

RESOURCE DOCUMENT: PASTORAL MINISTRY: Staff Supervision Tool and Time-Related Factors
Staff Supervision

At the end of this short paper you will find a reporting form for staff. It's basic questions provide a healthy framework for a weekly staff meeting that will allow for an encouraging and fruitful interaction. Because part of ministry involves "time-on-the-job" there is also a more free ranging discussion of things like holidays, ministry away and the like.

Question: How can I supervise my staff in a positive and constructive way?

Answer:

- Here is a tool that I adapted along the way that can be used in a weekly staff meeting.
- It covers the areas of concern and importance acknowledging the accountability relationship. It is couched in the first person, "I." This is friendly and direct way to address and it puts the onus of reporting on the reporter. Point #1 first question with permission granting and direction. Point #2 concerns problem solving, helping both parties to flag and deal with problems. Point #3 looks to the future, helping the reporter to plan ahead, and also keeping the supervisor apprized of upcoming issues. Point #4 tags progress for ongoing projects. Point #5 helps both parties to deal with the personal and human side of the work relationship.
- The report needs to be completed and submitted prior to the meeting so that the supervisor has had a chance to

Question: Why do you ask for a log of activities?

Answer:

A supervisor needs to know what a staff person has been doing. It simply provides background documentation that is ready if the need arises for clarification.

Question: Why do you ask the total number of hours? And why do you use 50 hours as a baseline?

Answer:

We are creatures of time and time measurement is one of the useful units for gauging work done. Ministry is work, so ministry takes time. While not effective as a measure when used alone, the logging of time helps with accountability. Time logging also helps a supervisor identify someone who is spending too much time working. When used in conjunction with outcomes there is a yardstick for productivity and helps to identify particular strengths, weaknesses, opportunities for improvement, etc. As to the benchmark of 50 hours. This is a "rule of thumb" given me years ago by a seminary prof who was also a pastor. His view was that 40 hours is thought of as an accepted work week and we expect our people to be available for church related ministry another 10 hours, including Sundays. Thus in the pastor's case, it makes sense to use 50 hours as a benchmark. Some use 60 hours as a benchmark and many pastors are engaged for a lot more than 60!

Staff Holidays, Vacations, Ministry Away, etc.

Question: What about days off, statutory holidays and ministry away from home?

Answer:

It has been typical for pastor's to take Mondays off, although many have moved to alternative days, and for Saturdays to be a quieter day, but this too has changed. The best "rule of thumb" is to recognize that one day in seven still needs to be a day apart when "work" is not on the day's agenda. Another approach to time off is to think of the day in 3 segments [morning, noon, evening] and to insert a segment of "off-time" so that there are no more than 8 consecutive segments without a break.

Question: What about statutory holidays?

Answer:

For the purposes of logging, I use “10 hours” for a statutory holiday taken. Many pastors find it impossible to take statutory holidays and their day off in a given week. I have used the rule of thumb of allowing for statutory holiday within a month of the actual date; others use the rule of taking it within the week on either side of the actual date. If it isn't taken within that time period it's lost.

For the purposes of logging, ministry responsibility that takes me away from home overnight is logged in as 12 hours, unless the actual time of the sessions involved is easily measurable. Overnight time away actually involves 24 hours so it seems a reasonable adjustment to log it in at 12 hours, but if the actual time involved in meetings, etc., is more t

Question: What about sabbaticals?

Answer:

There is a circular on sabbaticals that was prepared a number of years ago that will be posted by July 1, 2000. This still contains useful guidelines. Here are a few additional thoughts.

Three month Sabbatical after Five Years

Briefly sabbaticals for pastors who have been in a given charge for five years benefit immensely from a longer block of time away from actual pastoral duties. This is an investment worthy of consideration. A three month sabbatical is a time for personal and spiritual renewal that is long enough to really unwind and to take a fresh look at themselves and at one's ministry. It is often a time when God gives a renewed passion and vision for what He wants to do in a church. To ease the burden on a local church it is often best to include vacation time to be taken as part of the three month block. During the three month sabbatical the pastor is entirely free of any responsibilities including emergencies. Arrangements can be made with a sister church to assist in such things as pulpit supply or emergency pastoral care, but in most cases the local leadership is well able to carry on for a three month period.

Some large multi-staff churches release the senior pastor EVERY year for three months so that the senior pastor can renew family wellbeing as well as personal recharging for the intense nine months of ministry.

Study Leave:

Many organizations invest thousands of dollars in both funding training and education for staff. It is premised on the simple recognition that one's greatest resource is the human resource. Many organizations pay the study fees as well as paying their staff to attend. Even a small church can make this investment with a little forethought and planning. The biggest obstacle is most often the mental barrier of seeing this as a worthwhile investment. It is a huge investment on the part of the pastor to enroll with often many long hours into the night working on assignments: New information, ideas, perspectives an intense experience that often feels like “drinking from a fire hose.” What a blessing when others recognize and share in this investment recognizing that what helps the pastor in vocational and personal growth enhances ministry impact.

Year Sabbaticals after six years

The very word sabbatical comes from the biblical sabbath! That is, 1 day in seven, 1 year in seven and so on. And the crown of seven sets of seven years was the Year of Jubilee, the 50th year in which the captives were set free, all lands were returned, and all debts were cancelled! I do not know of any churches that have applied this principle on the 1 for 7.

Ministry Away

God has gifted some of His servants with strong gifts that are important to share with sister churches. Local congregations with a strong “kingdom” sensitivity recognize that God has blessed them with a pastor that has this “missionary” call and have willingly embraced this as part of what God is calling them to do in support of this larger ministry. These times of ministry away are also important in the ongoing growth and renewal of the pastor. A rule of thumb is for a pastor to be available for Lord's Day ministry elsewhere 4 or 5 times a year.

Camp Sundays

Part of our EMC Canada East heritage is encourage pastors to be involved in the ministry of our camps. The provision for two camp Sundays is sanctioned by a District bylaw.

2.2.4.1.4 Pastors (and full time staff) shall have vacation entitlement of two (2) weeks under three (3) years of service, three weeks after three (3) years of service, four (4) weeks after ten (10) years of service, and five (5) weeks after twenty (20) years of service, where service years include service with a previous denomination in the case of transfer and acceptance of credentials from a previous denomination.

Concerning pastoral vacations,

- i. the local church is responsible for the cost of pulpit supply during the pastor's vacation period,
- ii. if the pastor is assisting in district Youth Camps, or is in attendance for the full week at a General Family Camp, the local Church shall be responsible for the cost of pulpit supply up to two (2) weeks so involved, and such a week at General Camp be considered 'in service' rather than holiday time.
- iii. all pastors who are moving shall take their vacation from the pastorate they are leaving.
- iv. It is the responsibility of each local church to insert in the terms of employment a clear statement of vacation time granted the pastor.

This provision is made with at least four purposes in mind: 1) When pastors support camping ministry by their presence this very often encourages their people to get involved; 2) It allows for pastors to minister at camps; 3) It also helps pastors to connect with the larger District family in a relaxed environment; 4) It is often a time for personal spiritual renewal for pastors.

Personnel Report Form

Name of Person Reporting:

Reporting to:

- ***I need a decision on the following:***

Position:

Date:

- ***I am having a problem with the following:***

- ***I am planning to:***

- ***I have made progress in the following areas:***

- ***Here's an update on how I'm doing personally:***

6. Please attach the weekly log of your activities (or a photocopy of your week's from your diary) since last we met including the total of hours (Baseline: 50 hours)