

Suggested Guidelines for Pastoral Sabbatical Evangelical Friends Church Mid-America

Rationale:

Members of the pastoral staff serve in a unique position in their full-time ministry. The demands of pastoral ministry are great and often draining physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Despite the use of accumulated vacation time, pastors often find themselves stressed and spiritually depleted over the years.

Recognizing that normal routines often do not provide for reflection and renewal of the vision and mission of the pastor's ministry, the congregation will provide a sabbatical for the pastor and pastoral staff. The benefits of the sabbatical for the pastoral staff member and congregation are to:

- Express gratitude and high value to the pastoral staff member.
- Share in the building of the pastor for continued service.
- Strengthen the relationship between pastor and congregation.

Sabbatical Policy

1. The term "sabbatical" means the pastor is relieved of all routine and emergency duties during the time granted. Prior to the sabbatical the pastor and church leadership should develop a plan for covering the pastor's duties during the absence. Sabbatical is separate and distinct from accrued vacation. No vacation time should be used within 4 weeks before or after sabbatical.
2. Pastoral staff shall be eligible for sabbatical upon completion of seven consecutive years of service in a local church. Eligibility will be reached following the pastor's anniversary date.
3. Additional time shall be allowed after each five-year period following the initial leave. Two additional weeks will be added for each five-year period. Maximum leave shall not exceed twelve weeks. See table below.

Years of Service	Sabbatical Allowed
7 years	8 weeks
12 years	10 weeks
17 years	12 weeks (maximum)
Beyond 17 years	See item 10

4. Scheduling shall be based on seniority at the local church. No two pastors may be on sabbatical at the same time. Leave must be taken within one year of eligibility.
5. A written proposal shall be presented to the church's Board of Elders and the EFC-MAYM Lead Superintendent at least six months prior to the beginning of the desired sabbatical. Other pastoral staff shall first present a written request to the lead pastor

following the same guidelines. The request shall then be presented to the church's Board of Elders for final approval.

6. The proposal should include the following:
 - specific plans for physical rest, personal recreation, family responsibilities, intellectual stimulation, and spiritual renewal;
 - strategy for coverage during the sabbatical; and
 - commitment by the pastor for continued service at the church.
7. A written report shall be presented to the church's Board of Elders and to the EFC-MAYM Lead Superintendent at the conclusion of the sabbatical. It should include how the time was invested and what benefits were realized.
8. During the year of the sabbatical, time ordinarily allotted for continuing education will not be used. Vacation time will not be reduced because of the sabbatical leave, nor will it be used to extend the sabbatical period.
9. The pastor's full wages and benefits shall continue during the sabbatical. No compensation shall be given for unused sabbatical time.
10. The pastor will be expected to remain in employment with this congregation for a period of at least twelve months after the conclusion of his or her sabbatical leave. If the pastor leaves the church prior to that time, financial arrangements for repayment of sabbatical expenses to the church will be made between the Board of Elders and the pastor.
11. The church Board of Elders will address exceptions to the above policy on a case-by-case basis.