. Final decisions of the Pastoral Relations Committee (and the board of elders) should be presented to the pastor prior to any public presentation of the full church budget to the congregation.

Suggested Annual Salary Worksheet

1. Is the compensation you are receiving for the present year adequate for your family's needs? If your wife is working outside the home, is it out of necessity or desire? How much pressure does this put on your family?
2. Is the current rate of compensation, although adequate to meet needs, presenting a measure of stress in your family because of other legitimate desires?
3. Do you have anticipated additional significant expenses in this coming year (e.g. another child, purchase of car, child going to college)?
4. Was your professional expense allowance adequate for conferences, books, etc.?
5. Was your life insurance reimbursement adequate?
6. Was your car allowance adequate?
7. Do you have increased educational costs in this coming year? If yes, please explain.
8. Do you desire a restructuring of your compensation package to benefit your tax burden?
9. Is your present parsonage adequate for your family? If not, please explain.
10. Are there short term (in the next 6-12 months) repairs or needs for your present parsonage? Please explain and list.
11. Are there longer term (1-3 years) repairs additions or needs your family suggests or desires for your parsonage? Please list.
12. Do you have any other requests, concerns, or comments? Please feel free to comment below.

In addition to an annual meeting to discuss the salary for the coming year, the pastor should be encouraged to approach the Pastoral Relations Committee at any time during the year if unusual or emergency financial needs arise. In any given case, it may not be wise or possible to help the pastor with the need, but the church should remember that a pastor (unlike a missionary) has nowhere else to turn for help but to the church that he serves.

It is important that local churches be knowledgeable about current tax law and its application to the payment of its pastor's salary and benefits. Both the church and the pastor should take full advantage of the law by structuring the pastor's salary and

benefits. Church members also should be educated as to the tax burden that applies to their pastor. Because, tax law is constantly changing, the Pastoral Relations Committee may consult with the Ministerial Relations Committee or a tax consultant of their choice.(See appendix).

Health insurance benefits are to be provided through the plan offered by the Bible Fellowship Church or any other plan selected by the church. Churches are encouraged to consider both the cost and the coverage in reaching this decision.

Payment to the pastor's Minister's Annuity Fund is mandated in the Faith & Order. Questions concerning this are directed to the BFC Board of Pensions. Pastors should be encouraged to seek their own financial consultation concerning the wise investment of these resources.

APPENDIX

I. Sample Pastoral Evaluation Questionnaire

Answer the following questions by giving a number between "5" (very strong) and "1" (very weak). If you cannot answer a question, leave the space blank. Your response will be used in a positive way by the Pastoral Relations Committee in their evaluation of the pastor.

A. Pulpit Ministry

- _____ 1. Do the pastor's sermons reveal adequate preparation?
- _____ 2. Do his sermons have sound Biblical content?
- _____ 3. Does he use enough helpful illustrations?
- _____ 4. Does he make practical applications that meet real needs?
- _____ 5. Is the length of the sermons satisfactory?
- _____ 6. Is there enough variety in sermon topics and emphases?
- _____ 7. Does he speak loudly and clearly enough to be heard?
- _____ 8. Does he keep his sermons free of personal grievances and hobby-horses?

- _____9. Does he read the Scriptures accurately and appropriately?
- _____10. Does he present the gospel clearly?
- _____11. Does he have any mannerisms that distract from the message? If so, list them :

Other comments or suggestions:

B. Teaching Ministry

- _____1. Is the pastor a diligent student and researcher of the Word of God?
- _____2. Does his teaching contain adequate doctrinal and exegetical material for Christian growth in your life?
- _____3. Does he have a satisfactory role in the Sunday School teaching ministry?
- _____4. Does he encourage members to discover and use their teaching skills?

Other comments or suggestions:

C. Visitation

- _____1. Does the pastor make enough pastoral visits?
- _____2. Does he have a program of visitation to include the elderly, hospitalized, new contacts and absentees?

Other comments or suggestions:

D. Counseling Ministry

- _____1. Do people feel free to approach the pastor for counseling about problems?
- _____2. Does the pastor make himself available for counseling?
- _____3. Does the pastor keep what is shared in confidence?
- _____4. Does the pastor employ biblical principles in his counseling?
- _____5. Does he manifest practical wisdom in his counsel?
- _____6. Does he know when to make referrals in special cases?

