

Get Connected!

As people created in the image of a triune God, the need for community should not surprise us. Meaningful relationships are essential in the life of a healthy person and an effective pastor. Pursuing them is a healthy practice that assures sustainability in ministry.

Essential Connections:

❖ **Knowing God** *Time with the Lord*

There are many creative ways in which pastors stay connected with God in the midst of their ministry. A monthly personal retreat day has become the practice of many EFCA leaders.

In *For God's Sake, REST!* Jim Anderson outlines a day that provides a person with...

- A time to release concerns – prayer.
- A time to review one's work – evaluation.
- A time to remember the Lord – worship.

❖ **Deep Friendships** *Time with True Friends*

Prayer partnerships: Be supported in pray by a small group of friends who know you and your ministry. Create a way to communicate with them on a regular basis.

Mentoring friendships: Insights emerge from constructive time spent with friends who are committed to each other's growth and effectiveness in ministry. Consider connecting with someone who has gone before you or someone who is walking with you or someone who is coming along after you.

❖ **Ministry Associations** *Time with your Team*

Join the EFCA Ministerial Association: The association exists to provide benefits to its members and support EFCA Pastoral Care Ministries. Think of your membership as "team support".

Attend gatherings created for EFCA pastors:

- Districts host pastor clusters, ministerial retreats and training conferences.
- The EFCA National Office sponsors events throughout the year designed to bring together pastors of various size churches, pastoral staff serving in specialized roles and pastors wanting to interact on areas of common interest.

Obtain an EFCA Ministerial Credential: The value of a ministerial credential is the fact that it "belongs" to a group of peers who entrust it to you. In addition to securing legal status as a minister, a credential says you welcome accountability from others serving alongside you.

Learn more: www.efca.org/pastoralcare



Keep Growing!

Some pastors intuitively know how to be life-long learners and are able to monitor their commitments to make it happen. Most of us need the benefit of guidelines or the help of a good friend. A friend of mine writes, "Healthy things grow... Growing things change... Change requires risk... Risk demands faith... and Faith makes you healthy", from Tom Garasha in *EKG, probing the heart of a pastor*.

Learn more about yourself:

To keep growing, interact with ideas presented in books intended to impact your life: *A Contrarian's Guide to Knowing God, spirituality for the rest of us*, Larry Osborne, Multnomah; *The Me I Want to Be, becoming God's best version of you*, John Ortberg, Zondervan and *Take Back Your Life! 10 Choices to give you More Time, More Energy, and Better Relationships*, H. Dale Burke, Harvest House Publishers. There are many such books and blogs that will help you know yourself.

We encourage you to learn more about yourself from tools like Ministry Match and Strengths Finder. They help a pastor enjoy life and ministry doing what God created them to do best. These profile tools are available from Pastoral Care Ministries.

"As God helps you grow, you will change. But you will always be you. An acorn can grow into an oak tree, but it cannot become a rose bush. It can be a healthy oak or it can be a stunted oak – but it won't be a shrub. You will always be you – a growing, healthy you or a languishing you – but God did not create you to be anybody else. He pre-wired your temperament. He determined your natural gifts and talents. He made you to feel certain passions and desires. He planned your body and mind. Your uniqueness is God-designed." John Ortberg, "The Me I want to Be", Zondervan, 2010.

Engage in a "pursuing excellence" plan:

If you are already engaged in a plan of personal growth and it is working for you, "well done, keep at it".

If you need the benefit of a guideline, create a "pursuing excellence" plan for yourself. The plan involves 2 activities in each of 3 areas that you complete in 2 years.

Spiritual Formation – being conformed to the image of Christ

Personal Well-being – taking a sustainable approach to life's demands

Ministry Excellence – sharpening yourself for effective ministry

To get started on things that have been on your heart for a long time, download the "pursuing excellence" materials. It's an initiative of the EFCA Ministerial Association designed to promote personal growth and sustainability in ministry.

Learn more: www.efca.org/pastoralcare





I'm Growing!

A personal plan to Keep Growing

The Basic Structure

Some pastors intuitively know how to be life long learners and monitor their commitment to make it happen. Many need the benefit of guidelines and the help of a friend. Become part of an adventure in which you will be doing things that have likely been on your heart for a long time. We recommend undertaking activities that can be completed in a span of two years.

1. Individually designed

Select activities you believe will be best for you.

2. Addressing three areas

Spiritual formation – the process of being conformed to the image of Christ. Address areas such as the practice of spiritual disciplines, clarity of your calling, an integrated theological/biblical worldview, holy living, and renovation of the heart.

Personal Well-being – the critical areas of a pastor's personal life. Address areas such as marriage & family relationships, physical health, daily habits, stage of life and a sustainable approach to life's demands.

Ministry Excellence – the opportunities to systematically “sharpen the saw” for a more productive ministry. Address areas such as training in one's primary focus of ministry, continuing education, leadership development, staff management, valuable new skills and ministry transitions.

3. Aided by a mentor

The nature of this mentor relationship will vary depending on the individual's desires. We maintain that everyone needs “a brain to pick, an ear to listen, and a push in the right direction”. The deepening of a good friendship is likely.

