The Pastoral Relations Committee:
Ensuring the Productive Partnership between Pastor and People

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What Does a PRC Do?

• The Pastoral Relations Committee (PRC)
  – Facilitates communication between the ministerial staff and the congregation
  – Provides a middle ground to discuss and resolve concerns.
  – Facilitates conflict
  – Enhances a constructive relationship between clergy and congregation

The PRC helps the church achieve its mission and ensures a vital and healthy church
When Should we Start a PRC?

• When to Start?
  – At the beginning of the pastorate before problems arise

• Include the Pastor?
  – Yes, start the committee with the consent of the Pastor.
  – Often the PRC is comprised of people who served on the search committee.

• Training required?
  – Yes, PRC Members need to understand their role and how to be effective in it.
Qualifications for PRC Member

• Have a genuine concern for the life of the church
• Are sensitive to personal relationships and understand people
• Are able to present ideas clearly
• Can successfully maintain confidentiality
• Have an ability to solve problems
• Can facilitate problem resolution
• Understand organizational structure
• Are spiritually rooted
• Have earned the congregation’s trust and respect
PRC Logistics

• The PRC should consist of 3 to 6 members
• The committee should meet 4 to 8 times a year.
  – Avoid meeting only when there are difficulties
  – Devote at least one meeting per year to reviewing and evaluating the church’s ministries and ministers.
• At least one meeting per year should be at the parsonage (If applicable).
Sample Meeting Agenda

• Opening Prayer or scripture
• Accomplishments
  – Ask each person to share a positive area where they have seen growth
• Challenges
  – Ask each person to share an area where there is need for growth
• Discussion
• Closing
Goals of the PRC

• Goal 1 – Understand and Interpret the Ministry of the Church

• Goal 2 – Promote Communications between the Pastor and the congregation

• Goal 3 – Facilitate fair and just compensation for the Pastor
Compensation Considerations

• What are your pastors:
  – Responsibilities,
  – Experience,
  – Education,
  – Expertise,
  – Effectiveness,
  – Years of Service

• These attributes help to determine fair compensation
Compensation Considerations

• Other factors
  – Cost of living and salaries of similar professions
  – Review of pastor compensation for similar size churches in the region
  – Consumer Price Index and Average salaries of selected occupations
  – Options for bivocational pastorates where compensation is not equivalent to full-time pay.
  – Pastoral Staff salaries should be a percentage of Senior Pastor’s pay.
Reimbursable Expenses

- Mileage and automobile reimbursement
- Convention and other denominational events
- Books, magazines and other resources
- Continuing education
- Hospitality
- Ministers Council dues!!!
Benefits

• Social Security / Medicare tax offset of a minimum of 50% of your pastor’s self-employment tax liability.

• Employment packages that include medical, dental, death and retirement.

• For more information contact www.mmbb.org.
Goals of the PRC (continued)

• Goal 4 – Encourage gifted persons in the congregation to assist in the church’s ministerial leadership

• Goal 5 – Encourage pastoral development
Ensure Pastoral Well Being

• Encourage the keeping of pastoral boundaries
  – Time off for rest and renewal

• Sabbaticals
  – Offers the gift of time for full restoration
Planning for Absence

- Establish agreed-upon dates
- Began at least three months in advance for planning
- Develop a list of duties and assignments staff / laypersons
- Ensure assignments for visitation
- Arrange for nearby minister in case of emergency
- Communicate with region office
- Look for ways to help
- Keep the congregation informed
- Line up guest preachers
- Let the congregation know how everyone will benefit from a sabbatical
- Celebrate the pastor’s return as a congregation
Goals of the PRC (continued)

• Goal 6 – Resolve Conflict in the Church
• Goal 7 – Assist Change
Staff Changes

• Installing a New Pastor
  – Establish a PRC
  – Encourage your pastor to join the Ministers Council

• Staff Departures
  – Recognize publicly the staff member’s contributions to the church’s mission

• Termination
  – PRC assists with termination
  – Ensure that the process is clearly spelled out in church policies.
  – In times of conflict, seek assistance of region staff
Staff Changes (continued)

- Retirement
  - Be sure to celebrate the pastor’s life, work and ministry.
  - Ministers Council Covenant and Code of Ethics requires that a pastor retiring or resigning for any reason must sever pastoral relationships with the congregation and its members.
In Closing

- The role of the PRC should be taken up with sobriety and sincere desire to serve God.
- Pastors needed both encouragement and constructive criticism.
- “Just as iron sharpens iron” is the role of the PRC to assist the pastor and the church in realizing their mission.
The Pastoral Relations Committee: A Productive Partnership

*People learn from one another, just as iron sharpens iron.*”

Proverbs 27:17 (TEV)