Other comments or suggestions:

E. Family Life

_____1. Does the pastor show biblical leadership with his wife and children?

_____2. Is the pastor's home life an example to the church?

_____3. Is the pastor's home kept reasonably neat and in good order?

_____4. Does the pastor set an example of Christian hospitality?

Other comments or suggestions:

F. Personal Life

_____1. Is the pastor's attire appropriate to his office and the occasion?

_____2. Is he warm, friendly, and approachable?

_____3. Is he flexible without compromising principle?

_____4. Is he fair and unprejudiced in his dealings with all?

_____5. Does he demonstrate wise use of his income?

_____6. Is his income adequate to meet his needs?

Other comments or suggestions:

G. Administrative Skills

_____1. Does the pastor exert leadership when it is expected of him?

_____2. Does he delegate authority rather than attempt to do everything himself?

_____3. Does he communicate policies and decisions to the members of the congregation?

_____4. Is he able to coordinate the various ministries and programs of the church?

_____5. Does the pastor help to set goals for progress and see them to completion?

Other comments or suggestions:

What are the pastor's greatest strengths?

What are the pastor's greatest weaknesses?

Any other comments or suggestions?

_____Name (optional)

II. Extended Periods of Renewal and Rest

A church may believe it is helpful to its pastor to have an extended time away from pastoral responsibilities for the purpose of renewal and rest. The concept of a sabbatical comes from the Old Testament principle of rest in the seventh year. This has been adopted by the academic community in the form of a sabbatical leave every seven years, and has also been taken up by some churches. It need not be a formal policy on the part of your church, but it may be an approach to help your pastor remain strong over the long haul. If so, the length of the time should be decided (not less than one month and probably not more than three to six months), the general use of the time away (professional enrichment, writing, counseling, recreation, travel, etc.), and the financial terms of the time away (preferably at full pay).

It is actually not expensive to help the pastor in this way, because the additional cost may be only the cost of pulpit supply for a month or so.

If a church wants to help its pastor in this way and simply cannot afford either the absence of the pastor or the cost of replacing him for a season, other creative alternatives may include extra vacation for the year, a quarterly three day block of time away to rest and study, or other unique arrangements worked out by the pastor and the church.

III. Parsonage or Home Ownership for the Pastor

For most people, the largest single investment in their lives is the ownership of a home. For many pastors, this opportunity is limited because of the nature of their ministry and the fact of their living in church owned parsonages. The following advice is offered to churches concerning parsonages and pastor owned homes:

1. **Church Owned Parsonages:** The ownership of a parsonage is the most economical way for a church to be able to provide for pastors over the course of many years. The church should therefore make every effort to keep the parsonage in good repair, and make every reasonable attempt to accommodate the pastor's requests concerning decorations, etc. Since the pastor is sacrificing the opportunity to build his own equity while living in

the parsonage, the church should consider paying the pastor some of the money it has saved in principle and interest payments as a means of helping him to save toward the day when he retires. It is very sad that many pastors complete a long and faithful ministry with nowhere to live and no means to provide for housing in retirement. A “future housing fund” can help to avoid this.

2. **Pastor Owned Housing:** The best way a church can help its pastor to prepare for retirement is by enabling him to buy his own home. This can be done in an equitable way by loaning the pastor a down-payment (if necessary) and then forgiving him a portion of it (perhaps 10% per year) so that if the pastor stays ten years the down-payment is forgiven, or if he leaves for any reason he repays the unforgiven portion to the church.

A Parsonage Allowance is the best way to protect the pastor’s income from unnecessary tax, since he can deduct legitimate expenses from his income for tax purposes. This should be implemented by the church whether or not he lives in a parsonage. The cost of utilities and simple maintenance may be included as a part of his salary package. For a pastor who owns his own home, the parsonage allowance should include the cost of his mortgage payment.

IV. Tax Advantages

A church can help its pastor, and actually pay him more, by structuring his salary package to the pastor’s tax advantage. For example :

Example One- Total Package- \$60,000

1. Salary- \$58,000
2. Professional Expense- \$2000

Example Two- Total Package-\$60,000

1. Salary- \$33,000
2. Housing-\$24,000
3. Education- \$2,400
4. Professional Expense- \$600

In both cases, the cost to the church is \$60,000. In both cases, only line 1 is taxable for income tax purposes, but structuring his salary according to Example Two saves the pastor hundreds of dollars in taxes.

For the purpose of educating the congregation, it is helpful to list on the published budget how much of the pastor's income is Social Security tax. Thus, for example, in Example Two, the salary line could be written as 1. Salary- \$27,950 (+\$5050 S.S.Tax). This gives the congregation a more accurate picture of how much money the pastor actually has to spend.