

## SABBATICAL POLICY – RECOMMENDED FOR CHURCHES

The concept of the Sabbatical comes from the very fabric of God’s word. We all know that “Sabbath” means seven. On the 7<sup>th</sup> day God rested from creating and the 7<sup>th</sup> day became a special day of rest. Later, in Leviticus, the “Sabbath” is extended to the land itself. It is this principle of rest that God has woven into the very fabric of our being that the concept of a “Sabbatical” is derived. With this biblical principle in mind, the District Presbytery endorses the following Sabbatical Policy for senior pastors and pastoral staff in all of our NCN churches.

A. Purpose:

The purpose of a sabbatical is for rest, reflection, rejuvenation, and restoration of the minister and their family. The sabbatical is to “recharge” spiritual batteries drawn down by the constant act of giving.

B. Basic Plan of a Sabbath:

1. At the end of six (6) consecutive years of ministry the church should provide for a sabbatical rest for its pastor(s).
2. The Sabbath is to be approved by the local board and communicated to the District in the year the Sabbath is taken.
3. The Sabbath shall be for a period of not less than one (1) month and not more than three (3) months.
4. The congregation shall be informed and either staff pastors shall fill the pulpit or the District may be asked for assistance.

C. Sabbatical Activity:

1. The minister shall engage in personal relaxation, ministerial development, or other activity not related to the normal pastoral responsibilities.
2. A minimum of one (1) week shall be spent with family.
3. There should be no preaching or ministry assignments during the sabbatical.
4. Educational opportunities are approved as are certain ministerial retreats or conferences.
5. The minister will give a report to the board of his sabbatical upon completion of the sabbatical period.

D. Funding:

1. The church will continue all salary and benefit coverage during the sabbatical period.
2. The church should establish a stipend to cover any conference, education, or travel costs. This should be a fixed amount that is documented by receipts.
3. An honorarium amount should be established for any pulpit guest during the sabbatical period.
4. Vacation should not be tied to the sabbatical. The sabbatical is not an “accrued” benefit and if not taken cannot be paid out as vacation or sick leave.

Longevity of pastors and staff are often the surest signs of a healthy growing church. This policy is suggested to help each church honor and reward longevity in the pulpit and in staff ministries, as well as aiding the ministers of the church to remain vital and strong in their ministries.