

# MINISTRY REVIEWS

It is recommended that every church engage in healthy, positive, ongoing review of its collective life and ministry. Such review will necessarily include the manner in which the pastor is exercising his or her ministry and leadership.

All ministry reviews must be handled professionally and pastorally. If they are handled poorly, they can be critically destructive to pastors and people. Reviews must be well structured, following clear guidelines. They are not times of open-ended criticism or times for adversaries to air their grievances.

**The Basic Purpose** of ministry reviews is **ministry development and enhancement**. The review process is intended to result in pastor and people being strengthened, encouraged, and better equipped to carry out the tasks the Lord has called them to.

It must be an affirming process, where strengths are praised, and strategies put in place to address any evident weaknesses.

A good review process will result in:

1. **AFFIRMATION** of key gifts and of ministry done well.
2. **IDENTIFICATION** of areas of ministry that are weak or need to be developed, redirected, or discontinued. This will help identify areas of learning for the Registration Development Agreement (RDA) portion of Baptist Registration.
3. **DEVELOPMENT** of the pastor's gifts and ministries for the year, or years, ahead
4. **COMMITMENT** on the part of the pastor to continue to minister with the results of the review in mind, and on the part of the church, to provide the support and resources necessary for the ministry of the pastor to be enhanced.

## Timing - when should a review take place?

Reviews of pastoral staff would normally be annual.

The timing of ministry reviews must be mutually agreed upon by pastors and church leaders.

Many of the hassles surrounding ministry reviews will be avoided if the concept and process of review is agreed upon when a pastor is first called by a church, and if there is a clearly agreed position description of what the pastor is supposed to do.

## Types of Reviews

### A Three-Month Review

This review concludes the call process and is designed to see that the beginning of a ministry has been done well.

### An Annual Review

This review is designed as the annual evaluation of the pastor's Ministry Plan, including strategic goals and objectives and Position Description each year, or agreed review period. Ideally, the annual review of the RDA would be included.

## Who should do the review?

A Review Team needs to be set up, in consultation with the pastor, of 2 - 3 people, one of whom would be part of the leadership of the church.

Should the pastor's spouse be involved in the review meetings? Our recommendation is "no" unless the spouse is employed by the church in some capacity. We realise arguments can be made for including the spouse, as a couple work together in ministry, but the spouse's involvement in aspects of ministry is at their choice, not because they are employed by the church.

## Suggested Ministry Review Process

1. Review team and pastor meet briefly to clarify the process to be used.
2. The Church may be informed 2 weeks in advance and invited to give feedback to the reviewers.
3. Pastor and review team meet to:
  - Review the feedback information
  - Work through performance questions
  - Review goals and plans from last review (if applicable)
  - Review content of position description and make appropriate changes
  - Set new goals and strategies.
  - Agree when the next review will take place

## THREE MONTH MINISTRY REVIEW

### Questions to ask the Pastor

1. What have the first three months been like for you?
2. (If applicable) How is your spouse and family adjusting to the change? Do they feel at home in the church and the community?
3. What are some of the things that you are discovering about the uniqueness of this congregation? What surprises have you experienced?
4. Do you think the people are responding to your leadership? Are there areas where you sense there may be resistance?
5. Is what the Pastoral Search Team represented to you about this congregation pretty much what you have discovered so far?
6. What are your plans for the next three months? In what ways do your plans correspond with those of the congregation? What would you like to see happen here because of your ministry?
7. What do you think are the areas where changes should take place in the church and possibly the community?
8. Are there areas in your ministry where you feel a need for more help?
9. Are you currently registered? If not, in what ways can we assist you to become registered?
10. Have there been any commitments or promises made by the Pastoral Search Team or church leadership which have not been fulfilled? Any areas of misunderstanding regarding the terms and conditions in your letter of call?
11. Is there anything else you would like to add?

# ANNUAL MINISTRY REVIEW

## Review of past year

Suggested questions:

1. What has the church achieved over the past year?
2. Were priorities set for the last year and have these been achieved?
3. What were the factors that may have contributed to not achieving some priorities?
4. What feedback have you had from church people?
5. What is your assessment of the worship services over the past year?
6. Are you looking to bring changes?
7. Are you able to assess the spiritual development of people within the church?
8. What is your assessment of the mission of the church?
9. Has it changed?
10. Does it need to change?
11. Is there an adequate review of existing mission activities?

## Personal development

What do you see as your areas of:

1. Greatest strength
2. Weakness
3. Most satisfying achievement
4. Disappointment

What is in place to ensure your own continuing spiritual nurture, refreshment, and growth? Are there those you can share with at a deep and frank level?

These questions could be part of the Baptist Registration review: What professional development have you undertaken during the past year? What are your plans for the coming year?

Do you have plans for a sabbatical?

## Communication

1. Are the communication lines within the church working effectively and, in particular, within the leadership groups.
2. Has work within the wider church and parachurch influenced the amount of time devoted to this church?

## Life outside your vocation

1. How intrusive has church-related work been to your family life?

2. Have you been able to give adequate time to your family during the review period?
3. Have you taken leave regularly and used it for refreshment purposes?
4. What time do you allocate to maintaining physical fitness, recreation, and leisure?

### Forward planning

1. What is your vision for yourself and the church for the coming year?
2. How do you assess your role within an overall plan for the year?
3. Do you see this as a shared responsibility with the leadership?

### Position Description

1. What areas should stay the same and what need changing?

### Finally, and importantly

1. How can the leadership and church minister to you?
2. What on-going training would be helpful for you?
3. What matters do you wish to raise with the review team?

Further resources can be found on the Leadership Hub website:  
[Leadership.baptist.nz/elders-and-governance/resources-training/](http://Leadership.baptist.nz/elders-and-governance/resources-training/)