

Creating a Culture of Ministry Health

A Guide to Help Churches and Pastors Face the Risks of Ministry Life

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Dear Church Board and Chairperson

Management Consultant Peter Drucker called church leadership “the most difficult and taxing role he knew.”¹ LifeWay Research Vice President Scott McConnell said of pastors, “This is a brutal job, churches ought to be concerned.”² 100% of pastors surveyed by the Francis A. Schaeffer Institute of Church Leadership Development had a close associate or seminary friend who had left the ministry due to church conflict, stress related burnout, or a moral failure.³

Until your church is large enough to hire an executive pastor, you as a board are the human resources department. It is a huge responsibility to steward your employees, and stewarding the pastoral position has unique challenges.

If you want to create a culture of ministry health and growth, you need to intentionally identify and address the risks that could sabotage your goal. Below are 10 questions that reflect the challenges that you and your pastor face, as researched by Dr. Charles A. Wickman in *Pastors at Risk* (note chapter references in parentheses).

How do we become unified with our pastor to clarify, communicate, and contend for God's vision for our church? (Ch#4) *“The primary stressor experienced by pastors, leading the most often to forced resignation, is vision conflict.” -Wickman/Spencer⁴*

How do we help our pastor by setting appropriate and manageable expectations of our pastor and clearly communicating them to him and our church? (Ch#7) *“In a survey asking how exited pastors experienced stress in their ministry, role conflict was a top ranked producer of stress second only to conflict over how ministry was to be done in the church.” –Wickman⁵*

How are we helping our pastor train volunteers and delegate (administrate) responsibilities? (Ch#6) *“George Barna has discovered that while 69% of the pastors of effective churches have preaching/teaching as their primary gift emphasis, administration and leadership are found in only 15% of these pastors.” – John Hawco⁶*

How are we facilitating healthy communication in our church? (Ch#9) *“Most church conflict results from poor communication.” -Rick Warren⁷*

How do we help our pastor manage the grief and loss he experiences regularly and create a culture of joy? (Ch#11) *“Ministry is fraught with grief because of difficulty in relationships between sheep and shepherd, people and pastor.” -John A. MacArthur⁸*

How do we help our pastor manage stress related burnout and encourage him to have enough rest? (Ch#1-2) *“75% of pastors experience a significant crisis that they faced due to stress in the ministry” - Fuller Institute⁹*

How do we help our pastor say no and handle the criticism that comes with it? (Ch#8) *“All of the top at risk pastors said it was difficult for them to say no.” -Wickman¹⁰*

How do we help our pastor manage discouragement and encourage him to invest in self care? (Ch#3) *“70% of pastors constantly fight depression.” -Fuller Institute¹¹*

How do we support our pastor to pursue a healthy relationship with his wife? (Ch#10) “77% of pastors felt they did not have a good marriage.” -FASICLD ¹²

How do we help our pastor manage isolation and encourage him to meet with pastors of other churches and denominations? (Ch#5) “Only a fellow minister can point out the width and depth of the rut in which a colleague may be running.” - Winton H. Beaven¹³

Thank you for investing in the health of your church by addressing the 10 Risks every church and its pastor face. If you would like further resources or there’s any way we can support and strengthen your ministry, please don’t hesitate to contact us.
Serving Jesus together!

For more information on pastoral renewal and restoration, please visit our website at www.pirministries.org, or contact us at info@pirministries.org.

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¹ Grudem, Elliot. “Pour It Out,” *Leadership Journal*, Winter 2016.

² Green, Lisa Cannon. “The One Percent;” *Christianity Today*, September 1, 2015.

^{3,8,9,11,12} Krejcir, Dr. Richard J. “Statistics On Pastors,” <http://www.intothyword.org/apps/articles/?articleid=36562>, 2007.

^{4,5,10} Wickman, Dr. Charles A. *Pastors at Risk*, 2014.

⁶ Hawco, John. “The Senior Pastor/Executive Pastor Team: A Contemporary Paradigm For The Larger Church Staff,” Dissertation, https://www.xpastor.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/hawco_john.pdf, 2005.

⁷ Warren, Rick. “Develop These 7 Skills When You Want People to Listen,” <http://pastors.com/develop-these-7-skills-when-you-want-people-to-listen/>, October 2, 2015.

⁸ MacArthur, John A. “Restoring the Grieving Pastor’s Joy,” <https://www.gty.org/resources/sermons/47-48/restoring-the-grieving-pastors-joy-part-1>, September 24, 1995.

¹³ Beaven, Winton H. “Ministerial Burnout-Cause and Prevention,” <https://www.ministrymagazine.org/archive/1986/03/ministerial-burnout-cause-and-prevention>, March 1986.