

# **A Guide to Sabbatical Leave - Appendices & Resources**

**For QB Ministers  
and Churches**

**Assisting local QB churches  
to facilitate healthy pastorates.**



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*Permission is granted for local QB churches to  
reproduce this book in its entirety.*

# Guidelines on Sabbatical Leave

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This documents Contains the Appendices and Resources referred to in the Queensland Baptist publication *A Guide to Sabbatical Leave* and should be read in conjunction with this *A Guide to Sabbatical Leave*.

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# Guidelines on Sabbatical Leave

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## Appendix 1 – Sample Letter #1 To Congregations About Sabbaticals<sup>1</sup>

(add your church logo)

Date

Dear Church,

Several weeks ago we announced that we are giving our Lead Pastor, \_\_\_\_\_, a three month sabbatical which will be from \_\_\_\_\_ through \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_. As promised, on behalf of our Local Board of Administration, I wanted to follow up to provide a framework for the sabbatical as well as encouragement to all of us as the time approaches.

### BIBLICAL UNDERPINNINGS

Sabbatical comes from the image of Sabbath, the cycle of rest found in the scriptures. There is a weekly rest (Sabbath), a cyclical rest (through each of the feasts of the year), a year-long rest (for the land every seven years), and a year of jubilee, where everything was restored in Israel - property, debts cancelled, slaves freed, and a year-long celebration (every 50 years). Rest and renewal are deeply entrenched biblical principles. Jesus himself would often steal away to be with the Father, to refresh and restore His soul. In the same way, we want to provide rhythms of rest and restoration to our spiritual leaders.

### DENOMINATIONAL VALUE

As a leadership team, we want to better serve our leadership team, by offering a Sabbatical rest for \_\_\_\_\_. This is in keeping with the recommendations of Queensland Baptists which desires for each local church to provide a Sabbatical rest every seven years for their pastoral leadership. \_\_\_\_\_ has been here for \_\_\_\_ years and we feel a bit remiss that this has not happened sooner. We prayed and concluded together that it was a good time to do it now and were excited to let him know this.

### WHAT WILL THIS BE LIKE FOR US?

As Pastor \_\_\_\_\_ steps out for the \_\_\_\_\_ month Sabbatical in \_\_\_\_\_, our leadership team will step in to fulfill their role in many ways. They are capable and ready to do this well. We, as a Board, feel very positive about the leadership team's planning and preparation for this time. The teaching team, supplemented with a few guests, will continue to teach on Sundays without \_\_\_\_\_, in order to assist and encourage our growth. The leadership and administrative responsibilities \_\_\_\_\_ carries will be delegated to the leadership team (\_\_\_\_\_ at the point leadership, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_). The Board will continue in our role as elders alongside of the staff leadership team. We are very confident in the leadership team the Lord has raised up here at \_\_\_\_\_ Church, and excited for this season ahead!

### WHERE WILL \_\_\_\_\_ BE AND WHAT WILL THEY BE DOING?

\_\_\_\_\_ has anchored events planned each month as part of the Sabbatical. In \_\_\_\_\_ he/she will have a week at a monastery for a silent retreat and reflection to begin their time away. He/she and their family will also have a week away together - a way to celebrate together the years they have collectively served with him on our behalf. They will have a trip planned that will encompass time visiting several churches and surrounded by some time together for rest and investment in their marriage. The remainder of their time will be for rest and spiritual renewal. They will not be present at the church during the three-month period and will disconnect from phone, email and social media during that time as well. They will return the beginning of \_\_\_\_\_ to their duties here, but with a gradual engagement over the first month - the re-entry is very important to help solidify the learnings and benefits of the Sabbatical.

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Sabbatical Policies – Samples & Templates, accessed at <https://thegl.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Sabbatical-Packet-Sample-Policy-Worksheet-Letters-1-1.pdf>

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### OUR LEARNING TOO

We all have a role in the learning process while they are away. Our leadership team will learn and grow during this time as they take on new roles and responsibilities that will assist us not only now, but going forward. Many of you can also engage in the interim in ways that will move you forward in personal growth and in service too. Please ask your ministry leaders how you can help in the months ahead! Also, God wants to do a work in each of us during this time. While \_\_\_\_\_ is gone please pray for him; grow alongside of him and with us as a team. God is going to do something in all of us - even while apart - that will work beautifully as we come back together. Be part of that work.

### OUR FOCUS IN THE COMING SEASON

As the new ministry year approaches, we have two major initiatives we believe God is calling us to, in order to live out our mission to be radically loving, and growing together in Christ.

