

Sabbatical Leave Policy 3

Becoming a Sabbath Community: A Guide for Churches

This is a real example of a church or NGO sabbatical leave policy and is reflective of its own organisational context. It is provided not to be copied but to help you to create your own policy.

Sabbatical Leave Policy 3

123 CHURCH Sabbatical Policy – resilience, longevity and well-being in ministry

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the structure of sabbatical for 123 CHURCH senior ministry staff.

Practical policy for 123 CHURCH

As a church, our senior staff are in gospel ministry with us a for a season, in what we pray is a lifetime serving God faithfully and fully. We want the season at 123 CHURCH to be one where staff are given the support, care and structure that thoroughly enables that.

We want our senior staff to avoid burning out. Because of the nature of the 'call' to ministry, people will often persist and persevere in ministry long after they should have sought help. Setting a structure in place which governs our own expectations of staff time, leave and longer-term planning, alongside the Intentional Leadership operational policy, enables 123 CHURCH to clearly adopt Paul's intention for the resilience of Timothy in gospel ministry.

We want our staff to have a life of deep personal relationship with God, to be feeding on His word regularly, and to be in a deep prayerful and rejuvenating relationship with their Saviour.

We want them to have good physical and mental health.

We want them to have healthy relationship with their spouses, their children, their families and their friends. We want them to participate in hobbies and activities that refresh and provide enjoyment.

Sabbatical

This derives from the biblical principle of Sabbath rest (in particular, Lev. 25:1-7). In the Old Testament, this concept acknowledges the need for the refreshment and recuperation of the land as part of the order of creation. To be productive, regular recuperative rest is necessary.

Sabbatical provides for the replenishment of resources that have drained as a result of ministry, eg, emotional, spiritual, physical, relational. During the time of Sabbatical, the leader is released from all their normal responsibilities. The components are carefully planned by the leader with the assistance of a mentor and the church's Elders.

The plan for Sabbatical also provides for preparation to cover all tasks usually undertaken, as well as associated costs. The staff member taking Sabbatical receives their normal remuneration for the entire period, as well as any additional costs for travel etc.

Sabbatical usually includes elements of spiritual retreat, reading, attending conferences, visiting other ministries, writing, and other creative projects. The person taking a sabbatical would report to (insert name) upon their return.

Sabbatical should be written into the contract of the senior minister and all full-time paid ministry staff. It would accrue at one week per year and cannot be taken before four years of service in the church. It should be taken at seven years of ministry service, if not before. This means that, at a minimum, after seven years ministry staff could take seven weeks of Sabbatical leave. Long service leave and annual leave can be added on to the total.

Sabbatical planning

The senior staff member must develop a plan for sabbatical, in conjunction with (name), for the approval of (name).

The plan should cover:

- 1.** The goals, purpose and timeframe of the sabbatical period for the minister, and how the details of the plan will seek to refresh and rejuvenate. It should include details of, for example, specific rest and reflection opportunities, conferences or ministry partnerships and time with family.
- 2.** Outline of any changes to living arrangements, travel or costs to attend conferences etc.
- 3.** Delegation of functions. The plans should consider whether a locum is required to carry out certain functions, or whether additional duties will be required of other staff including variation/s to remuneration.
- 4.** A contingency plan outlining the type of events where the senior staff member should be contacted and by whom. Eg, a major incident/pastoral matter, or an allegation/moral failure or building issue.
- 5.** How the staff member is covered for any injury or accident whilst on sabbatical.
- 6.** Details of salary to be paid as normal while on sabbatical. The overall plan should also include provision of funds for additional requirements like conferences and travel which need to be costed in advance. Elders must approve this allocation with the plan.
- 7.** The senior staff member may also seek provision for their family to live elsewhere during the sabbatical, where their usual residence is within direct proximity to the church site.
- 8.** Provision for other staff to access additional allowances (like higher duties) for extra responsibilities over the period of sabbatical. Staff leave needs to be planned in advance to enable other staff to have periods of rest outside the sabbatical period.
- 9.** Consideration of additional mentoring support for any associate ministry staff who assume a senior role during the sabbatical. This is to provide direct support and coaching in assuming the additional responsibilities.

10. Details of requirements for any visiting preachers or locum, including indicative costs.

Planning for Sabbatical should be considered within the cycle of performance review for senior staff, and the final plan agreed with Elders no less than three months prior to the Sabbatical commencing.

Sabbatical is not regarded by 123 CHURCH as a leave entitlement. As a spiritual and psychological well-being approach, it is intended that 123 CHURCH makes provision for this during the minister's tenure with the church, according to policy and with the agreement of Elders. Sabbatical is not paid out in any way upon departure.