

Sabbatical Manual

Southeastern California Conference
of Seventh-day Adventists

Ministerial Department



SABBATICAL MANUAL

I. Why A Sabbatical?

Church members often see the exciting part of being a pastor—that is, chairing meetings, preaching, etc. The fact is that being a pastor involves many hours every week of very high pressure and often routine work, running from one hospital to another, trying to prepare sermons, etc. One problem that church members often forget is that usually the Sabbath is one of the busiest days for the pastor. While he/she is indeed ministering through preaching, visitation, attending potlucks, etc., it still takes away from time alone and his/her time with family. One of the ways the Seventh-day Adventist Church has historically handled this is to move pastors every three to four years. This way, the pastor gets a little different perspective and is often able to better cope.

Certainly, it is far better for pastors to have time built in, from time to time, for renewal and regeneration. This benefits the congregation greatly! Several congregations whose pastors have taken sabbaticals have been amazed at the changes in preaching, prayer meetings and other programs after the sabbatical. All of us need time to be alone, alone with our families, and alone with God. Since the pastor is the spiritual leader of the congregation, it is especially important for him or her to have this type of time.

The sabbatical is not meant to be a vacation! The sabbatical should not generally be connected with vacation time. Rather, it is a time for renewal and spiritual regeneration.

II. Sources of Information

Churches are provided three sources of information regarding sabbaticals from Southeastern California Conference Ministerial Department. These sources are:

1. A 25-minute video tape prepared for the church board explaining the rationale and procedures to be involved in filling out the forms for the sabbatical.
2. The sabbatical manual, which you are presently reading, explains the philosophy and policies, as well as samples of each of the forms which are to be filled out by pastors applying for a sabbatical. These forms illustrate the type of information that is

needed. The purpose of the forms is so that the church and pastor will be comfortable that all areas have been handled. Obviously, there may be a number of things that the pastor and church board need to discuss that do not need to be filled out on the individual forms. The forms to be filled out are available to the pastor and church board from the Ministerial Department of Southeastern California Conference. These forms are in triplicate. One copy is sent to the head elder, one to the pastor, and one maintained in the Ministerial Department. All forms are to be signed off by the pastor and the head elder, with the exception of one form which is to be signed off by the pastor's spouse.

3. A brochure that can be distributed to the congregation describing the need for, and value of, sabbaticals. This should be done after final approval of the proposal.

III. Suggested Procedures

While the procedures will vary from one church to another, a general form that would be of help would be the following:

1. Meet With Church Leaders

A pastor desiring a sabbatical should put together a short proposal and share this with his/her head elder. If the head elder is supportive, then it should be supported by the board of elders at a more formal meeting. Once this is done, if the leaders agree with the proposal, or the proposal is modified by some of the church leaders' input, then the next step is to present it to the church board.

2. Church Board Meeting

At the church board meeting the head elder should present the proposal to the board to see if they are interested in supporting the proposal. If they are, then the videotape should be shown. If they are in concurrence with moving on with the proposal, then the next procedure should be handing out manuals to the church board to study during the next month.

3. Set Up Small Committee Chaired by the Head Elder

This small committee is organized to sharpen up the proposal to be brought to the church board next time. If there is adequate

support at this time, the process of filling out the forms may take place also.

4. Second Church Board Meeting

At this second church board meeting, the proposal should be studied by the church board, as well as the forms reviewed that have been proposed by the small committee meeting with the pastor. At the point these are approved, they should then be sent to the Conference Ministerial Director. The Conference Ministerial Director will secure approval by Conference Administration. Once this is done, it will go to the Conference Sabbatical Committee for final approval. It is crucial that all of the material be in the Conference Office at least two months prior to the beginning date of the proposal.

IV. Sabbatical Policy

The Southeastern California Conference Committee, in July 1989, voted a sabbatical policy. There are three major presuppositions that are relevant to the local congregation. They are:

1. A sabbatical should be understood and supported by the local church, and especially by the local church board.
2. After the sabbatical, there should be a report of the value to the pastor, both to the local church board and to the conference Ministerial Department.
3. The sabbatical should not be combined with vacation time, except in very unique cases.

Objectives of the Sabbatical

The sabbatical is not intended to be a time of only intellectual pursuits. It is not only a time of study, but rather should involve five specific areas. They are:

1. **A time for personal and family renewal.** Many pastors' families are in serious difficulties. This is often precipitated by the lack of time for true one-to-one relationships.
2. **Physical, intellectual, and emotional restoration.** The pastor, at the end of the sabbatical, should have had an opportunity to improve his/her physical, intellectual and emotional realms.

