

One year from now, the committee will ask two questions of each item on the pastor's list:

Did the pastor perform this task as agreed?

Did the pastor meet or exceed expectations in the performance of this item? This requires more than a yes or no answer. Be specific in your comments beyond yes or no.

The committee will need to share the results with the pastor and get the pastor's feedback

Then, ask two questions of each item on the second list:

Did the person/group who agreed to this task perform the task as agreed?

Did the person/group meet or exceed expectations in performing the task? This requires more than a yes or no answer. Be specific in your comments beyond yes or no.

Share the results with the pastor, the persons/groups involved, and get their feedback.

Then start the process all over again in preparation for next year's review.

Of course the committee will want to be attentive to members as they make suggestions about goals for the subsequent year, but if you follow these guidelines, you will have a clear understanding that will lead to an accurate and satisfactory performance review.

Be aware that if you do not have clarity about expectations, the pastor and the officers, boards and committees will be subject to complaints from all quarters because everyone's whims have not been met. If you do have clarity, your mutual accountability will strengthen your church's witness, outreach and mission.

A word of caution: you may be tempted to ignore "part two" of the above suggestion. If you do, realize that you are demanding accountability from your servant-leader while encouraging everyone else within your congregation to avoid responsibility. Within a caring community of Christian faith, all should be accountable to one another as well as to God.

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A PASTOR'S ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REVIEW

INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF COMMUNITY CHURCHES

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Local congregations have a variety of ways of assessing their pastors' performance. A few actually vote on re-appointing the pastor each year, thus providing a very final and annual "pass-fail" judgment on their servant-leader. Some congregations elect or appoint a pastoral relations or personnel committee with instructions to meet with the pastor on a regular basis, reviewing the pastor's activities and making suggestions in a variety of areas. Some churches just wait for somebody to complain, and then demand the pastor adjust a schedule or give greater emphasis to a pastoral duty in response to the "squeaky wheel." Only a minority of churches actually plan for an annual performance review for their pastor.

The process for a pastor's annual review actually begins a year in advance. At that time, pastor and a responsible committee consider with careful prayer the life of the congregation and what needs particular attention in the coming year, based on a long-term strategic plan adopted by the congregation or on some other basis. Will this be a year in which the life of the congregation will need to be strengthened by intensive pastoral visitation efforts? Or do the boards and committees need training? Or is there a need to launch an additional weekly worship service? Or are there other priorities that need to be addressed?

With that decided, pastor and committee will review the on-going ministries of the church that require pastoral time and attention: sermon preparation, pastoral calls at medical/nursing facilities, attendance at and follow-up from church committee meetings, leadership in ecumenical/community groups, etc., etc. Are there specific, measurable expectations regarding any of these items? How many hours per week do each of these activities require? Write down the measurable expectations and the number of hours required for each activity/task.

Now back to the emerging needs. How much time per week will each of those needs require?

Now add up all the estimated hours, remembering that "emergency" items such as deaths/funerals will happen and will require time.

Is the total number of hours per week realistic? If not, something has to "give." Do remember that the pastor does need time for family and for sleeping!

Some tasks can be assigned elsewhere. Given your mutual understanding, some tasks may simply need to be left undone.

A simple example of what might be left undone: perhaps the pastor should not be expected to attend the monthly meetings of the Flower Committee. But if that group has been expecting the pastor to appear at its meetings, somebody - preferably not the pastor - will need to speak with the Flower Committee to tell them not to expect the pastor's presence during the coming year, AND the reasons why.

If you have arrived at a reasonable estimate of the number of hours required each week, then simply make a list of everything you and the pastor mutually agree that the pastor is to do. If there are performance parameters for any item, these need to be specified. Another simple example: if you want sermons to last not shorter than 15 minutes nor longer than 25 minutes except in unusual circumstances, this is the time to specify that. Unhappily, specifying that every sermon be "good" is not possible, because "good" is not quantifiable, except by God.

Pastor and committee need to review and approve the list together. The committee chair and the pastor should sign the list, with photocopies remaining with the pastor and each member of the committee.



Are you done yet? No! Now comes part two. The pastor does not work alone. Ministry is always a team effort. What specifically can the pastor and the congregation expect each and every officer/board/committee/fellowship group to do to advance the church's ministry in the coming year, both in on-going activities and in response to the emerging needs? How many hours will each activity require each week? List each item and the responsible person(s) or group(s). Again, be realistic.

Pastor, committee and the persons listed need to review and approve the list together and sign the list. Each of the individuals who have participated in this process should retain copies.