

Policy

PASTORAL AND MINISTRY REVIEWS

For the well-being, personal development and professional growth of pastors, and the health of churches, Ministry Support and Development strongly advises that churches and pastors undertake periodic and regular Pastoral Reviews, externally monitored.

These reviews should be 360 degree in format. That is the review should seek input from the person/ministry being reviewed, the peers of the person being reviewed, any persons that they lead and those to whom they are accountable.

Process

Ministry Support and Development has at its disposal a number of tools and models for Pastoral Review, and is able to externally assist churches and pastors in the carrying out of such reviews.

Pastors and churches wishing MSD to assist in conducting reviews should contact the **Director of Pastoral Development** at the Baptist Ministry Centre, Epping, **9868 9230**.

Guidelines

1. There may be a variety of **purposes** in conducting any specific review of a church's ministry, pastor, or pastoral team member. These purposes may include such things as:
 - to better understand strengths and weaknesses of a pastor's role and performance;
 - to better understand how effectively the ministry is progressing in the eyes of the congregation;
 - to understand the 'balance' of an existing pastoral team;
 - to evaluate the progress in a pastor's professional development;
 - to analyse one particular aspect of a pastor's ministry;
 - to assess the perceptions of a pastor's ministry after a period in his or her role.

The first step in a review process is thus to decide upon the particular purposes of the current review.

The assumption in these notes is that the essential basis of the review is personal rather than administrative. That is, the pastor's ministry is not being assessed for purpose of their management as employee, but as a tool for personal improvement.

Therefore, whatever the specific purposes of any individual review, such a review should always have as its **implicit** and **explicit**, its **underlying** and its **stated**, its **private** and its **public** purpose, the goal of assisting the pastor to **improve** and **develop** in their service for God as seen in their ministry through the local congregation. The purpose of these kinds of reviews is thus to aid and contribute to **growth** of the pastor and thereby the church. It should always be made manifestly clear that the review is **not** tied to continuance or otherwise of the pastor, nor to salary and conditions adjustments.

Furthermore, the material and data gained from the review is **owned** by the pastor not by the congregation or the administration of the church in these kinds of reviews.

2. The review should be a **360 degree review**: that is, the pastor reflects on their own ministry, with feedback from those who work closest with him/her (such as any other paid staff both administrative and pastoral), key leaders in the congregation (such as

elders/ deacons), and some randomly selected representatives of the wider church, which then becomes material for reflection and, hopefully, development. That material should then be collated, analysed, and fed back to the pastor in a structured and recorded way for their reflection, so that they can compare their perception of how they are functioning with the perception of the church. There should then be an opportunity for the pastor to meet with someone, possibly external to the church (eg. MSD staff or consultant) to reflect on the outcomes of the review and work on any changes and development they need to undertake.

3. The review is to be devised so that it focuses on the overall ministry role of the pastor, but looks for the **positives** as well as areas that could be improved. It is **not** an opportunity for pastor bashing. It will start on the (biblical) assumption that all pastors are gifted in **some** areas but not so gifted in others, rather than the expectation that all the desires of all the people will be met in the pastor's role and functioning.
4. The whole church should be informed that the pastor is, with her/his cooperation, undergoing an appraisal, and that some of them will be asked to participate anonymously in that review. In selecting representative people from the congregation, the church leadership may invite the pastor to suggest names, in addition to a list they themselves formulate. However, the leadership must do their best to ensure that those taking part are representative of the whole of the congregation. Those selected need to clearly understand the confidential nature of the review, and that this is **not** a chance to anonymously vent complaints about the pastor, but provide **feedback**, 'for their improvement.'
5. Three respected, appropriately skilled, and trusted people from the leadership or wider congregation, including at least one deacon or elder, should be selected to oversee the whole review process, in conjunction with an external person (MSD staff or consultant) involved to assist with the review, if one is chosen.
6. The detailed results of the review should remain utterly **confidential** to the pastor and the person(s) who work through it with her/him. To reiterate, the **pastor**, in this kind of review, **owns** the results of the review. Of course the pastor is at liberty to discuss the details of the review with anyone they wish to, should that be their desire. The church should be **broadly informed** that the review has been undertaken and that the pastor is working through the feedback he/she has received, with the church's leadership.
7. Ideally, a **simple learning track** as a result of the review will be worked out with the pastor, to put into place processes for ministry improvement in some selected areas over the next twelve months. This may be undertaken in conjunction with an MSD representative or consultant, if so desired.
8. **Suggested review timetable:**
 - Discuss with the pastor the proposed review and its specific nature
 - Select an 'administrator' in the church to oversee the review process
 - Select those who will be asked to contribute – co-workers, lay leaders (deacons/elders) and church members/attendees
 - Select the church members/attendees randomly – say, by choosing every eleventh person in the church "Who's Who"
 - Distribute material to the pastor and those others contributing
 - Allow one to three weeks for material to be returned
 - Allow a fortnight for collation and writing up of feedback
 - Provide feedback for the pastor to read
 - Hold meeting with the pastor to review feedback
 - Establish any learning, development or support processes that need to be put into place as a result of the review
 - Provide brief, general report to the church meeting