

Sabbatical Leave Policy

New Life Foursquare Church

Purpose of Sabbatical Leave

The sabbatical leave is a period of time away from the pastor's regular duties, offered to its pastors by the church, for the mutual benefit of the church and the pastor. Its purpose is to provide the pastor opportunities for exposure to and study of new ideas, improvement of professional skills relevant to the ministry, development of the pastor's spiritual resources, and spiritual and physical renewal and refreshment.

Eligibility

A pastor can apply for a two-month (taken consecutively) sabbatical leave after having completed seven or more years of continuous, full time services at New Life Foursquare Church. Subsequent sabbatical leaves may be considered after five years has elapsed since the end of the previous sabbatical leave. If two pastors qualify for a sabbatical leave during a calendar year of each other, the first to achieve the seven years of service will be given priority, and the second must leave at least a six-month gap between sabbatical leaves, from the end of the first to the beginning of the second.

Since a sabbatical leave is for the benefit of the church as well as the pastor, a pastor may apply for a sabbatical leave only if there is clear intent to return to full ministry with New Life Foursquare Church at the end of the sabbatical leave period.

Application Procedure

Application for a sabbatical leave is to be prepared by the pastor in consultation with the senior pastor, and submitted to the Church Council for its approval.

It is expected that the nature, duration, schedule, and financial and logistical arrangements for the leave will be worked out as part of the application to the Council. The application must contain the following:

1. A clear statement of the rationale for and goals of the leave;
2. An outline of the intended use and schedule of the leave time (see below);
3. The envisioned benefit to the pastor's personal and professional development;
4. The benefit to the Congregation and the church's ministry; and
5. Any other issues the Council deems important.

In making an application, the pastor should allow sufficient time before the start of the sabbatical leave for the church to make suitable arrangements for covering the necessary pastoral duties and responsibilities.

Intended Use of the Leave Time

Since the primary purpose of the sabbatical leave is the personal refreshing and professional development of the pastor while being relieved of the regular duties associated with their ministry to our church, the majority of the time spent on the sabbatical leave should reflect that purpose. Shorter periods of time spent in some public service to the church or community, in physical and mental relaxation (as in vacation), and/or in other spiritual renewal and refreshment are appropriate.

Sabbatical Leave and Vacation

In addition to the two months sabbatical leave, the pastor will be granted no more than two weeks paid vacation during that calendar year. That vacation, however, should not be taken within two months before or after the sabbatical leave.

Financial Arrangements

A sabbatical leave may not be used to accept paid employment. Opportunities to preach or speak should only be accepted as part of the sabbatical leave proposal, but such opportunities should be minimized so that the full benefit of the time away may be achieved. Requests to officiate at weddings and funerals may be accepted, provided that they do not interfere with the approved sabbatical plan.

The church will provide continued salary and benefits to the pastor while on sabbatical leave. The church will also pay the costs to cover the pastor's preaching and other duties while on sabbatical.

To cover the pastor's costs while on sabbatical leave, the pastor is encouraged to apply for financial assistance (e.g. fellowships, grants, and scholarships) for the purposes approved in the leave application. If financial assistance from these sources is inadequate to cover the pastor's costs related to professional improvement, such as registration, tuition, books, housing, and travel, the Council will be receptive to a request from the pastor to assist in covering such costs. Such requests should be submitted in time for them to be included in the budget for the appropriate time period.

Evaluation

Evaluations of the sabbatical leave and its impact on the minister and the congregation are helpful means for planning such future opportunities. Evaluative reports should be submitted to the Council and shared with the Staff (and congregation if deemed appropriate) within thirty days after the leave is completed. The reports should include the benefits and disappointments

for both the minister and the congregation, as well as any recommendations for the future.