EVALUATING MINISTRY

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION OF PASTORS

I. What is the Biblical basis of conducting pastor evaluations?

“Listen to advice and accept instruction, that you may gain wisdom for the future.” Proverbs 19:20

“What Examine yourselves to see whether you are living in the faith.” Corinthians 13: 5

“But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly promotes the body’s growth I building itself up in love.” Ephesians 4:15

II. Evaluation: The Broad Starting Point

a. Evaluation as a system in place within the organization – not a weapon for getting at a target!

b. Evaluation based on clearly stated prior expectations – job descriptions, goals, etc.

c. From beginning to end, a means to affirmation, growth, constructive critique

d. Complaint mechanisms need to be separate; evaluations should provide opportunity for identifying weakness & unsatisfactory performance, but not be focused on that.

e. The barriers: Laity don’t know the pastor’s job! Laity aren’t the “boss” in the typical corporate sense. Church hasn’t done this well in the past, so we’re now paying the price for past neglect!

III. What are the goals for pastoral performance review?

a. Determine what the goals are before starting the process.

b. Examples:

   i. Examining whether congregation is meeting mission goals.

   ii. Examining whether pastor is effective in leading the congregation, meeting expectations, fulfilling mission.

   iii. To assist the pastor to grow professionally and personally.

IV. What process should be used?

a. Make the process constructive and collaborative.

   i. Evaluations should be primarily formative: What have we learned and what are the goals for the coming year? How were the prior year’s goals met?

   ii. Avoid or minimize summative evaluations, conclusions: Is the pastor good or bad, did she do a good/bad job?

   iii. Be specific when providing feedback, examples.

b. Consider the pastoral evaluation in the context of congregation dynamics and the whole ministry of the congregation.

c. Invite the pastor to provide a self-assessment of achievements, challenges

d. Separate the timing, completion of performance reviews from salary reviews.
e. Performance reviews should be done on a regular (usually annual) basis.
   i. Performance reviews should not be used to resolve emerging conflicts—
      use conflict resolution tools for that purpose.
   ii. Regular evaluations:
      1. Build trust and confidence in relationships
      2. Provide positive affirmation for the pastor
      3. Provide opportunity to identify areas for growth, support.
      4. Help avoid emerging conflicts and build relationships needed to
         resolve them when they arise.

f. Keep it simple—both in form and feedback. Focus on major themes, goals and
   the pastor’s role in accomplishing them.

g. Address performance concerns—and positive performance—as they arise during
   the year—don’t wait for the annual review.

h. Maintain confidentiality in the process.

i. Schedule a time to meet with pastor to discuss the performance review and stay
   focused on the task.

V. **Who should conduct a pastoral performance review?**

a. Consider using an “elders” approach—e.g., church council executive committee,
   pastoral relations committee, etc.

b. If survey is used to gather information for the review, be thoughtful about who
   should participate. Participants should be:
   i. Sincere, honest, and genuinely interested in process as opportunity for
      growth
   ii. Clear in their communication
   iii. Able to dialogue with pastor; personal and interactive
   iv. Knowledgeable about the congregation’s mission, activities, members

c. Anonymous comments generally are out of order.
   i. Use the evaluation process to teach healthy communication among
      leaders, congregants and pastor.
   ii. Anonymity may be appropriate in allegations of sexual harassment, etc.,
      but such issues are best handled in separate processes.

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*Staff, Congregational, and Pastoral Ministry Assessment Tools*, Western Iowa Synod, ELCA
[http://synodresourcecenter.org/admin/personnel/staff_evaluations/0001/staff_assessment.html](http://synodresourcecenter.org/admin/personnel/staff_evaluations/0001/staff_assessment.html)

*Resources for Staff-Parish Relations Committees*, Lewis Center for Church Leadership, Wesley Theological Seminary [http://www.churchleadership.com/resources/pastor_evaluation.htm](http://www.churchleadership.com/resources/pastor_evaluation.htm)


*Pastoral Evaluation Form*, Desert Springs Church

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

*When Better Isn't Enough: Evaluation Tools for the 21st Century*