



GUIDELINES FOR THE  
*Sabbatical Leave*  
SABBATICAL LEAVE

LAKEMOUNT WORSHIP CENTER

# Introduction

In an era when exhaustion is considered the reward for efficiency, and busyness a badge of usefulness, the Leadership of Lakemount Worship Center recognize the supremacy of God's Word in the principle of the Sabbath rest. God gave Moses specific instructions to rest. Once per week, and once every seven years [Lev 25:1-7]. The Leadership of Lakemount Worship Center acknowledges this principle, re-iterated again in the letter to the Hebrews [Heb 4:9-11].

## DEFINITION

The leadership and pastors acknowledge a joint responsibility to ensure the effective use of a sabbatical leave so as to strengthen the church in the achievement of its mission. The sabbatical serves to fulfill the mending and equipping aspects of our church vision.

### WHAT A SABBATICAL IS

- > it is a time of physical rest & family connection;
- > it is a time of spiritual refreshing;
- > it is a time of study and new learning;
- > it is a time of devoted, focused prayer;
- > it is a time to spend with God, without the interruptions of normal work routines;
- > it is a time to focus on inner healing and spiritual growth;

The Leadership of Lakemount Worship Center submits that a sabbatical leave is not an entitlement. A sabbatical leave is intended for rest, study, research, writing, and spiritual growth. The sabbatical leave provides a means by which a pastor increases knowledge through study, grows spiritually through focused prayer, achieves physical rest, and strengthens contacts with other ministries, thus enhancing his contribution to the church upon return.

The Leadership firmly believes that the time of sabbatical is a time of commanded rest for the pastor. The pastor is to be given all latitude possible, by all members of the church, to ensure separation from church responsibilities. While on leave, the pastor must be considered generally unavailable, and the Leadership will work with the pastor to keep him segregated from the congregation to accomplish the goals of the sabbatical.

## PARAMETERS FOR A SABBATICAL LEAVE

To be eligible for sabbatical leave, a pastor shall have completed six uninterrupted years of service at Lakemount Worship Center at the time of the sabbatical, or have completed six uninterrupted years of service at Lakemount Worship Center since the last sabbatical leave. Normally, the pastor will take the sabbatical in the seventh year of service. Normally, not more than one pastoral staff member may take sabbatical leave in any twelve month period.

- > The duration of the sabbatical will normally be three (3) to six (6) months, and may be extended to maximum of eight (8) months under exceptional circumstances.
- > A sabbatical shall not be broken into several short-term leaves.
- > A pastor who takes sabbatical shall not be entitled to the annual one-week study leave allotted for that year.
- > In a sabbatical year, a pastor may apply to the Board of Administration for regular vacation entitlement. A pastor on sabbatical shall receive their regular salary & benefits package in full unless mutually negotiated otherwise.

The following are the duties and roles to be played-out by both the pastor and the church to ensure a beneficial sabbatical. This procedure is broken into three areas of responsibility; that of the pastor, that of the Boards which will oversee the sabbatical, and that of the church. Some of the requirements of the sabbatical may change based on the position held by the person taking the sabbatical.

Prepared by,  
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# Responsibilities of the APPLICANT

## 1. APPLICATION FOR SABBATICAL LEAVE

**1.1** > A pastor requesting sabbatical leave shall, not less than 15 months prior to the start of leave, submit a written application to both the Board of Administration and the Elders. In the application the pastor shall:

- a) formally request sabbatical leave, and propose start and end dates;
- b) outline expectations of the leave, and provide a study plan;
- c) outline accountability issues to ensure that the study plan is followed;
- d) outline a mechanism for remaining in contact with the Sabbatical committee;

## 2. USE OF EQUIPMENT AND FACILITIES

**2.1** > A pastor on sabbatical will not normally be permitted to use the church office equipment, make use of staff, or use facilities, including vehicles.

**2.2** > A pastor on sabbatical, or about to take sabbatical, may make application to the Sabbatical Committee for occasional use of church equipment, facilities, and vehicles provided such use has critical impact upon successful completion of the sabbatical.

## 3. SUBSTITUTION OF RESPONSIBILITIES

**3.1** > In order to meet the requirements of Sec 3.2, below, twelve months before the start of the sabbatical, the Sabbatical Committee and the applicant shall meet to catalogue the applicant's present roles and responsibilities.