3. **A time of professional growth.** The pastor needs time to develop in new areas where time is not available in his/her week-to-week schedule.
4. **A time of spiritual growth.** Pastors cannot spend all of their time pouring out their experience with God to the congregation, if they have no time to "recharge their spiritual batteries."
5. **Peer interaction.** Pastors are often far more isolated than the congregation understands. Pastors need time to visit with other pastors, to attend other churches, to get some unique perspectives that will help them break out of the "rut" of pastoring year by year.

Length of Sabbatical

The conference policy states that the sabbatical can involve up to four weeks for every two years of pastoral work and that this time may accrue up to one quarter (12 weeks), at the rate of two weeks per year, after the first two years.

In most cases, a shorter sabbatical would be appropriate. The time limitations are simply maximum times available. The Sabbatical is not automatic and is based on: (1) need; (2) church support; (3) conference administration support; and (4) a detailed proposal by the pastor.

Funding

While the pastor's salary continues, sabbaticals can cost money--the need to go to a retreat center, to attend workshops, etc. For that reason, there are three primary sources of funding. They are:

1. Continuing education funds from the conference up to \$400 a year (depending on Conference Committee funding each year).
2. Recommended local church subsidy of \$250 for every two years the pastor has served the local church, which may accrue to a total of \$500. While this is at the discrimination of the local church, the local church is encouraged to cooperate in the funding of the sabbatical.
3. Conference subsidy--for every two years, \$250, which may accrue up to \$500 (depending on Conference Committee funding each year).

Funding illustrates the concept that the sabbatical should be seen as a cooperative effort of the local congregation and the conference.

Who May Apply For A Sabbatical?

There are a number of criteria that have been established as policy for individuals desiring a sabbatical. They are:

1. The pastor must have completed the ordination process. This precludes individuals taking a sabbatical during the first four to five years of ministry.
2. The pastor should generally have served at least two years in a church before taking a sabbatical.
3. The local church may wish to establish a small committee to help the pastor develop the sabbatical proposal. This should usually be chaired by the head elder.
4. The local church board must give approval to the sabbatical proposal.
5. Conference administration must give approval to the sabbatical proposal.
6. The Conference Sabbatical Committee, consisting of three individuals, will study and evaluate the sabbatical proposal. In many cases, the sabbatical proposal will have to be rewritten several times before it is finally accepted by the sabbatical committee.
7. The conference Ministerial Department will provide maintenance of records.
8. A sabbatical proposal must be submitted to the Ministerial Department of Southeastern California Conference a minimum of two months prior to the start of the sabbatical.
9. Within 30 days of completion of the sabbatical, the pastor will write a two to three page evaluation paper describing the growth experience of the sabbatical. This paper will be submitted to the local church board, as well as the Ministerial Department.

V. Description of Forms in Manual

The sample forms are worksheets that are to be prepared by the pastor and the head elder or small committee that works with him/her. These are to be signed off by the head elder, whose signature signifies the approval of the church board, as well as the pastor, when approved by the church board. The following are only samples of the type of information needed.

Worship Speakers During Sabbatical

It is crucial that worship speakers be arranged before the sabbatical begins. The sample shows the dates, the individuals who will be speaking, and their phone numbers, so the head elder or anyone needing to contact the individuals from the church can contact them. In the case of an associate pastor, simply state "This does not apply" and sign.

Prayer Meeting Speakers During the Sabbatical

This sheet is similar to the worship services, but is used to line up the prayer meetings. If prayer meetings are not in operation in the local congregation, that needs to be noted on this sheet.

Visitation During Sabbatical

There are individuals who need to be visited during the sabbatical. There are three types of people who could be doing the visiting. They are: lay people in the congregation; retired ministers; and practicing ministers from other nearby congregations. The name of the individuals who can visit and their phone number must be on the sheet. Of great importance is the question, "Have they been contacted?" It is assumed that most people will be contacted so that they will know they could be called upon. If they have not been contacted, this needs to be checked on this sheet.

Funerals and Times of Crises During Sabbatical

One of the biggest concerns to lay people is if there were to be a funeral and the pastor is out of town for several weeks, who will be available to conduct the funeral? This could be retired ministers or other local pastors. It is extremely important that these names be provided and that at least one or two have been contacted to be sure they would be willing to fill in.

