**LOCAL CHURCH SABBATICAL POLICY**

\*\*\*NAME OF CHURCH\*\*\*

**PURPOSE:**

In recognition of the spiritual principle of a seventh year Sabbath (Leviticus 25:1-7), and the potential for ministry stress to accumulate, a sabbatical policy has been established at \*\*\*NAME OF CHURCH\*\*\* for the purpose of renewal and retention of its pastoral staff.

A Sabbatical is an extended time away from the usual work for the purpose of study, career development, personal renewal, spiritual enrichment, or rest. It is not intended for preaching or ministry assignments, but to benefit both the individual and their ministry within \*\*\*NAME OF CHURCH\*\*\*.

**OBJECTIVES:**

1. ***Re-Creation*:** Provide adequate contiguous time away from the normal daily routine for pastors to experience a re-creation of their ministerial energies and creativity while promoting a unique opportunity to experience quality time with family and friends.
2. ***Realization*:** Develop growth opportunities for other pastoral staff by encouraging them to accept appropriate leadership responsibilities during the period of another’s sabbatical.
3. ***Role Modeling*:** By example, to foster a healthy awareness of the balance between a strong work ethic and a healthy personal life within the ministry at \*\*\*NAME OF CHURCH\*\*\*.

**PROTOCOLS:**

1. Each pastor may take a sabbatical after their sixth year at (\*\*\*NAME OF CHURCH\*\*\*). In consultation with the Board of (\*\*\*NAME OF CHURCH\*\*\*), the Lead Pastor shall establish the initial seven-year rotation period for existing pastors. Such rotation shall be established to minimize the disruption of ministry operations. Additional sabbaticals may be determined by the Lead Pastor and ratified by the Board.
2. When establishing the sabbatical policy, the Official Board and Lead Pastor shall determine the length of sabbaticals. Typical Sabbaticals can range from a few weeks to a few months. One important factor is that, no matter the length, the time away should be contiguous and not broken up.

1. The sabbatical shall be selected at least three months in advance and must be approved by the Lead Pastor.
2. Full benefits and compensation will continue to accrue to the pastor during the sabbatical. However, holidays falling within a sabbatical month will not be carried forward. Additionally, the pastor is requested not to schedule vacation time near the sabbatical in order to avoid undue hardship on the church and staff. The participant may be given some funds for use while on their sabbatical, and must retain confidentiality as to the amount of funds received. If both spouses are employed and on the pastoral team, the policy applies for both spouses when the first spouse reaches eligibility.
3. In preparation for the sabbatical, the pastor shall take care to make sure that every aspect of their responsibilities are adequately covered. Oversight of each area of ministry is to be delegated to a member of the pastoral staff or lay leadership. Such delegation must be done in consultation with, and finally approved by, the Lead Pastor at least one month in advance of the sabbatical. Upon approval of such delegation, the pastor shall be responsible for communicating the temporary leadership change in advance and in writing to all leaders that will be affected. Prior to the sabbatical, the pastor shall also hold a personal meeting with the leaders who will be providing temporary leadership.
4. Prior to the sabbatical, any problem areas or unresolved issues that may require action during the pastor’s absence must be communicated in detail via memorandum to the Lead Pastor and the temporary leader.
5. Prior to departure, all communication (i.e., letters, email, return calls) shall be current as of the date of the pastor’s sabbatical.
6. During the sabbatical, all correspondence will be forwarded to the pastor’s Administrative Assistant and will be handled in conjunction with the temporary leader prior to the pastor’s return. Voicemail is to be turned off. Upon the pastor’s return, there shall be no communications which need to be returned. All correspondence and calls received during the sabbatical shall have been completely processed by the leadership/Administrative team assigned to respond to the above.
7. Emergency contact numbers and locations need to be provided to the following people: the Lead Pastor/designated Board member, the pastor’s Administrative Assistant, and the temporary leader.
8. Following the sabbatical, the Lead Pastor shall provide an oral report of the sabbatical to the board, staff pastors shall provide an oral report of the sabbatical to other members of the pastoral staff.

**Resources**

**Suggested books to read beforehand to prepare for Sabbatical**

“Clergy Renewal” by Richard Bullock and Richard Brusehoff

“Ordering your private World”by Gordon MacDonald

“Running on Empty” by Wayne Cordero

**Suggested Books to read during Sabbatical**

“Refresh, Renew, Revive” by HB London, jr.

“The Rest of God” by Mark Buchanan (restoring your soul by restoring SABBATH).

“DNA of Relationships”by Gary Smalley

“Inside Out” by Larry Crabb

“Love Revealed” by Kerry Clarensau

“Rhythm of Life” by Richard Exley

“24/6” by Matthew Sleeth

“Sacred Slow” by Alicia Chole

“Divine Conspiracy” by Dallas Willard

**Links-**

[www.lifeway.com/en/articles/pastor-ministry-guidelines-successful-sabbatical-vacation](http://www.lifeway.com/en/articles/pastor-ministry-guidelines-successful-sabbatical-vacation)

[www.forbes.com/sites/augustturak/2014/06/17/6-reasons-why-every-leader-needs-a-sabbatical/#153b2bb8195b](http://www.forbes.com/sites/augustturak/2014/06/17/6-reasons-why-every-leader-needs-a-sabbatical/#153b2bb8195b)

[www.influencemagazine.com/practice/burning-the-candle-at-both-ends](http://www.influencemagazine.com/practice/burning-the-candle-at-both-ends)

[www.influencemagazine.com/practice/renewal-as-a-way-of-life](http://www.influencemagazine.com/practice/renewal-as-a-way-of-life)

<https://vimeo.com/169172271>

**Places for retreat and renewal-** (some are free and some are discounted)

Dorothy’s Place and Lillie’s Pad at Lakeview Camp and Retreat Center- Credentialed North Texas District A/G ministers can receive 5 nights free annually. Call

[www.havenriverinn.com](http://www.havenriverinn.com)

Haven River Inn- Comfort Texas. Lamb’s Tale Ministries. 2 free nights per year

[www.prophetschamber.com](http://www.prophetschamber.com)

The Prophet’s Chamber, Russellville, Arkansas. 5 free nights as available.

[www.ag.org/Resources/Resources-For/For-Ministers/Renewals-Retreats-and-Vacations](http://www.ag.org/Resources/Resources-For/For-Ministers/Renewals-Retreats-and-Vacations)

[www.thebroomtreerefuge.org](http://www.thebroomtreerefuge.org)

[www.eaglemountainlodge.com](http://www.eaglemountainlodge.com)

[www.springvalleyranchok.com](http://www.springvalleyranchok.com)

[www.abbielane.org](http://www.abbielane.org)

**Fill in Pulpit Ministry.**

Contact your Presbyter or Regional Presbyter for information of those available for pulpit ministry.