**3.2** > The Sabbatical Committee and the applicant shall work together to appoint, equip, and support an individual to direct the duties and responsibilities usually help by the applicant on sabbatical.

## 4. CONTACT WITH THE CHURCH

**4.1** > It is recommended that the pastor not attend church functions during the sabbatical period. If the pastor's family chooses to continue attending church functions, they may do so, as it is the pastor who is on sabbatical, and not his family.

**4.2** > While on sabbatical, the pastor is to remain in contact with a designate of the Sabbatical Committee. This liaison person shall have the responsibility of ensuring a flow of information between the pastor and the church. The liaison shall be a member of the Sabbatical Committee who will act as the sole contact between the church and the pastor.

**4.3** > The pastor is directed to inform the liaison if a congregant contacts the pastor directly for ministry purposes. The Sabbatical Committee will act on the contact issue.

**4.4** > It is the responsibility of the pastor & the liaison to arrange for regular contact. One contact per month is recommended.

**4.5** > Information exchanged should focus on the well-being of the pastor & his family and the general progress of his sabbatical plan. Church information should be of a general nature, with no references to specific incidents or problems.

## 5. MAJOR INCIDENT

**5.1** > In the event of a major incident (death of a congregant, serious accident, etc.) the pastor may be requested by the Sabbatical Committee to attend to the specific need.

**5.2** > If, in the opinion of the Sabbatical Committee, the major incident may negatively affect the successful completion of the sabbatical, the Sabbatical Committee will meet with the pastor to determine the degree of impact, the likelihood of successful completion of sabbatical, and need to postpone, suspend, or extend the sabbatical. Both the pastor and Sabbatical Committee will work together and issue a statement to settle the issue.

## 6. REPORTS

**6.1** > Written updates shall be provided at least twice by the pastor while on sabbatical, to the Sabbatical Committee. These updates shall outline progress to date and report on issues which may require the Sabbatical Committee's attention.

**6.2** > The Sabbatical reports shall, by their nature, remain confidential. However, the Sabbatical Committee may, at its discretion, summarize or recount contents to the congregation, for the purposes of keeping the congregation updated on the progress of the sabbatical.

**6.3** > The pastor shall prepare a final written report to be submitted to the Sabbatical Committee and Leadership Council, that will include the sabbatical goals met and exceeded; unexpected tasks and goals given by God to add to or replace the pastor's goals; and discuss the spiritual effect on the pastor.

**6.4** > The report shall be received and reviewed in a meeting of the Leadership Council, the Sabbatical Committee, and the pastor. A question and answer session shall be held. More information may be requested if the need arises, and re-submission of a final written report shall be made to both the Council of Elders and the Board of Administration.

## 7. OUTSIDE ENGAGEMENTS AND REMUNERATION

**7.1** > While on sabbatical, it is recommended that the pastor not participate in ministry duties of any church. The pastor may speak briefly to a congregation or assembly but not for the purpose of receiving remuneration.

## 8. RETURN FROM SABBATICAL

**8.1** > In the first week following the return from sabbatical, the pastor will meet with the Leadership Council and the Sabbatical Committee to:

- a) receive and review the Pastor's final report,
- b) receive and review the Sabbatical Committee's report,
- c) undertake a time of prayer and release back into ministry

**8.2** > If a lay person or any other staff member, who has assumed a role once held by the pastor, in the opinion of the Leadership, is able to continue in that role, then the Leadership will discuss with the pastor the best course of action for that role. The purpose is to raise leaders within the church to promote church body growth.

**8.3** The returning pastor will not make any procedural decisions or give direction until the terms of 8.1 are complete.

## 9. RESIGNATIONS, TERMINATIONS

**9.1** A pastor who returns from sabbatical is expected to remain on staff with the church for at least 12 months following the sabbatical. If a pastor resigns on his own initiative before 1 year after the completion of a sabbatical, the Lakemount Leadership will be released from all expectations customary of severance agreements beyond the legal requirements.

# Responsibilities of the BOARDS OF GOVERNANCE

One of the goals of a sabbatical period is to grow the body into a role of ministry. Ministry does not necessarily mean preaching, but service to the body. The Leadership is keen to see individuals raised-up who are able to assume some of the duties usually carried by the pastor on sabbatical. The result is a leader from the body who can serve the body for the benefit of the body. This will happen while the pastor is on sabbatical. The body will be asked to grow into service.

