

PASTOR PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

The Need for Evaluation and How to Do It

by Pastor Church Relations Committee, CRC North America



CRCA MINISTRY FORMATION

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DIRECTIONS

How to Use the Pastoral Performance Evaluation

THE NEED FOR EVALUATION

The one who stands to gain the most from an accurate evaluation is the pastor. It is to his advantage to know how the council members perceive his strong and weak areas. On the other hand, nothing is more detrimental to good pastoral relations than a haphazard or fragmentary evaluation.

Let me give an example. A sister in the congregation feels that the pastor should visit her aged mother more often. She approaches an elder who, after a few weeks, approaches the pastor with a general suggestion that he should pay due attention to the needs of the senior members. However, just a week before the pastor had visited several old people so he finds it hard to conceal a tone of surprise in his response. The elder, in turn, interprets this as a mild form of defensiveness. Pastoral relations have suffered.

Some councils take an hour now and then for a discussion about the pastorate. But even such sessions, well-intended as they may be, are at best fragmentary since a comprehensive overview is lacking. The pastor finds himself in an unenviable position. It is hard to predict what the office-bearers may bring up, because a single individual

council member is not likely to have a complete overview of the pastor's performance. The pastor, on the other hand, will probably feel equally uncomfortable with criticism or praise. It would be far better if the various phases of the pastorate could be accurately and comprehensively assessed in a non-threatening setting. The pastor would be afforded a valid assessment of both his strong points and his not-so-strong points. He would feel confirmed with reference to the former and motivated to make suitable provisions with reference to the latter.



HOW TO CONDUCT THE EVALUATION

1. Participants.

Participation in this evaluation process should be limited to elders and deacons. The council may wish to inform the congregation that an evaluation is being conducted but should be

very prudent about sharing personal details.

2. Preparation.

I recommend that the evaluation take place at a special council meeting. The instructions should be read carefully and well understood. The purpose and benefits of the evaluation should be highlighted and discussed. Prayers should be offered.

The evaluation forms should then be handed out to the participants and collected again before the end of the meeting. The council members should sign their evaluations with the

understanding that their names will not be divulged. The completed evaluations which are turned over to a committee for processing should not be taken from the room after the meeting.

Council members should begin the evaluation with prayerful self-examination, keeping in mind that the reason for this evaluation is to enhance the quality of the ministry in the church. It is not an occasion to right wrongs. Personal misgivings should be discussed person-to-person with the pastor beforehand. Be fair, charitable, candid, and impartial. Base your responses on long-range performance, not on a whim of the moment.

3. Two Perspectives.

On the Pastoral Performance Evaluation you will notice that you are asked to rate various aspects of the pastorate from two perspectives. The left-hand column measures the importance you yourself attach to various propositions regarding the pastorate. The right-hand column measures how you judge your pastor's effectiveness. The values you express in the left-hand column shed light on the significance of your scores in the right-hand column. The difference between the two columns should be carefully explained to the participants during the preparation session.

4. Doing the evaluation.

Circle one of the numbers in each row of the "importance" and quality/effectiveness" columns.

The number you circle in each of the rows of the "importance" column will indicate the importance you ascribe to the propositions in the middle column. The

numbers you circle in the "quality/effectiveness" column will rate your perception of the pastor's performance regarding the same propositions. The higher the number you circle, the higher you rate the quality and effectiveness of the pastor's performance for each item listed.

The "quality/effectiveness" column also contains an "n/a" row by which you can indicate that the proposition is not applicable to your situation.

5. The pastor also participates.

The pastor should fill out the evaluation form twice. The first time he will express his own views: how he rates the importance of the various areas of ministry regardless of actual situations and how he evaluates his own gifts and performance. The second time he will rate what he perceives to be the mind of the council regarding the importance of areas of ministry and how he thinks they will rate his performance.

6. Processing the data.

I propose that two members of the executive and the chairman of the deacons serve as a committee in charge of processing and collating the rating sheets.

They should average the scores given by the office-bearers to each proposition and enter the results into a master copy. The pastor's copies should not be part of the calculation of the overall average. As mentioned earlier, the individual rating sheets should not be open for scrutiny by anyone but the processing committee.

A pastor may consider himself to be performing acceptably in a given area when the average rating for a proposition

in the “quality/effectiveness” column is as high as, or higher than, the average rating for that item in the “importance” column. For example, if the council rates the importance of “the way the pastor ministers to the youth” as 3.6 and his quality and effectiveness as 2.9, the performance gap is 0.7. The performance gap is the difference between the two average scores for each proposition and should be carefully noted in the evaluation process.

7. After the data is processed.

Following the processing of the evaluation forms, a meeting should be arranged. Only the members of the processing committee and the pastor should be present at this meeting. Any strong or weak areas of the ministry, as indicated by the performance gaps referred to above, should be noted and discussed. The pastor should be given every opportunity to explain or comment, or ask for clarification if necessary. At this juncture the pastor’s own evaluation sheet should be compared with the sheet containing the evaluation results from the processing committee. If a considerable discrepancy exists between the council’s evaluation and the pastor’s self-evaluation, an in-depth discussion is called for. This, in turn, should be followed by a discussion on how the pastor can put outstanding gifts to better use, and how he can improve in areas where his gifts may be less than outstanding. The latter can generally be done by arranging for additional training or guidance, and/or appointing competent assistance in the areas of deficiency.

