

Baptist Union of NSW and ACT
Pastoral Care for Ministers and Pastors
Guides and Resources

Introduction

A theological framework to guide Ministry

There is no stereotype for healthy pastoral ministry. Just as diversity is a divine creation in God, we each bring differences which enhance the strength of the Church and promote our commitment to worship, evangelism, fellowship, teaching and compassion.

Rather than preaching homogeneity, the resources developed within this guide are here to support ministers and pastors in their own self-reflection, assisting them as they look in themselves to find the guidance they need from God.

By providing guides and resources to support the mentoring, spiritual development, professional enrichment and opportunities for ministers and pastors, we hope to create a supportive environment where pastoral health can flourish - a place where pastors are encouraged to look within themselves, to determine their own level of health and are supported where necessary to grow stronger.

Within the Baptist Union of NSW and ACT, a healthy pastor is a person of ***character and posture***. A person who seeks:

- Above all else to know God and secondly to know him or herself and the people he or she serves.
- To fulfil God's calling on his or her life with faith and focus.
- To be a Christian person of integrity as an individual and, if married, within the partnership of marriage and within their family.

A healthy pastor has a growing awareness of who he or she is in light of their personal and family story, giftedness and accountability before God. As a student of the word of God, he or she seeks diligently to understand the community and the people he or she serves.

A healthy pastor lives for the glory of God and the extension of God's kingdom. Living gently with men and women, girls and boys, a healthy pastor is a thoughtful, accountable and constructive member of the wider community of faith to which he or she belongs.

A healthy pastor submits to ***ongoing formation***. In full cooperation with the Holy Spirit, personal spiritual formation is nurtured through regular Bible reading, consistent exegetical practice and constant prayer (1 Timothy 4:6-10). With a vision for personal formation, a healthy pastor practices the presence of God persistently, working for the coming of God's kingdom, on earth and in Heaven. He or she:

- Lives in submission to the lordship of Christ, practicing other spiritual disciplines such as living simply and cultivating meaningful fellowship with peers in a local congregation and pastoral ministry.

- Seeks at all times and in all places to exercise faith, love and hope (1 Corinthians 13: 13 and 1 Thessalonians 1: 3)
- Constantly works at showing love, affection and care towards his or her spouse and children if married and a parent.
- Walks intentionally with the Holy Spirit, nurturing love, joy peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self control (Galatians 5:22 and 2 Timothy 2:1-6 & 13 NRSV).
- Is realistic and humble about personal gifts, recognising the importance of balancing personal strengths with the acceptance of personal limitations (Romans 12: 3-8 NSRV).
- Recognises the constant possibility of blind spots, prejudices and biases that are reflected in the theology pastors embrace, their behaviours and relationships and in their teaching and preaching, striving to stay open to God and the wisdom of others.
- Is disciplined in caring for his or her body by eating and exercising healthily.
- Keeps up friendships outside the local congregation with the discipline and effort that this will require.
- Keeps him or herself accountable to family members and to a spiritual mentor through regular open meetings.
- Avoids all obsessive and compulsive actions and addictions conscientiously
- Listens to God, self and others –
 - Accepting the ministry of others as well as readily ministering with others.
 - Listening carefully and acting on the constructive criticism of others who care for us and for whose care we are pastorally responsible.

Despite owning his or her theology and seeking to embody it in life and relationships, a healthy pastor remains open to yet more learning from Scripture, life and others. A healthy pastor embraces the boundaries set by the values of the CAP (Continuing Accreditation Process) protocols, accepting accountability for reading and ministry practices and involvement in ministries beyond the local congregation.

A healthy pastor maintains strong **relationships**. He or she relates to God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit as a child by grace and through faith, and is constantly prayerful. Recognising that Christian community and relationships are built on the reality that we all serve God, the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit, he or she knows that God is relationship, community and love – all three in one. A healthy pastor takes this knowledge into the community:

- Relating to spouse and family members with a warmth that is mutual in its giving and receiving.
- Dealing with conflict in marriage and family directly and constructively without abuse or misplaced anger or frustration.
- Constantly working on communication with family, church leaders, and the members of the congregation in which he or she serves.
- Relating to the congregation as brothers and sisters in Christ in a covenant of mutual giving and receiving of respect and care, recognising that we are all to focus on Jesus the Lord.

A healthy pastor adopts the mindset and function of *ministry*. Taking a large world view which reflects the heart of a missionary God, he or she gives leadership in the promotion and work of mission, church growth and evangelism:

- Modelling and promoting community and personal justice, along with the exercise of mercy towards the marginalised and forgotten.
- Preaching and living grace.
- Praying for the people with whom he lives and ministers constantly.
- Exercising gifts joyfully and faithfully for the good of others in Christ.
- Preparing and preaching, teaching and pastoring with discipline and focus.
- Constantly reading both classical and new books and journals, and preaching and teaching the opinions of responsible others while producing original work.
- Pastoring the strong and the weak, caring for God's people by feeding them with good preaching and teaching and quality care (Ezekiel 34, John 10 and 20, 1 Peter 2: 20-25)

The healthy pastor may well be a vision caster for a congregation, or alternatively will be the one who leads in promoting a congregation's godly vision. He or she is committed to excellence in pastoral care (Acts 20: 28) and will not shy away from leadership, but will be collegial in style. Constantly reflecting on leadership and pastoral action with the view to improving future leadership and ministry, a healthy pastor seeks professional assistance quickly and diligently when confronted with his or her personal poor behaviours or attitudes. Although required to exercise the ministry of evangelism whether or not he or she is particularly an evangelist by gifting, a healthy pastor addresses weaknesses with diligence in order to serve others as he or she grows in Christ and exercises his or her ministries.

The following guides and resources have been developed to help guide ministers and pastors as they seek to fulfil their calling as healthy pastors, and to assist congregations to work together to tackle challenges along the way and enable continued growth in God.

- *Based on the words of Rev Dr John Reid, October 2008*

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