

## Calling a Part-Time Pastor

If a church determines it cannot afford a full-time pastor it can determine the hours it can afford by how much money is available. For example: using \$40,000 as a base salary, a church which has \$30,000 available for salary (including cash salary, housing and social security offset) would at a minimum be able to afford a  $\frac{3}{4}$  time pastor. The church at the point of extending a call would need to determine what duties their pastor would be expected to fulfill in the 30 hours allotted. An important part of this conversation is also the determination of how the remaining duties would be handled.

An important consideration in identifying available funds is that benefits are usually included at the same proportion as the pastor's employment. Therefore, health care, continuing education, retirement and travel allowance are generally included on a proportional basis.

Involving new people in ministerial activities can be a benefit for the church.

It must be understood that the  $\frac{3}{4}$  time pastor would pursue other activities during the remaining  $\frac{1}{4}$  time that will likely involve seeking additional income.

Although cases can be cited where a part-time pastorate returned to full-time, such instances are rare. Congregations that strategically seek outside funding or designate a portion of their endowment for such purposes should develop an intentional plan for rebuilding the congregation and carefully monitor the results of their efforts to ensure that such resources are not depleted prior to achieving the goal of returning to full time ministry. The purpose of this document is to lift up several viable and healthy options to full time pastoral ministry. For instance, if the church moves into a bi-vocational model, many of these arrangements lead to long term healthy pastor/congregation relationships, especially if the pastor's other source of income is community based.

It is better to be honest about what the church can afford in terms of leadership than to offer less than a full-time salary and expect full-time service for less than a fair wage. More pastors are preparing for bi-vocational ministry by receiving training or education in another field. Others may not need to supplement their income.

### Sharing a pastor with another congregation

Yoking congregations or circuit preaching has been around since the Christian church was established in the United States. Two or more congregations which are in close proximity might choose this option. This model continues to support a full-time pastor and sharing a pastor spreads the expenses out between the yoked congregations.

If there is any difficulty in this kind of arrangement it is in finding the right match of a pastor for both congregations. Because the two congregations often differ in their cultures and strengths, it is not uncommon for the pastor to appeal more to one congregation than the other. It is suggested that a common leadership team be established to appoint a common search committee and after a call is extended to provide support and supervision for the pastor and to discuss any other concerns. Addressing such differences in a single group can help one congregation better appreciate the strengths of the pastor and work toward solutions before they escalate into unsolvable problems. Additionally, but not unrelated – over time one congregation may increase or decrease what it is able to contribute toward the pastor's compensation. Renegotiating the package annually allows for these differences.

### Calling a chaplain

Another option in calling a bi-vocational pastor is to call a pastor who is also serving as a chaplain. Many endorsed ABC chaplains are full or part time pastors who have negotiated with the churches time for this additional ministry as associated home missionaries.

The risk the church (and pastor) takes if military chaplaincy is the supplementing source of income is that there could be a deployment or other interruption to the civilian ministry. The other risk the church takes is that the pastor/chaplain may decide to go active duty.

There is less risk of interruption if the chaplain is serving as an intermittent or part time chaplain in a non-military setting such as a hospital or if the chaplain has a private practice as a pastoral counselor. The challenge is to define the hours available for both forms of service while preserving some kind of Sabbath or day off for the pastor who does this.

### Merging with another congregation

Two nearby congregations of similar or even differing denominations might choose to pool their resources and assets permanently and become

a single congregation, eliminating the need to maintain more than one building, leadership system, nomination process, etc. Two congregations might find that by merging one strong congregation is a result.

In many situations the more dominant church culture survives but it also happens that, in time a new identity emerges which is separate from the two original congregations. New members join without prior knowledge of the pre-existing separate identities of the former congregations. However, it is very difficult to merge more than one congregation to actually create something new from the outset. Often what happens is that one congregation is simply subsumed by the other. The worship, the activities, the processes, the ministries tend to reflect the dominant culture. To make the merger work it is suggested that a common task force be formed to create new systems and activities that are different from either of the merging congregations. The congregations should take the time to understand one another's strengths and preferences in order to create a new and stronger congregation than any of the previous congregations.

If the congregations work to create something new, this option can result in a stronger congregation for the long term. If they do not, the merger will be no stronger than the dominant congregation and if it struggled before, it will struggle again in a very short time down the road.

#### Calling a single staff team for multiple congregations

This model is similar to sharing your pastor with another congregation, except that congregations involved share more than one staff member. For instance, two congregations might seek to call a clergy couple or two part-time staff members with complementary skills. In an urban area where congregations are in closer proximity, three or four congregations might pool their resources to call an urban specialist, a worship specialist, and a family life specialist, some of whom may be part-time.

This model seeks to pool the resources of congregations in order to call a more specialized leadership team. Sometimes a congregation created an impossible job description by seeking to call a generalist who could be all things to all people. This model recognizes that one person will not possess all of the leadership skills needed and seeks to call people with complementary or specialized skills to advance similar ministries in each congregation.

Some ministries today, such as contemporary worship and family life ministry, seem to cry out for specialization. This model allows for certain congregations to afford such specialization that might never have been possible otherwise. Additionally, many seminary graduates are looking

for non-traditional settings in which to work. This model might be one that could attract the brightest and most creative new graduates.