Mentoring Options

“I’m Growing” involves asking a friend to journey with you. There are three kinds of relationships to consider. In the first your friend serves as a listener, in the second as a peer mentor, and in the third as a coach.

1. Listening Friend

Ask a friend to look at the details of the plan you outlined for yourself (including updates you create along the way) and to evaluate if they fit your goals for participating in “I’m Growing!” The friend agrees to keep in touch with you quarterly and to celebrate your progress along the way.

2. Peer-Mentor

Ask a peer mentor to do “I’m Growing” with you. Each creates a plan that may contain similar activities. As peer mentors for each other your friend and you meet for a day 4 times over the span of a year. You might elect to attend conferences together or grow a friendship between each other’s family. You agree to celebrate when you have done well and give each other permission to confront when you fall behind.

3. Life Coach

Ask someone to be a life coach. Your friend helps you assess your life and determine what you might do to improve your ministry skills, deepen your spiritual passions, and continue personal development. You agree upon those activities that need to be included in your plan. There is a greater degree of formality in that you expect to receive critical feedback, periodically update the plan, and see significant changes. The friend will celebrate your growth.

Creating Your Plan

The “I’m Growing!” planning form has room to record six things you’d like to do during two years of participation. There is room for additional or alternative activities you might discover along the way. The planning form can be downloaded at www.efca.org/healthypastors.

You might want to begin your journey with an overnight personal retreat. On the first day you can list ideas that come to mind. On the second day you can fill in your “I’m Growing!” plan.





"I'm Growing!" Plan

Name: _____ Mentor: _____ Date: _____

| SPIRITUAL FORMATION | PERSONAL WELL-BEING | MINISTRY EXCELLENCE |
|--|--|--|
| Description of Activity - First Priority | Description of Activity - First Priority | Description of Activity - First Priority |
| Description of Activity - Second Priority | Description of Activity - Second Priority | Description of Activity - Second Priority |
| Alternative or Additional "I'm Growing!" Activity | Alternative or Additional "I'm Growing!" Activity | Alternative or Additional "I'm Growing!" Activity |

Take A Break!

Restorative sabbatical opportunities are being taken by many EFCA Pastors. This is a positive trend reflecting increased awareness of a series of work/rest cycles found in the scriptures. Observing them is a healthy practice that assures sustainability in ministry.

Time Cycles:



Daily

Work / Sleep

Limit the evenings you aren't home with family to no more than 2 or 3 in a row. Take time for adequate sleep every night.



Weekly

6 days labor / A day of rest

If you don't take a day of rest! – Trust God, obey Him and take a day off!
If you don't know what to do! – Do what's restful for you. Change the pace.
If you try but it disappears! - Select a wiser day or try two half days.



Monthly

Busy Weeks / "Holy-Day" (Holiday)

Get into the habit of making holidays a fun event for your family. Create the kind of memories generated by Old Testament families as they celebrated the Feast of Tabernacles by building tents and living in them for a week. Grow the kind of relationships Job had with his sons and daughters by having their families over to the house for a meal.

Establish a monthly Personal Retreat Day (PRD) away from your office and centered on God's agenda. Suggestions for a meaningful PRD are readily available.



Season of Life Routine Years / A restorative sabbatical

A variety of sabbatical options are being experienced by pastors. One of them is likely to work well for you and the church. Examples are available from Pastoral Care Ministries.



Year of Jubilee First half of life / Second half of life

Instead of preparing for a mid-life crisis, prepare for a mid-life transition. During this special restorative sabbatical ask God to confirm what He has been doing in and through you. You'll be surprised how far you have come and how much more you can still do.

Learn more: www.efca.org/pastoralcare



EFCA
PASTORAL CARE
MINISTRIES

Address It Now!

"I am asking you to start something today. I do so out of concern for you as a person. The pain is not measured by the statistics gathered to see how many pastors get into trouble. It is measured by the depth of pain felt by the person and family who go through such experiences. I walk alongside families who get started and I've seen despair turn into hope."

Rev. John Herman, EFCA Pastoral Care Ministries

✦ What issues?

- Personal Purity
- Finances
- Positive Relationships
- Emotional Health
- Physical Health
- Family and Marriage

Honestly identify any area that should or does concern you.

✦ How to start?

There are issues you can address by just getting at it. There are times you need to trust a friend with whom you can create a plan of action. If so, find that friend.

✦ Is help available?

1. Holy Spirit: Thought you might need to be reminded of this fact.
2. A Good Friend: Deep friendships come with a willingness to help address problem areas.
3. Pastoral Care Ministries: A phone call or email (pastoralcare@efca.org) can start the process of connecting with us as care givers. We can guide you to numerous resources.
4. Districts: Several EFCA districts have a staff member whose primary ministry is pastoral care.
5. Books: Vital Signs (Tom Garasha); Emotionally Healthy Spirituality (Peter Scazzero); and many issue specific books.

"Self-care is never a selfish act – it is simply good stewardship of the only gift I have, the gift I was put on earth to offer others. Anytime we can listen to true self and give it the care it requires, we do it not only for ourselves, but for the many others whose lives we touch." Parker Palmer, as quoted in *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality*, Peter Scazzero, Integrity Publishers, Nashville, 2006

Learn more: www.efca.org/pastoralcare



EFCA
PASTORAL CARE
MINISTRIES