# INTERIM MINISTRY REVIEWS

*[Note: this document covers Ministry Review recommendations for interim ministry. There is a separate document for Transitional (aka Intentional Interim) Ministry Review recommendations that can be found on the Leadership Hub]*

It is recommended that every church engage in healthy, positive, ongoing review of its collective life and ministry. Such review will necessarily include the way the pastor is exercising their ministry calling and leadership gifts.

The Baptist Union of New Zealand (BUNZ) believes Interim Ministry provides a vital opportunity to care for a congregation between pastors. It is not a time of rest, rather it is a period of discernment and nurture for congregations who are navigating their way towards a new future. Because Interim Pastors are often called to shepherd congregations who are in a season of change, BUNZ recommends that regular Interim Ministry reviews occur during each Interim Pastorate.

All Interim Ministry reviews must be handled professionally and pastorally. If they are handled poorly, they can be critically destructive to Interim Pastors, their families, to congregations and to perceptions of Interim Ministry across the wider movement. Reviews must be well structured and follow clear guidelines. They are not times of open-ended criticism or times for adversaries to air their grievances.

The **basic purpose** of interim ministry reviews is **Interim Pastor development and enhancement**. The review process is intended to result in the Interim Pastor and congregants being strengthened, encouraged, and better equipped to carry out the interim work the Lord has called them to.

It also provides an opportunity to assess the effectiveness of regional and national support for Interim Pastors and Interim Ministry in the local congregation.

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

A good interim ministry review process will result in:

1. **AFFIRMATION** of key gifts, and of ministry done well.
2. **IDENTIFICATION** of areas of the Interim Pastor’s ministry that are weak or need to be developed, redirected, or discontinued. This will help identify areas of learning for the Interim Pastor’s next Registration Development Agreement for Baptist Registration.
3. **DEVELOPMENT** of the Interim Pastor’s gifts and ministries for the year, or years, ahead
4. **COMMITMENT** on the part of the Interim 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 Interim Pastor to be enhanced.
5. **STRENGTHENING** of Regional and National Support Centre staffs’ understandings of the support and resource needs of Interim Pastors and congregations during Interim processes.

**Timing - when should a review take place?**

Reviews of interim pastoral staff would typically be at 3 months after commencement, then – if the interim pastorate is longer than 12 months duration - at 6 monthly intervals unless otherwise specified in the Interim Pastor’s term of call agreement.

The timing of ministry reviews must be mutually agreed upon by the Interim Pastor, church leaders and Regional Leader.

Many of the challenges surrounding Interim ministry reviews will be avoided if the concept and process of review is agreed upon when an Interim Pastor is first called by a church, and if there is a clearly agreed position description outlining what the Interim Pastor is supposed to do. It is strongly recommended that interim ministry review dates are included in the Terms of Call Schedule.

## Types of Reviews

We have provided possible options for Interim Ministry Reviews, and these include:

**1. Three Month Interim Ministry Review**

The purpose of this initial review is to assess the effectiveness of the ‘entry phase’ as the Interim Pastor (and whānau) settles into their role, to determine resourcing and support needs of the Interim Pastor, assess the appropriateness of the interim process for this church, and to discuss the Interim Ministry Plan for the next six (6) months.

**2. Six Monthly Interim Ministry Reviews (for interim pastorates longer than 12 months)**

These reviews are designed as the ongoing evaluation of the Interim Pastor’s position description, Interim Ministry Plan, and Registration Development Agreement (for Baptist Registration), and ought also to include an assessment of the Interim Pastor’s self-care plan, and commitment to the Baptist Union’s Ethical Principles and Guidelines for Pastors and Leaders.

**3. End of Interim Pastorate Final Reviews**

* Interim pastorate review (see below)
* Interim Pastor debriefing (see below)

**Who should do the reviews?**

For both the three month and six-monthly reviews, a Review Team needs to be set up in consultation with the Interim Pastor, comprising a member of the church leadership team, a member of the Interim Team, and a Regional Association representative.

**Should the pastor’s spouse be involved in the review meetings?**

Unless your congregation has called a couple as *co-Interim Pastors* our recommendation would normally be “*no*”. 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 typically at their choice, not because they are employed by the church.

## Suggested Ministry Review Process

Review Team and Interim Pastor meet briefly to clarify the process to be used.

