

Grace Hills Church Pastoral Sabbatical Policy

Definition

A sabbatical is a time of enrichment and personal growth, to include rest, renewal, stimulation and development across spiritual, physical, and intellectual dimensions. The goal of the sabbatical is to ensure continued ministry excellence and faithfulness for the individual and the local church. Without this synergy, the purpose of the sabbatical is undermined.

Focus

A pastor initiates the sabbatical process by reaching the eligibility requirements and then submitting a plan for review by the Pastor's Management Team. Sabbaticals require a plan that is pre-approved and then a report after the sabbatical is completed.

Eligibility

Sabbaticals are limited to full time pastors. There is a distinction based upon the role of the pastor (e.g., lead, executive, & staff pastor). The pastor must have a minimum of five years of service to be initially eligible; the frequency of eligibility is a minimum of five years after the last sabbatical; the request for sabbatical must provide a minimum three months notice.

Timing

The timing for a sabbatical must be agreed to by the Pastor's Management Team. Such factors as time of year, the condition and stability of the pastor's ministry and the impact on key church events are essential components of timing decisions. The transition of the ministry leadership before and after the sabbatical is an important consideration.

Cost

The costs to the church and the individual for the sabbatical will be handled on a case-by-case basis. Normal sabbaticals will be handled via compensation and benefits, as if the time were vacation. The Pastor's Management Team may approve education, travel or other expenses.

Length

The Lead Pastor receives up to 12 weeks. Executive Pastors receive up to 8 weeks for the initial sabbatical; up to 10 weeks for second and following sabbaticals. Staff Pastors receive up to 4 weeks for the initial sabbatical; duration will increase an additional 2 weeks with every successive sabbatical up to a total of 8 weeks.

Concurrency

Where more than one sabbatical is requested for a period of time, the Pastor's Management Team will consider how multiple sabbaticals will impact the health of the church and decide on a case-by-case basis. As a rule, concurrent sabbaticals will be discouraged.