# TRANSITION MINISTRY REVIEWS

*[Note: this document covers ministry review recommendations for transition ministry also known as intentional interim ministry. There is a separate document with for 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 transition ministry provides a vital opportunity to enhance or return health and missional effectiveness to congregations who have experienced loss, harm, or ongoing decline. Because Transition Pastors are often called to shepherd congregations who are facing difficult circumstances, BUNZ recommends that regular transition ministry reviews occur during each transition pastorate.

All transition ministry reviews must be handled professionally and pastorally. If they are handled poorly, they can be critically destructive to Transition Pastors, their families, and to congregations. 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 transition ministry reviews is **transition ministry development and enhancement**. The review process is intended to result in the Transition Pastor and congregants being strengthened, encouraged, and better equipped to carry out the transition or transition tasks the Lord has called them to.

It also provides an opportunity to assess the effectiveness of regional and national support for Transition Pastors and transition 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 transition ministry review process will result in:

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

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

Reviews of transition pastoral staff would typically be at 3 months after commencement, then at 6 monthly intervals unless otherwise specified in the Transition Pastor’s term of call agreement.

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

Many of the hassles surrounding transition ministry reviews will be avoided if the concept and process of review is agreed upon when a Transition Pastor is first called by a church, and if there is a clearly agreed position description outlining what the Transition Pastor is supposed to do. It is strongly recommended that 3-, 9- and 15-month ministry review dates are included in the Terms of Call Schedule.

## Types of Reviews

We have provided possible options for transition ministry reviews, and these include:

**1. Three Month Transition Ministry Review**

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

**2. Six Monthly Transition Ministry Reviews (typically at 9 and 15 months)**

The purpose of transition ministry progress reviews shall be to determine progress against the expected outcomes of the transition process. These reviews are designed as the ongoing evaluation of the Transition Pastor’s position description, Transition Ministry Plan, and Registration Development Agreement (for Baptist Registration), and ought also to include an assessment of the Transition Pastor’s self-care plan, and commitment to the Baptist Union’s Ethical Principles and Guidelines for Pastors and Leaders.

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

* Transition Pastorate review – a ministry review questionnaire to be completed by the outgoing Transition Pastor
* Combined transition pastorate and Transition Pastor review – a questionnaire reflecting on the effectiveness of the transition process and the performance of the outgoing Transition Pastor will be completed by the Elders. On request, this may be accompanied by a meeting between the Church Elders and Regional Leader (or nominee).
* Transition Pastor debriefing review - a debriefing review meeting involving the outgoing Transition Pastor, Regional Leader (or nominee) and BUNZ Leadership Coordination Director (from the National Support Centre) to assess and celebrate the effectiveness of the completed transition pastorate, and to determine any ongoing care or training needs of the Transition Pastor.

**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 Transition Pastor, comprising a member of the church leadership team, a member of the transition 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-Transition 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 Transition 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. Transition 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 Transition Ministry Plan and make appropriate changes
* Transition Pastor to set new goals and plans.
* Agree when the next review will take place

## THREE MONTH TRANSITION MINISTRY REVIEW

**Questions to ask the Transition Pastor** (remove those that do not fit your context)

* 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 transition 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 TRANSITION MINISTRY REVIEW

**Review of past six months:**

* What has the church achieved over the six months?
  + - Were transition task priorities set for the last six months and have these been achieved?
* How well is the wider congregation understanding and embracing the changes being made?
* What were the factors that may have contributed to not achieving some priorities?
* 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 influenced 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?
  + - What is planned in relation to the five transition tasks?
* 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 transition 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 TRANSITION PASTORATE – FINAL REVIEWS

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

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

**Process:**

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

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

* the outgoing Transition Pastor
* the congregation’s new pastor and leadership team chair
* the BUNZ Leadership Co-ordination Director

**Accompanying documents:**

* Transition Pastorate Review (completed by the outgoing Transition Pastor)
* Transition Ministry and Pastor Review (completed by the Church Elders)

*For further information or assistance with transition ministry reviews, please contact your Regional Leader or the BUNZ Leadership Co-ordination Director (based at the National Support Centre):  
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