Boards and Committees During Sabbatical

Who will be chairing the church board? When will it be meeting? What other committees are meeting, such as Sabbath School councils, lay advisory committees, etc? What dates will they meet? Who will be in charge? And what are their phone numbers?

Bible Studies During Sabbatical

There are a number of Bible studies usually given by the pastor. One of the concerns of the congregation would be that these would not be carried out during the period of a sabbatical, and during these weeks the interest could be lost. For that reason, it is important that the pastor arrange for individuals to carry out the Bible studies, and that their phone numbers be available. It is crucial that these individuals be contacted and taken to the home and introduced to the people who are involved in Bible studies. If there are no Bible studies being given in the church at the present time by the pastor, this should be noted on this sheet.

Family Involvement During Sabbatical

It is important that the family of the pastor be involved in the sabbatical planning. It may be valuable for the family to be with the pastor during certain parts of the sabbatical. At times, it also may be valuable for the pastor to get away from the family and family pressures. This worksheet asks specific things, such as have you discussed the sabbatical as a family and do you concur with the proposal? Then a brief statement by the spouse is to be added explaining the spouse's and the rest of the family's reaction to the sabbatical. This should be signed by the spouse.

Expenses for Sabbatical

While funds are available, certainly they will not be funded unless specific expenses are detailed and receipts submitted. This is a very important part of the proposal. The financial policy previously stated in this manual governs this section.

Sabbatical Application

The sabbatical application is a summary form of all of the previous forms. The question is asked, "Are the following completed?" They should be checked off with the exception of "Conference administration approval?" That will be obtained by the Ministerial Department at the conference office.

The person desiring a sabbatical should write (in 300-500 words) what his/her proposal is and include such things as:

- 1. How this will be a renewal experience.**
- 2. Benefits to you.**
- 3. Benefits to the congregation.**
- 4. How it will impact the family.**

It is crucial that this document bear the signature of the pastor and of the head elder with a statement that this has been approved by the church board, before it is sent to the conference Sabbatical Committee through the Ministerial Department.

This document should be written before anything else is done. This is the document that should be presented and approved by the church board and then sent to the conference Sabbatical Committee with all of the forms completed, at least two months before the sabbatical is to begin.

The purpose of this manual then is to make sure that adequate planning has taken place for the sabbatical. It is also to assure the church that the major functions of the church are being covered during the sabbatical time.

Sample Sheets

SAMPLE

Worship Speakers During Sabbatical

Worksheet

<u>Date</u>	<u>Worship Speakers</u>	<u>Their Phone Numbers</u>
March 13	Robert Jones	782-1287
March 20	Elder Bob Taylor	719-781-2126
March 27	Robert Johansen	782-1412
April 4	Elder Bob Taylor	719-781-2126
April 10	Elder Steve Gifford	714-359-5800
April 17	Robert Jones	782-1287
April 24	Elder R. T. Smith	782-1416
April 31	Elder Leroy Fuger	782-6612
May 7	Vern Mohr	7782-1122
May 14	Alice Thomas	786-1716

Pastor's Signature Robert Jackson
Head Elder's Signature Vern Mohr
Date Dec. 20, 1990

SAMPLE

Prayer Meeting Speakers During Sabbatical

Worksheet

<u>Date</u>	<u>Speakers</u>	<u>Their Phone Numbers</u>
March 17	Fred Tort	682-1714
March 24	Elder John Davis	228-6842
March 30	Joyce Mohr	683-4444
April 7	Jack Johnson	666-4443
April 14	Elder Eric Montgomery	779-8899
April 21	Jackson Carson	779-9922
April 28	Louise Smith	623-4457
May 5	Randolph Hill	728-9876
May 12	Gerald Richards	722-6886

Pastor's Signature Robert Jackson
Head Elder's Signature Wern Mohr
Date Dec. 20, 1990

SAMPLE

Visitation During Sabbatical

Worksheet

People Available to Visit

Laypeople:

	<u>Name</u>	<u>Phone</u>	<u>Have they been contacted?</u>	
1.	<u>Jackson Jones</u>	<u>881-6677</u>	Yes <u>x</u>	No <u> </u>
2.	<u>George Riley</u>	<u>681-8877</u>	Yes <u>x</u>	No <u> </u>
3.	<u>William Johnson</u>	<u>999-5544</u>	Yes <u> </u>	No <u>x</u>

Retired Ministers:

	<u>Name</u>	<u>Phone</u>	<u>Have they been contacted?</u>	
1.	<u>Gene Williams</u>	<u>778-8877</u>	Yes <u>x</u>	No <u> </u>
2.	<u>Robert Wilson</u>	<u>992-1112</u>	Yes <u>x</u>	No <u> </u>
3.	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	Yes <u> </u>	No <u> </u>