8. Report to the council.

The processing committee should draft a

summary of findings and advice. An initial copy should go to the pastor for his input, after which the committee will prepare a final draft. Next a council meeting should be held during which the report is thoroughly discussed. The council may wish to decide how the various items of advice can best be implemented. Of course, the processing committee’s report should be kept confidential.

The ratings in the left-hand column should be studied separately. These ratings will enable the council to monitor its own priorities and vision of ministry. Every effort should be made to draft a master plan of ministry for the congregation as conducted by the office-bearers together.

9. How frequently should evaluations be held?

Pastors and councils will probably find an annual evaluation to be effective and helpful. The processing committee should keep a file on the results of each evaluation in order to be able to monitor progress.

Though the council may wish the congregation to know that an evaluation is being conducted, it should be very discreet about sharing details. You will find that maintaining a low profile throughout the entire process is to everyone’s advantage.



CHURCH PASTORAL PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

Introduction:

This evaluative tool should not be used when there are unresolved problems among council members or between council and pastor. Should that be the case it would be better to have a number of special sessions addressing the problems. The council might consider calling in some outside facilitators.

This evaluation need not be signed, which does, however, place a special responsibility on those doing the evaluation. Be strictly objective, impartial, and charitable. Do not give answers prompted by personal wishes or desires, do not speak from your own "agenda," do not try "to make a point," and do not consult with anyone else about possible answers you may give.

The score sheets are not distributed for individual completion. The officers of the council should collect the completed evaluations and process the scores on a single score sheet at a separate meeting.

Please rate the importance of the following propositions in terms of their importance to you personally.

Please rate the quality and effectiveness of your pastor's performance regarding the propositions below

IMPORTANCE
(Circle one)
4 = very important
3 = important
2 = fairly important
1 = unimportant

QUALITY/EFFECTIVENESS
(Circle one)
4 = outstanding
3 = above average
2 = average
1 = below average
n/a = not applicable

I. AREAS OF MINISTRY

A. Public worship ministry: the way the pastor ...

4	3	2	1	conducts public worship, in general	4	3	2	1	n/a
4	3	2	1	prepares sermons	4	3	2	1	n/a
4	3	2	1	addresses the needs of hearers	4	3	2	1	n/a
4	3	2	1	bases sermons on Scripture and the Confessions	4	3	2	1	n/a
4	3	2	1	conducts public prayers	4	3	2	1	n/a
4	3	2	1	makes visitors feel welcome	4	3	2	1	n/a

B. Pastoral ministry: the way the pastor...

4	3	2	1	relates with the members	4	3	2	1	n/a
4	3	2	1	ministers to those with needs and problems	4	3	2	1	n/a
4	3	2	1	ministers to the marginalized	4	3	2	1	n/a
4	3	2	1	ministers to those contemplating marriage	4	3	2	1	n/a
4	3	2	1	deals with conflict situations	4	3	2	1	n/a

C. Education Ministry: the way the pastor...

4	3	2	1	promotes an atmosphere of growth and learning in the congregation	4	3	2	1	n/a
4	3	2	1	prepares for the classes he teaches	4	3	2	1	n/a
4	3	2	1	consults with and encourages fellow teachers and leaders in the education program	4	3	2	1	n/a
4	3	2	1	evidences personal commitment to and understanding of the biblical/Reformed world and life view	4	3	2	1	n/a

D. Outreach and community ministry: the way the pastor...

4	3	2	1	evidences a biblical vision of the mission of the church to the surrounding community	4	3	2	1	n/a
4	3	2	1	motivates members to be active in outreach	4	3	2	1	n/a
4	3	2	1	motivates members to welcome and care for new members and inquirers	4	3	2	1	n/a
4	3	2	1	promotes missions abroad	4	3	2	1	n/a

E. Organizational and administrative aspects of ministry: the way the pastor...

4	3	2	1	shows concern for the proper functioning of the administrative system of the church	4	3	2	1	n/a
4	3	2	1	provides leadership in the church's management system	4	3	2	1	n/a
4	3	2	1	shows concern for matching qualified people with specific function/responsibilities	4	3	2	1	n/a
4	3	2	1	provides for professional training of elders and deacons	4	3	2	1	n/a
4	3	2	1	delegates responsibilities	4	3	2	1	n/a

F. Personal and professional development: the way the pastor...

4	3	2	1	values personal godliness	4	3	2	1	n/a
4	3	2	1	places appropriate priority on his marriage and family	4	3	2	1	n/a
4	3	2	1	evidences a sense of calling regarding the ministry	4	3	2	1	n/a
4	3	2	1	takes time for reflection and study	4	3	2	1	n/a
4	3	2	1	avails himself of opportunities for continuing education	4	3	2	1	n/a
4	3	2	1	values listening skills	4	3	2	1	n/a
4	3	2	1	cultivates good working relations with congregational leaders	4	3	2	1	n/a
4	3	2	1	relates to pastors and leaders in neighboring churches	4	3	2	1	n/a
4	3	2	1	conducts himself in the broader community	4	3	2	1	n/a

II. SUMMARY COMMENTS

A. In what area(s), according to your judgment, lie the pastor's greatest strengths and abilities?

B. What are some things you would suggest that the pastor work on?