



Baptist Churches
of NSW & ACT

**HEALTHY
PASTORAL REVIEW
PROCESS**

Pastoral Review Thoughts

- The goal of any review process is formative and supportive, it should never be about ongoing employment or an opportunity for people to express their dislikes or issues involving the pastor.
- Pastoral review process should be part of a broader regular review process that reviews not only the pastor, but the leadership team and other staff.
- The goal of a review process should always be about health and improvement.
- Unrest, dissatisfaction, disagreement, conflict or terminating a pastor's tenure should never be the reason for conducting a review. Consultancy or mediation are required here.
- There should be an agreed upon process and time frame for the review process that is affirmed and known by the pastor, leadership and church. It should be part of the normal rhythm of the overall church life.
- A review process should be connected to the Pastors Position Description, Personal Development (including family/ministry balance), team development/dynamics, and the vision of the church.
- The review process should provide support, care and encouragement in leadership, ministry and personal development.
- The review process should provide a constructive means of feedback and appropriate processes of accountability in areas of change and growth.
- The review process should enable collective reflection on the pastor's implementation of the church's vision, core values, objectives and goals.
- The review process should be facilitated by an intentional review group of at least three and no more than five and include both representatives from within the leadership team (ie deacons/elders) and representatives from the wider church family. One of these should be nominated by the pastor and all should be agreed upon by the leadership team and known to or affirmed by the wider church.

Elements of a healthy review process.

a) **Storytelling and sharing.** Open discussion and sharing the story – This is the opportunity for the Senior Pastor to share openly the encouragements, challenges and concerns of ministry and life. There is opportunity for the review group to ask generally and also specifically how things are going. Some possible questions might include:

1. What would you like more of from me?
2. What would you like less of from me?
3. What would you like me to keep the same?

b) **Personal Development Plan Review.** Each year the Senior Pastor is invited to document some specific goals for life and ministry and reflect on how these might be achieved. These are included in a Personal Development Plan. Areas for goal setting include at least one goal related to ministry leadership, at least one goal related to personal growth and one goal for something the Senior Pastor would like to achieve ‘for the fun of it’ – unrelated to ministry and leadership. Goals should be clear and achievable with some action planning and timetabling linked to them. A pastor may also work on these with a mentor external to the group. Reflection on the implementation of this plan and running adjustments to it are part of the meeting. Focus here is on the personal dimensions of ministry. An example of a Personal Development Plan can be found attached to this document.

c) **Review of functioning against a clear position description.** A review of the Senior Pastor’s functioning against his/her position description is an important part of the process. The position description (PD) provides a statement of the areas of responsibility and ministry. The group talks through issues and concerns relating to effective functioning in this role and provides considered feedback. This aspect of the review process is concerned with the pastoral role and leadership and ministry tasks. The PD should be provided to all participants of the review process. If there is not a clear and agreed PD, the review process should be delayed and the focus move to establishing a clear and agreed upon Position Description. Review process recommences 6 -12 months after the establishment of the position description.

d) **Feedback from congregation, staff and lay leaders.** It is valuable to use appropriate and well thought through means of gaining and processing objective feedback from people who work closely with or to whom the pastor is ministering. Individuals should be invited to participate in providing feedback rather than an open invitation and be representative of the church and leadership rather than the whole church and leadership. The review group and the pastor should agree on the list of individuals who will be invited to participate. This can be done through carefully designed surveys or interviews. It is not necessary for every review session but should be sought once every two – three years in some form. This needs to be planned by the review group in a session prior to when it will be needed. The group should take initiative in gathering, validating and processing this information. Some examples of the types of questions can be found attached to this document.

e) **Standardised appraisal.** The final basis for review is accessing and using any standardised appraisal tools the review group thinks might be appropriate for the Senior Pastor and benefit his/her self-understanding, functioning and leadership development. These are secondary to the process of review and may be used as determined by the group and the Senior Pastor together. **Leadership Practices Inventory, Leadership Reflections, or 10 Self-Care Strategies** are examples of some appraisals that could be used. These are attached at the end of this document.

f) **Discussion and agreement on Recommendations to go to the Board.** The group along with the pastor, spend some time prayerfully considering the main observations and recommendations that need to be communicated to the leadership team and/or the wider church. Some of these may include adjustments to terms and conditions, professional development needs, support needs, issues to do with manse, etc, etc.

g) **Prayer.** The underpinning and foundational aspect of any review process is prayer. There should be a commitment to prayer by all parties involved in the review process. An intentional prayer strategy and the development of a prayer team for the review process would be healthy practices.