

Sabbatical Policy

Brookside Church

INTRODUCTION

The concept of sabbatical is rooted in the biblical concept of “Sabbath” which God modeled (Genesis 2:1-4a) and commanded (Exodus 20:8-11). In Leviticus 25:1-7, the Lord says that after the sixth year the people were not supposed to sow the fields or harvest a crop. The land was allowed to rest, and therefore, so were the people. The Sabbath Day, The Year of Jubilee and the annual cycle of Feasts and Festivals were created by God for his people and are His gift of rest to us.

Sabbaticals have often been used in church and academia to provide a time of rest, recovery, renewal, and re-education for the individual. Many businesses are now providing paid sabbaticals for employees. We believe that our Senior Pastor should model God’s design for Sabbath rest. We believe that a time of sabbatical is important both in the sharpening and renewal of the pastor and for the health and strength of the Church. Sabbaticals are more than a reward for years of service. They are an investment for healthy years of service to come. A sabbatical is one part of an overall Ministry Health plan designed to keep your pastor healthy. The new policy ‘gently mandates’ that when a member of the pastoral staff has served seven years, the sabbatical is taken.

PURPOSE

The sabbatical is for the pursuit of activities approved by the Elders of the church. The intent of a sabbatical is (knowing that all three intents will not be fulfilled equally during a sabbatical):

1. To further the ministry objectives of the church
2. To enhance the spiritual intimacy/growth. of the staff member, and
3. To provide for physical, spiritual, and relational renewal and refreshment.

POLICY

Eligibility

A sabbatical may be granted to the Senior Pastor.

A sabbatical may be approved after the completion of the first seven years of full-time ministry at the church and every seventh year thereafter. Internship years are not counted as part of the total years of service.

Application

The Senior Pastor and/or the Elders will work together to determine a timeframe best suitable for the sabbatical. The staff member will work out the sabbatical details with his or her supervisor. A general sabbatical plan will be presented to The Elders at the time application for a sabbatical is made.

The sabbatical plan should include, but is not limited to:

- a general description of the desired sabbatical activities and how these activities will benefit the staff member and/ or the church
- the dates selected for the sabbatical
- how the staff member's responsibilities will be carried out during the sabbatical

Such a plan should be presented at least six months prior to the proposed sabbatical. Approval of a sabbatical plan is at the discretion of The Elders. Elders will add or remove items from the plan in an effort to ensure the desired outcome/expectations are met.

Timing

A sabbatical is available to the Senior Pastor for up to 12 weeks. Paid sabbatical time is in addition to available paid vacation time for the year in which the sabbatical is taken and vacation cannot be taken directly before or after the sabbatical period. Vacation time will be ½ the normal amount allocated per year.

It is required that the weeks be taken consecutively in order to maximize the possibility for refreshment or concentrated study. If possible, the sabbatical should be scheduled at a time that will minimize the disruptive effect on the normal operation of the church (i.e. summer will be preferable).

Additionally, no two staff members shall take a sabbatical in the same calendar year, unless explicit permission is granted.

Communication to Congregation

Provide multiple communication points from different staff members, elders about the upcoming sabbatical. Educate the congregation about the purpose and goals of the sabbatical.

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Challenge the congregation as to how they might incorporate the call for a regular Sabbath rest in their own lives.

Financial Agreement

- During the sabbatical, regular salary and full benefits will be paid.

- Reimbursable expenses will be determined on the basis of a sabbatical budget approved by the Elders.
- Qualified ministry or professional expenses that are already included in the non-sabbatical budget can be exercised during the sabbatical (i.e. conferences or training) if applicable.

Reports

Within 60 days after the conclusion of the sabbatical period, the pastor will make a written report to the Elders recapping how the time was spent and what was learned.

Employee and Church Agreement About Employment

The employee who chooses to take a Sabbatical leave under this policy agrees to the following terms.

- Because the Sabbatical leave is unlike an ordinary paid vacation, the employee agrees that if they are considering leaving the church prior to sabbatical that they would not pursue the sabbatical leave at this time.
- The Pastor or staff member is expected to refrain from seeking additional work opportunities and income during the sabbatical (i.e. preaching, weddings, funerals, etc.).

The church agrees to the following terms:

- The church agrees that it will not in any way seek a replacement for an employee during his Sabbatical leave.
- The church agrees that it will honor the leave of the employee and agrees not to contact him or her with church business.