## 1. ELIGIBILITY:

The Board of Administration will inform of all pastoral staff of the availability of the sabbatical.

## 2. APPLICATION FOR SABBATICAL LEAVE:

**2.1** > A Sabbatical committee composed of at least two Elders, two Deacons and any other members that the Leadership Council may wish to appoint, shall be struck to administer a request for sabbatical leave. This committee shall receive the application from the sabbatical candidate, and assess the request.

**2.2** > The Sabbatical Committee shall have the authority to review and recommend the sabbatical application, and the terms proposed in the pastor's application to the Leadership Council. The Sabbatical committee may recommend changes to the application and request re-submission of the report if the need is warranted.

**2.3** > The Board of Administration shall determine the degree of reimbursement for courses undertaken and completed while on sabbatical.

## 3. SALARY AND BENEFITS:

**3.1** > The Board of Administration shall establish a fund to set aside monies necessary to pay salary and benefits to a pastor on sabbatical.

## 4. USE OF EQUIPMENT AND FACILITIES:

**4.1** > The Sabbatical Committee may recommend to the Board of Administration that a pastor on sabbatical be permitted to occasionally use church equipment, facilities, and vehicles provided such use has critical impact upon successful completion of the sabbatical. The Board of Administration will consider the recommendation(s) and make final decision.

**4.2** > The Sabbatical Committee shall, prior to the start of sabbatical, issue a report to the pastor, describing what church facilities may be used while on sabbatical.

## 5. SUBSTITUTION OF RESPONSIBILITIES

**5.1** > In order to meet the requirements of Sec 5.2, below, twelve months before the start of the sabbatical, the Sabbatical Committee and the pastor shall meet to catalogue the pastor's present roles and responsibilities.

**5.2** > The Sabbatical Committee and the pastor shall work together to appoint, equip, and support an individual to direct the duties and responsibilities usually held by the pastor on sabbatical.

## 6. CONTACT WITH THE CHURCH

6.1 Before the start of sabbatical the Sabbatical Committee shall put in place a communication mechanism for the congregation, staff, and leadership to send their regards to the pastor. The purpose of the communication mechanism is to have a means by which the congregation may extend a prayer of health and happiness; but still maintain the pastor's segregation from the congregation.

6.2 > The staff and leadership shall contact the liaison if they wish to relay information to, or inquire of the pastor on sabbatical. The liaison, under advisement of the Sabbatical committee will determine what information is relayed to the pastor on sabbatical.

6.3 > The Leadership shall make clear communication to the congregation with respect to the sabbatical, its purpose, duration etc. and all interim mechanisms being implemented.

## 7. REPORTS

7.1 > The Sabbatical committee shall provide to the pastor on sabbatical, through the liaison, such information as it deems appropriate for the pastor to know without compromising the separation intent of the sabbatical process.

7.2 > The Sabbatical Committee shall submit to the Council of Elders and the Board of Administration a final written report of the church's spiritual growth during the pastor's sabbatical. Also discussed will be the pastor's leadership roles taken-up by various persons, how the church functioned in the pastor's absence; problems which occurred, and solutions which were developed.

## 8. RETURN FROM SABBATICAL

8.1 > In the first week following the return from sabbatical, the pastor will meet with the Leadership Council and the Sabbatical Committee to:

- a) receive and review the Pastor's final report,
- b) receive and review the Sabbatical Committee's report,
- c) undertake a time of prayer to release the pastor back into ministry

## 9. RESIGNATIONS, TERMINATIONS

9.1 > A pastor who returns from sabbatical is generally expected to remain on staff with the church for at least 12 months following the sabbatical. The Leadership Covenants to make no alteration to the pastor's position, authority or remuneration during the sabbatical period, except for reasons of moral failure or other such indiscretions as outlined in the constitution of the PAOC. The constitution shall govern such actions.

# Responsibilities of the CHURCH BODY

## 1. THE BODY OF CHRIST

The members of the church should continue to function as the Body of Christ in our community, carrying-out the ministries of the church [Heb 10:23-25].

## 2. SABBATICAL BOUNDARIES

While on sabbatical, the pastor is to be considered not available, and the pastor's family should not be considered a means of contact with the pastor.

## 3. PRAYER

In the course of the sabbatical, continue to pray for your pastor.



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