This model involves much more change than some of the other models and thus, may lead to conflict. Congregations not ready for extensive change will have difficulty reaping the benefits of such a system. The resources that were formerly poured into the preaching and pastoral care ministries may go elsewhere meaning that the more traditional ministries will also need to be done in a new way.

The congregations involved must take significant time to envision their futures and then must decide what specific leadership skills are needed to achieve those visions. Separate search committees should be formed for each position desired, but a common personnel committee should relate to all staff.

If one senior staff member does not oversee the other staff, the most difficult aspect of this model will be making the team concept work without a senior leader.

While this model will require a lot of work, if the changes occur, each congregation could ultimately be stronger than before.

### Calling a pastoral consultant

This model involves the complete transformation of each congregation involved from a pastoral led model to a laity led model. Resources previously utilized for pastoral leadership are now used for training the laity to carry out these tasks.

In New Testament times, laity were much more involved in ministry tasks than many are today. Perhaps the best way to transfer the ministry to the people is to remove the pastor from the local congregational setting. Congregations already differ a great deal according to what ministries are performed by paid staff and what ministries are performed by volunteer staff. This model seeks to turn all of the ministries over to the laity, using whatever pastoral compensation remains to train the laity to do the ministry and perhaps hold a pastoral trainer "on retainer."

Studies have shown that leaders develop best through experience. This model is completely dependent upon leaders willing to learn new skills. Learning new skills brings energy and enthusiasm to the tasks.

Either a single congregation or multiple congregations may implement this model. If a single congregation adopts this model, they would use

the remaining resources allotted for pastoral leadership to call a part-time trainer (rather than a traditional pastor) to train the laity to carry out the tasks of preaching, pastoral care, visitation, youth ministry, etc. Multiple congregations may also work together in this model by together identifying the ministries in which they would like to be trained. Volunteer teams could be formed across congregations.

In addition to the benefit of cross-fertilization of leadership training, a second advantage to working with multiple congregations is that the congregations could pool their resources to call a permanent on-site trainer rather than a part-time trainer. (This scenario would result in a combination of models 1, 2, and 4).

Certainly, some congregations may not be ready to assume all of the pastoral duties. Even those who say they are willing in the beginning may find it difficult to follow through with commitments.

The congregation should go through an assessment phase to discover what ministries need to be done in the future. The assessment phase could be conducted prior to the commitment to this model. Teams should then be formed of people willing to be trained to perform those tasks. Although not recommended, a single individual may volunteer to take on one of the ministries alone rather than a team.

Once the ministries have been named and the people recruited, then the search committee can be formed to call a pastoral trainer or consultant with the ability to train others in the areas designated. The key to this model is forming the teams prior to the calling of the consultant.

For a single congregation adopting this model, the pool of candidates may include retired or interim pastors, while multiple congregations may be able to call a permanent full-time pastoral consultant. While at first glance, one might wonder who would apply, the applicant pool for such a position might be quite large. Many pastors with many years of experience are looking for a new challenge.

Once a congregation gets past the willingness stage, calling a pastoral consultant could indeed result in a very long term solution for the viability of the congregations involved. Some of the models for this type of ministry, such as Church of the Savior in Washington DC, lead to thriving ministries.

#### Asking a healthy congregation to mentor your congregation

This model uses the resources previously earmarked for pastoral compensation to contract with a stronger congregation to mentor your

congregation to the point where full-time pastoral leadership can again be afforded. Typically, the mentoring congregation will provide for the preaching, worship leading, pastoral care, and other leadership responsibilities while assessing, training, and making recommendations for the future.

Many growing and healthy congregations love to share their ideas with others. Too often, such ideas are shared in one day seminars leaving the participants to implement the principles with little or no further contact. Individuals mentoring individuals have proven to be a very strong model of leadership growth. Might the model be transferred to organizations?

Opening up the entire congregational system for reflection and improvement is a more holistic approach to improvement than changing or training a few of the congregation's leaders.

There will be a temptation on the part of both congregations for one congregation to simply emulate the practices of the other which seldom works. The key will be to adapt what is working in one setting to a completely different setting. This model will also require a great deal of change and thus readiness for change, on the part of the mentored congregation.

It takes a great deal of humility to ask for help. Humility will be a key in moving forward. While this model may not require as much assessment up front, it will require an extreme openness to having one's ministries critiqued, challenged, and changed. Be clear about the desired goals of the mentoring congregation and do not contract for more than 6-12 months at a time.

If successful, the congregation should become more like the congregation doing the mentoring and the mentoring congregation should become stronger as well after reflecting upon its principles and practices.

Table Highlighting Differences of Pastoral Leadership Models

Model	Pastoral Leadership	How pastoral resources are used	Key to implementation	Degree of change required
Part-time Pastor	Shared Pastor	Pastoral compensation	Involving new people in ministry	Minimal
Pastor/Chaplain	Shared Pastor	Pastoral compensation	Balancing the two ministerial roles	Minimal
Sharing a full-time pastor	Shared Pastor	Pastoral compensation	Working cooperatively with the other congregation	Minimal
Merging congregations	Solo Pastor	Pastoral compensation	Forming a new congregation different from the previous	Major
Single staff team for multiple congregations	Pastoral staff team	Pastoral compensation	Identifying specialized staff needs	Moderate
Pastoral consultant	Pastoral Trainer	Call a consultant	Forming ministry teams willing to be trained	Extreme
Congregational mentoring model	Leadership from another congregation	Contract for services	Finding the right mentoring congregation	Major