1. The Church may be informed 2 weeks in advance and invited to give feedback to the reviewers.
2. Interim Pastor and Review Team meet to:

* Review the feedback information
* Work through Performance Questions (below)
* Review Goals and Plans from last review (if applicable)
* Review content of position description and Interim Ministry Plan and make appropriate changes
* Interim Pastor to set new goals and plans.
* Agree when the next review will take place

## THREE MONTH INTERIM MINISTRY REVIEW

**Questions to ask the Interim Pastor**

* What have the first three months been like for you?
* How is your spouse and family adjusting to the change?
  + Do they feel at home in the church and the community?
* What are some of the things that you are discovering about the uniqueness of this congregation?
  + What surprises have you experienced?
* Do you think the people are responding to your leadership?
  + Are there areas where you sense there may be resistance?
* Is what the Regional Association and church leadership presented to you about this congregation pretty much what you have discovered so far?
  + If not, what ‘gaps’ have you encountered?
* What do you think are the areas where changes should take place in congregational culture and activities?
* What are your ministry plans for the next six months?
  + Are there any planned absences or courses you would like to attend in the next 6 months?
* Are you receiving sufficient support from both congregational and regional leadership?
  + Are there areas in your Interim Ministry or self-care plan where additional help might be needed?
* Have you been able to connect with local Baptist pastors and Regional Association staff?
* Are you currently registered?
  + If not, in what ways can we assist you to become registered?
* Have there been any commitments or promises made by the committee or church leadership which have not been fulfilled?
  + Any areas of misunderstanding regarding the terms and conditions in your letter of call or position description?
* Is there anything else you would like to add?

## SIX MONTHLY INTERIM MINISTRY REVIEW

**Review of past six months:**

* What has the church achieved over the six months?
* Were priorities set for the last six months and have these been achieved?
* What were the factors that may have contributed to not achieving some priorities?
* How well is the wider congregation understanding and embracing the changes being   
   made?
* What feedback have you had from church people?
* What is your assessment of the worship services over the past six months?
  + Are you looking to bring changes?
* How would you assess the spiritual development of people within the congregation over the last six months?
* What is your assessment of the health and unity of the congregation?
  + Has it changed over the last six months?
  + What changes might still be required?

**Personal development**

* What do you see as your areas of:
* Greatest strength
* Weakness
* Most satisfying achievement
* Disappointment/frustration
* What is in place to ensure your own continuing spiritual nurture, refreshment, and growth?
  + Are you attending regular ministry supervision?
  + How are you resting and restoring each week?
  + Are there those you can share with at a deep and frank level about your emotional, relational, and sexual wellbeing?

**Professional development**

* What areas of professional development have you undertaken during the past year?
* What professional development plans do you have for the next six months/coming year?
* What Baptist whānau events do you hope to attend in the next six months?

**Communication**

* Are the communication lines within the church working effectively and in particular with the leadership groups?
* Has work within the wider Baptist whānau or with para-church entities had an effect on the amount of time committed to this church?

**Ethics and self-care practices**

* How intrusive has church-related work been to your family life?
  + What boundaries might need strengthening, and how can leadership support you with this?
* Have you been able to give adequate time to your family during the review period?
* Have you taken leave regularly and used it for refreshment purposes?
  + What leave plans do you have for the next 6 months?
* What time do you allocate to maintaining physical fitness, recreation, and leisure?
* Are you accurately claiming reimbursements for ministry costs?
* Does your ministry enhancement allowance adequately cover self-care expenses for you and your spouse?

**Forward planning**

* What is your vision for yourself and the church for the coming six months?
* How ready is this congregation to begin a pastoral search process? [if appropriate]
* How do you assess your role within an overall plan for the next six months?
  + How will you share responsibility for this with the leadership team?
* What are your plans once this Interim pastorate concludes?

**Position Description**

* What areas should stay the same and what need changing?

**Finally, and importantly**

* How can the leadership and congregation minister to you and your family?
* How might the wider Baptist whānau minister to you and your family?
* Are there any additional matters you wish to raise with the review team?

## END OF INTERIM PASTORATE – FINAL REVIEWS

At the end of an Interim or Interim pastorate, congregations are invited to undertake a formal review process. The focus of this review is to determine:

* The effectiveness of the interim process on the congregation’s wellbeing and missional effectiveness
* How the Interim Pastor shepherded the Interim process
* How the congregation responded to the Interim process
* How well the congregation and wider Baptist movement supported the Interim Pastor during their Interim pastorate
* How well the wider Baptist movement supported the congregation during the Interim process
* Opportunities to strengthen the NZ Baptist Union interim pastorate processes

**Process:**

These reviews are typically facilitated by a staff member of the local Regional Association and be done around or shortly after completion of the interim pastorate.

A final summary report would be released by the local Regional Association’s Regional Leader and copies given to:

* the outgoing Interim Pastor
* the congregation’s new pastor and leadership team chair
* the BUNZ Leadership Coordination Director (based at National Support Office)

Accompanying documents:

* Interim Pastorate Review (completed by the outgoing Interim Pastor)

*For further information or assistance with Interim Ministry Reviews, please contact your Region Leader or the BUNZ Leadership Coordination Director:  
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