Practicing Ministers:

	<u>Name</u>	<u>Phone</u>	<u>Have they been contacted?</u>	
1.	<u>Sydney Ross</u>	<u>779-9944</u>	Yes <u>x</u>	No <u> </u>
2.	<u>Phillip Jackson</u>	<u>214-6897</u>	Yes <u>x</u>	No <u> </u>
3.	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	Yes <u> </u>	No <u> </u>

Pastor's Signature Robert Jackson
 Head Elder's Signature Wern Marr
 Date Dec. 20, 1990

SAMPLE

Funerals and Pastoral Crises During Sabbatical

Worksheet

In case of a funeral, who is available to conduct the service?

	<u>Name</u>	<u>Phone</u>	<u>Have they been contacted?</u>
1.	<u>Rene Reynolds</u>	<u>777-7744</u>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
2.	<u>James Boynton</u>	<u>882-2288</u>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3.	<u>Harold Williams</u>	<u>654-5432</u>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

Pastor's Signature Robert Jackson
Head Elder's Signature Vern Mohr
Date Dec. 20, 1990

SAMPLE

Boards and Committees During Sabbatical

Worksheet

Who is in charge of:

Church Board:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Phone Number</u>
1. <u>March 24</u>	<u>Bob Tompson</u>	<u>782-1212</u>
2. <u>April 21</u>	<u>Bob Tompson</u>	<u>782-1212</u>
3. _____	_____	_____

Other Committees:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Phone</u>	<u>Committee</u>
1. <u>April 17</u>	<u>Lorane Thorn</u>	<u>782-1716</u>	<u>S.S. Council</u>
2. <u>April 21</u>	<u>Fred Aster</u>	<u>782-9162</u>	<u>Lay Advisory</u>
3. _____	_____	_____	_____

Pastor's Signature Robert Jackson
 Head Elder's Signature Vern Mohr
 Date Dec. 20, 1989

SAMPLE

Bible Studies During Sabbatical

Worksheet

<u>Name</u>	<u>Person Responsible for</u>	<u>Phone Number</u>
1. <u>Harold Richards</u>	<u>Ron Jones</u>	<u>782-1982</u>
2. <u>Marilyn Bunch</u>	<u>Leroy Gillespie</u>	<u>781-9989</u>
3. <u>Richard Betz</u>	<u>Ron Jones</u>	<u>782-1982</u>
4. <u>LeRoy Smith</u>	<u>Joyce Monroe</u>	<u>781-9817</u>
5. <u>Joan Slice</u>	<u>Joyce Monroe</u>	<u>781-9817</u>
6. _____	_____	_____
7. _____	_____	_____
8. _____	_____	_____
9. _____	_____	_____
10. _____	_____	_____

Pastor's Signature Robert Jackson
Head Elder's Signature Vera Mohr
Date Dec. 20, 1990

SAMPLE Expenses for Sabbatical

Worksheet

What are the costs incurred in the sabbatical?

Expenses:

1.	Travel to retreat center	\$85.00
2.	Tuition	260.00
3.	Supplies	75.00
4.	Motel	180.00
5.	Marriage Encounter (motel, etc.)	60.00
6.	Total	\$660.00

Sources of Funding:

1.	Local church	250.00
2.	Continuing education (conference)	160.00
3.	Conference sabbatical fund	250.00
4.	Total	\$660.00
5.		

Pastor's Signature Robert Jackson

Head Elder's Signature Wern Mohr

Date Dec. 20, 1990

SAMPLE

Sabbatical Application

Name: John Smith
Church: Tustin
Dates Included: March 12-May 17

Are the following completed?

Worship speakers?	Yes <u>✓</u>
Prayer meeting speakers?	Yes <u>✓</u>
Funeral assignments?	Yes <u>✓</u>
Boards and committees?	Yes <u>✓</u>
Bible studies?	Yes <u>✓</u>
Family Involvement?	Yes <u>✓</u>
Expense?	Yes <u>✓</u>
Conference administration approval? (Office will supply)	Yes <u>✓</u>

Pastor's Signature Robert Jackson
Head Elder's Signature Vern Mohr
Date Dec. 20, 1990

Write, in 300 to 500 words, what your proposal is. Be sure to include: (1) How this will be a renewal experience; (2) Benefits to you; (3) Benefits to the congregation; (4) How it will impact your family.

