



## Pastoral Care and Development Team

*Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ. This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ (Ephesians 4: 11-13). But we request of you, brethren, that you appreciate those who diligently labor among you, and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction, and that you esteem them very highly in love because of their work. And live peacefully with each other (1 Thessalonians 5:12-13). Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms (1 Peter 4:10).*

As the body of Christ, the congregation and pastoral staff are called to mutually support and care for one another.

### What is a Pastoral Care and Development Team?

The Pastoral Care and Development Team (PC&D Team) is a proactive committee whose purpose is to contribute to the church's good stewardship of its primary resource—pastoral staff—by meeting regularly with each pastor for dialogue focused on the pastor's care and development.

### How does this differ from a Pastoral Relations or Mutual Ministry Committee?

Most of our churches have built into their leadership structures either a Pastoral Relations Committee (PRC) or a Mutual Ministry Committee (MMC). These committees are charged with ensuring a "vital, healthy, mutually beneficial relationship between the congregation and the pastors and ministry staff." Under this framework, PRCs and MMCs traditionally have had multiple responsibilities:

1. Clergy care: ensure that the needs of the pastor and pastoral family can be brought forward for discussion, consideration, and prayer.
2. Personnel committee: set up a periodic official performance evaluation and review process.
3. Conflict management: serve as the official committee for dealing with specific grievances.
4. Appreciation: serve as a vehicle for kudos, praises, or other forms of positive encouragement and expressions of gratitude or thanks

There is tension among the competing roles of caring for pastors, serving as a neutral arbitrator of congregant's complaints, and performing staff job reviews, making it difficult for one committee to effectively serve all four functions. A Pastoral Care and Development Team is not responsible for job review, other personnel matters, and handling grievances, leaving these issues to be addressed by the Leadership Team/Council/Board instead.

### What, then, are the specific responsibilities of the Pastoral Care and Development Team?

The PC&D Team focuses exclusively on caring for pastors and their families and promoting the professional development of their pastors. The roles and responsibilities of the PC&D Team are:

1. Care
  - a. Pray regularly for pastor and pastoral family.
  - b. Solicit and address concerns of pastor and pastoral family.
  - c. Provide support for pastors and the pastoral family in times of personal or professional stress.
  - d. Help plan ministry renewal leaves or sabbaticals to be approved by church leadership.
2. Advocacy

- a. Advocate for and assist pastor in getting the appropriate time for reflection, rest, and renewal (self-care).
  - b. Educate church leaders and church as a whole regarding the needs and challenges of pastoral ministry.
  - c. Provide recommendations to church Council/Board/Leadership Team regarding continuing education and professional development opportunities as needed.
3. Accountability
- a. Support pastor in managing gifts and schedule at macro level paying attention to burnout possibility and prevention. This may include attention to keeping Sabbath, having healthy boundaries with time and ministry, and good self-care practices.
  - b. Encourage pastor's development of support network with colleagues and others outside the church.
4. Appreciation/Encouragement
- a. Organize, promote and conduct activities for congregation's annual expression of appreciation (i.e., Pastor Appreciation Month) as well as to find ways of expressing encouragement and appreciation throughout the year.
  - b. With the pastor's consent, provide input for healthy processes of feedback and development to the group in the church that is charged with evaluation.

Guidance and support for PC&D Teams are available both through the Board of Ordered Ministry and the Pacific Southwest Conference care team.

### **Who comprises the Pastoral Care and Development Team?**

Because trust and a positive relationship are vital to the ability of the PC&D Team to care well, it is recommended that the pastor suggests a short list of possible committee members, and the Leadership Team, Board or Council vets and appoints or nominates these members. Ideally, the chair of the committee would be the Vice-Chair or other council member, so the PC&D Team functions in conjunction with the overall leadership of the church. However, because of the confidential nature of the committee, the PC&D Team does not report the substance of its meetings to church leadership unless mutually agreed upon with the pastor and pastoral family.

First and foremost, PC&D Team members should be persons with whom the pastor has a good relationship. Ideally, these are individuals who are:

- 1. Supportive of the pastor, with a sensitivity to the feelings and needs of both congregation and minister
- 2. Spiritually and emotionally mature and able to have integrity with regard to maintaining confidentiality
- 3. Skilled in communication and healthy relationships
- 4. Discerning and wise
- 5. Both men and women and of mixed ages.

The effectiveness of the PC&D Team hinges upon confidentiality, which is the basis of trust. Confidentiality means keeping what is shared within the PC&D Team as sacred trust, not revealing information, even to a spouse, and guaranteeing privacy. When serious concerns are raised that warrant outside intervention, open acknowledgement of this exception should occur.

Consideration for the length of term include maintaining continuity and allowing for fresh perspectives. It is recommended that members serve a minimum two-year term, and that terms be staggered to facilitate effective functioning of the team.

### **Sample Schedule of Meetings**

At each meeting, the PC&D Team should engage in dialogue with the pastor and pray for the pastor. Although an agenda may be set for each meeting, flexibility and sensitivity to the Spirit is required. Below is an example of how regular meetings may be loosely organized to ensure the overall vision of the PC&D Team is addressed.

*January* – The central focus is on CONNECTION.

At the beginning of the term of service, the first meeting is designed for committee members to meet each other, to review PC&D Team vision and responsibilities, as well as to address logistics (calendar, etc.). Hearing the pastor's story of call to ministry and time in prayer are essential.

*February* – The central focus is on CARE.

Focus on pastor's self-care and family care. The pastor's spouse may be invited to attend all or part of the meeting. The desire or need for an additional individual meeting with the spouse should be raised. Begin discussions on ministry leave and/or sabbatical planning.

*May* – The central focus is on APPRECIATION.

Discuss what makes the pastor thrive in ministry and what keeps the pastor going in hard times in ministry. Plan annual congregational expression of appreciation (e.g., Pastor Appreciation Month in October)

*August* – The central focus is on ACCOUNTABILITY and ADVOCACY

Reflect on the pastor's use of gifts and time, paying attention to the possibility of burnout and ministry fatigue. Discuss needs for advocacy and education within the church.

*November* – The focus of the final meeting of the PC&D Team is flexible to address any unfinished business, to reflect on the functioning of the committee and any improvements that need to be made, and to plan for transitions within the team.

### **Sample Questions for Discussion**

1. How best can we continue to pray for you?
2. Which aspects of your ministry have been joyful? Which burdensome?
3. In what ways are you most able to use and develop your gifts?
4. How many hours have you been working per week? How does that compare with your expectations?
5. Do you feel adequately resourced to do your job?
6. What encourages you to continue to pastor?
7. How is the wellbeing of your family (health, quality time, finances, etc.)?
8. How goes your walk with the Lord?

### **Additional Resources**

Clergy Renewal: The Alban Guide to Sabbatical Planning by A. Richard Bullock and Richard J. Bruesehoff. The Alban Institute, #AL214 (also available on Amazon.com)

Rest in the Storm: Self-Care Strategies for Clergy and Other Caregivers by Kirk Byron Jones.

“Sabbatical...The Necessary Option: A guide to planning and implementing a sabbatical leave that will benefit both the pastor and the church.” by Pinnacle Ministries. [www.pinmin.org](http://www.pinmin.org)

“When Rest is the Only Solution” by Brady Boyd. Leadership Journal, January 2015  
<http://www.christianitytoday.com/le/2015/winter/when-rest-is-only-solution.html>