

# *Ethical Principles & Guidelines*

FOR PASTORS OF  
NEW ZEALAND BAPTIST CHURCHES



*As a follower of Jesus Christ, called by God to proclaim the gospel, and gifted by the Holy Spirit to be a pastor of His church, I dedicate myself to conduct my ministry within a New Zealand Baptist church according to the principles and guidelines set forth in this code of ethics*

**Reaffirmed yearly:**

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

PRINCIPLE  
**1**

# *I will serve my local church with diligence and integrity*

- 1.1 I will faithfully use my time and energies as pastor, teacher, preacher and administrator through proper work habits and responsible use of my time.
- 1.2 I will endeavour to be impartial and fair to all who are part of the church community. I will not abuse my position by taking advantage of those to whom I minister for purposes of personal, institutional, political or financial gain.
- 1.3 In my preaching responsibilities, I will give adequate time to preparation and prayer, so that my presentation will be biblically true and easily understood. I will constantly seek to improve my preaching.
- 1.4 I will avoid all forms of inappropriate sexual behaviour.
  - a) I will be vigilant to avoid sexual temptation, and will treat others with respect and decorum. I recognise that I am in a position of relative power in my dealings with others, and will never take advantage of this sexually.
  - b) In my visitation, pastoral care and counselling practices I will exercise great discretion when alone with another person and recognise the value, where possible, of having another person nearby. Where potential difficulties exist within myself or in the other person, I will ensure I am not alone.
  - c) I recognise that any extra-marital sexual involvement will disqualify me from continuing in my current pastoral ministry, and possibly in any church in the future.
  - d) When I sense I am vulnerable, I will face up to this and seek help.
  - e) I will not deliberately read, watch, download or listen to pornographic material in any form.
- 1.5 I will seek to develop leadership in others. I will endeavour not to be defensive over another person excelling in an area of ministry, but will encourage them in it.
- 1.6 I will seek the guidance of God to develop vision and direction for my ministry in the church. I recognise it is essential that I do not move ahead unless others have caught the vision and are willing to work alongside me.
- 1.7 I will recognise that my knowledge and ministry skills need to be continually extended and enhanced. I will maintain my Baptist Leaders' Registration, regularly attend courses, lectures, seminars and the like to learn and be encouraged in my ministry.
- 1.8 Where fees are charged for weddings, funerals or any other pastoral professional ministry, they shall be on the basis agreed by the church leadership.

- 1.9 As a full-time pastor, I will not accept any other paid work without the expressed consent of the church leadership.
- 1.10 I will seek to maintain good relationships with my church. When difficulties arise in my relationship with the church and/or its leadership teams I will endeavour to achieve consensus and harmony to the best of my ability. Where consensus is not possible I will seek assistance from the leadership of the Baptist Churches of New Zealand.
- 1.11 Ministry is primarily a divine calling and not employment. It is not my right to “fight to keep my job” when that compromises either my ministry or the ministry of the church.
- 1.12 In the light of 1 Corinthians 6:1-8, I will never take the church or its leadership to Court, but will seek to resolve any disputes in accordance with 1.10 (above).
- 1.13 Confidentiality is an important part of my ministry. I will be careful not to share identifiable information gained via ministry relationships either with others, including colleagues, or in my preaching.
- 1.14 I will recognise the limits of my competence and refer those to whom I minister to others when this proves necessary or desirable.
- 1.15 I will honour and adhere to the terms and conditions of my agreed Terms of Call including matters of leave and financial arrangements.
- 1.16 I will ensure that church assets and property are managed and maintained to meet standards of compliance and good stewardship.



## *I will maintain good relationships with other pastors*

- 2.1 I will endeavour to relate well to other pastors, as partners in the work of God, respecting their ministry and co-operating with them. I will respect their different ministry styles and theological positions.
- 2.2 I will make it a priority to maintain contact with my colleagues, both Baptist and from other denominations, through personal meetings and regular support of pastors’ meetings and conferences.
- 2.3 I will be available to serve my colleagues and their families with counsel and pastoral support.
- 2.4 I will refuse to treat other colleagues as competition but, on the contrary, will support and encourage them in their ministry.

- 2.5 I will refrain from speaking negatively about a colleague, especially my predecessor or my successor.
- 2.6 a) I will not return to a former church for professional services, such as a wedding or funeral, except after consultation/invitation of the resident pastor.
- b) I will treat with respect and kindness any predecessor who returns to minister and/or stays as a general congregation member in the church.
- 2.7 If I become aware of inappropriate behaviour or misconduct in a colleague, I will, in love, confront my colleague about this rather than speak to others first. Where this action would be inappropriate, and in the event of serious misconduct, I will also approach those in denominational leadership.
- 2.8 If I retire or resign from the pastorate, and remain in the same church, I will not accept any position in the church unless at the request and agreement of succeeding leadership and after prayerful consideration.

PRINCIPLE  
3

*I will be intentional and responsible in caring for myself*

- 3.1 I will seek to love my God with all my heart, soul, mind and strength. Regular prayer and devotional reading of Scripture will be normal parts of my life.
- 3.2 I will continue to seek good mental and emotional health, endeavouring to maintain good relationships with others and with myself. I will deal with issues of my past and my personality with the aim of becoming more Christ-like.
- 3.3 I will recognise there are limits to the ministry that I can properly provide and that respect for my own health in ministry relationships and appropriate self-care should be upheld.
- 3.4 I will recognise my own need for recreation, refreshment and renewal for which at times I will call on the support and expertise of other pastors, consultants and other professionals.
- 3.5 My relationships will be characterised by my being truthful in speech and behaviour.
- 3.6 I will commit to asking for help when I am struggling with personal or professional issues.
- 3.7 I will commit to taking holidays and leave in order to be refreshed for ongoing ministry in the church.

PRINCIPLE  
**4**

## *I will care for my family / household*

- 4.1 I will be generous in giving my family the time, love and consideration they require. My first pastoral responsibility is to them.
- 4.2 If married, I will be a loving partner for my spouse and seek to follow biblical patterns in my role as wife/husband. I accept that in our immediate family our primary roles are husband, wife and parents to the children we may have. I will encourage my spouse to minister according to his/her gifting and family circumstances.
- 4.3 If I have children, I will love them and accept them as a gift from God. I will seek to be a caring role model, not imposing undue expectations upon them.
- 4.4 I will endeavour to manage my finances in order to provide for my family/household's needs in a responsible way.

PRINCIPLE  
**5**

## *I will support my denomination*

- 5.1 I will support and co-operate with the wider family of Baptist churches and faith communities, of which the church and I are part, recognising with gratitude its contribution to our life and ministry.
- 5.2 I will work to improve the strength and ministry of our denominational work.
- 5.3 I will accept and support the pastoral leadership of the regional leader and Baptist Union national staff, and will always be willing to receive their advice, encouragement or discipline.
- 5.4
  - a) If I am unable to minister within the framework and understanding of ministry within Baptist churches I will resign my position within the church.
  - b) I will not be involved in starting or pastoring another church in the same immediate locality as my previous church without the express approval of the Baptist Union.



## *I will be a good citizen*

- 6.1 I will endeavour to obey the laws of my government unless they require disobedience to the law of God.
- 6.2 I will be honest and responsible in my finances by seeking to pay all bills on time and endeavour to avoid getting myself into a position where I am financially out of control. I will seek to live within my income.
- 6.3 I will seek to have positive input into my wider community through involvement in appropriate community enterprises/activities.



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