1. We must reach the unchurched and de-churched in our area. There are over 20,000 people in our local neighbourhoods who do not attend church or know the love of Jesus. We have a great redemptive potential and the summer is a key time to ramp up our focus to reach out in the coming year.
2. We want to become more like Jesus, and believe this can be summed up in one word. The love of Jesus is displayed in one word, generosity. God so loved the world that HE GAVE His only son... Jesus, to save us. As the middle of the year approaches we will be working to prepare a teaching series and serving opportunities that will help us to grow in the likeness of Jesus through becoming generous people. Join us in engaging in the mission god has for us, together!

Thank you for your support, encouragement, and engagement in this process as we honour our Lead Pastor through this gift of time, rest and renewal. Thank you too for your prayers and ongoing ministry here at \_\_\_\_\_ Church! The best is yet to come.

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Chairman of the Board

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## Appendix 2 – Sample Letter #2 to Congregations about Sabbaticals<sup>2</sup>

(add your church logo)

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Dear \_\_\_\_\_ Church Family,

\_\_\_\_\_ Church recently celebrated \_\_\_\_\_ years (date) in existence! As we celebrated \_\_\_\_\_ years the \_\_\_\_\_ family (names of Pastor's family) have completed \_\_\_\_\_ years as church planters / founders / pastor of \_\_\_\_\_ Church. For the past 16 months the Board, lead team, deacon team, and staff have been preparing to offer a sabbatical leave to Pastor \_\_\_\_\_ and their family. Pastor \_\_\_\_\_'s sabbatical will commence on \_\_\_\_\_ and the \_\_\_\_\_'s will return to ministry on \_\_\_\_\_ (\_\_\_\_ weeks).

### What is a Sabbatical?

It is an extended time away from routine ministry for the purpose of renewal, retooling, and receiving a fresh vision. It is meant to provide a time of special renewal for the pastor that will bring personal nourishment to his/her soul, a deeper relationship with the Lord, family renewal, and a clearer understanding of God's vision for the church. A sabbatical helps prevent ministry burnout and may give the pastor a fresh perspective for his/her ministry.

### What does the Bible say about Sabbaticals?

"The concept of sabbatical is deeply and indisputably rooted in Scripture. The term is derived from the Old Testament idea of "Sabbath." The Hebrew word means "rest." God created the world in six days and rested on the seventh (Genesis 2:1-3). During the Hebrew children's exodus from Egypt, God directed them (Exodus 16:26) to gather the manna daily but to rest on the seventh day (Sabbath). In numerous Old Testament passages, God admonished His people to work six days but to devote the seventh day to God as a day of rest (Exodus 20:9-10, 23:12, 31:15, 34:21, 35:2; Leviticus 23:3 and Deuteronomy 5:13). Among the Israelites, God instituted the Sabbath year (Leviticus 25:1-5). On every seventh year, the children of Israel were to refrain from farming the land and let the earth rest. Both the Israelites and the land benefited from the Sabbath rest.

These passages suggest that there is a rhythm to life. As the preacher said, for everything there is a season (Ecclesiastes 3:1). Jesus' own life and ministry reflect a deep understanding and appreciation for the rhythms of life. The demands upon Him were so great that His own ministry was punctuated with times of withdrawal for prayer and spiritual solitude (Matthew 14:23; Mark 6:46; Luke 5:16, 6:12)."

### Why have we have decided to grant this sabbatical:

- We are following Biblical and best practices for long-term ministry health
- Spiritual renewal and recharging for another 7-years!
- Further education as Pastor \_\_\_\_\_ continues \_\_\_\_\_ studies

### What is the Sabbatical Policy at \_\_\_\_\_ Church:

"The role of a pastor is one that requires continual sharpening and renewal, not only to acquire additional skills, but also to enable them to deal with the ever-changing nature of ministry in the modern world. Overflow gives a sabbatical to its full-time pastoral staff after 7 years of service to its leadership and \_\_\_\_\_

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<sup>2</sup> Adapted from Sabbatical Policies – Samples & Templates, accessed at <https://thegl.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Sabbatical-Packet-Sample-Policy-Worksheet-Letters-1-1.pdf>

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congregation and every 7 years thereafter. It should not be viewed as a vacation nor will the sabbatical be counted against accrued vacation time.”

### What is the plan during Pastor \_\_\_\_\_’s absence?

- **Weekend Sermons:** Great guest speakers and \_\_\_\_\_’s teaching team
- **Ministry Leadership:** \_\_\_\_\_ Staff and ministry team directors
- **Operations/Administration:** Office Manager and Operations Director
- **Congregational Care:** Pastoral team (Pastor \_\_\_\_\_, Pastor \_\_\_\_\_, and Pastor \_\_\_\_\_)
- **Strategic Leadership:** Elders and Deacons

### What is your role during this sabbatical?

- Pray, encourage, and support Pastor \_\_\_\_\_ and their family
- Pray and step-up at the church so the church is strengthened during this time:
  - o Attend regularly and invite others
  - o Give faithfully and generously
  - o Volunteer and serve consistently
- Respect the boundaries with the \_\_\_\_\_’s.
  - o They will be traveling quite a bit, but also will not have access to Pastor \_\_\_\_\_’s phone, email, or social media. Expect to see words of inspiration and encouragement from Pastor \_\_\_\_\_ via their blog and social media, but know that it is all being prepared ahead of time. They are not to engage in any “ministry or work” talk during their sabbatical.

Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_ Elders

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## Appendix 3 – Sabbatical Plan template <sup>3</sup>

Name : \_\_\_\_\_

Proposed Sabbatical Dates

From \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

### REASONS/OBJECTIVES/PURPOSES/OUTCOMES FOR SABBATICAL

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_

### SUPPORT PEOPLE

Possible people to approach to be a Sabbatical Advisor / Mentor

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_

Possible people to approach to be a Key Congregational Contact

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_

Communication Plan

| <b>Support Person</b>             | <b>Suggested Frequency</b> | <b>Planned Frequency</b> |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Sabbatical Advisor                | Once every 2 weeks         | _____                    |
| Key Congregational Contact        | Once a month               | _____                    |
| Mentor or Professional Supervisor | Once per Phase             | _____                    |

### PRIORITY ISSUES TO REFLECT ON DURING SABBATICAL

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) \_\_\_\_\_
- 6) \_\_\_\_\_

### AGREEMENTS DURING SABBATICAL

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) \_\_\_\_\_

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<sup>3</sup> Adapted from Foley, S. & Brown, S., 2019 *Sabbatical Guidelines – A Season of Renewal*, Navigators

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## KEY GOALS / ACTIVITIES

### Phase I – Release and Relinquish ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) DATES

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) \_\_\_\_\_

### Phase II – Rest and Recovery ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) DATES

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) \_\_\_\_\_
- 6) \_\_\_\_\_

### Phase III – Reflection and Refocus ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) DATES

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) \_\_\_\_\_
- 6) \_\_\_\_\_

### Phase IV – Reassignment or Realignment ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) DATES

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) \_\_\_\_\_
- 6) \_\_\_\_\_

### Phase V – Re-Entry and Re-Engagement ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) DATES

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) \_\_\_\_\_
- 6) \_\_\_\_\_

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## Appendix 4 – Example Sabbatical Plan<sup>4</sup>

Name : John Staff

Proposed Sabbatical Dates

From March to May

### REASONS/OBJECTIVES/PURPOSES/OUTCOMES FOR SABBATICAL

- 1) Find Refreshment after heavy season of change
- 2) Restore relationship with God that has been neglected in busyness
- 3) Regain healthy boundaries and limits to enable longevity in ministry
- 4) Spend time with Angela (Wife) and invest intentionally in our marriage as our kids grow up

### SUPPORT PEOPLE

Possible people to approach to be a Sabbatical Advisor / Mentor

- 1) Josh Advice
- 2) Ben Mentor

Possible people to approach to be a Key Congregational Contact

- 1) Julie Member
- 2) Sam Attendee

Communication Plan

| Support Person                    | Suggested Frequency | Planned Frequency             |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------|
| Sabbatical Advisor                | Once every 2 weeks  | <u>Fortnightly Phonecalls</u> |
| Key Congregational Contact        | Once a month        | <u>Monthly Meetings</u>       |
| Mentor or Professional Supervisor | Once per Phase      | <u>Meeting Once</u>           |

### PRIORITY ISSUES TO REFLECT ON DURING SABBATICAL

- 1) Ministry overload, over commitment, overwork
- 2) Perfectionism
- 3) Partnering in ministry
- 4) Disappointment
- 5) Self-doubt
- 6) Critical spirit
- 7) Anger
- 8) Fear
- 9) Role-fit
- 10) Marriage

<sup>4</sup> Adapted from Foley, S. & Brown, S., 2019 *Sabbatical Guidelines – A Season of Renewal*, Navigators

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## AGREEMENTS DURING SABBATICAL

- 1) Keep my sabbatical a priority focus
- 2) Regular journaling.
- 3) Bi-monthly day alone with God.
- 4) Jane will participate as appropriate.
- 5) Take initiative to stay current with sabbatical advisor and supervisors.
- 6) Limit ministry activities and travel as agreed with sabbatical advisor.
- 7) Be transparent and vulnerable.
- 8) Consider becoming a sabbatical advisor for another in the future.

## KEY GOALS / ACTIVITIES

### Phase I – Release and Relinquish ( Oct – Feb ) DATES

- 1) Organise Support People.
- 2) Complete assessment inventories and finalise sabbatical plan with sabbatical advisor.
- 3) Send completed Sabbatical Plan to SA, KCC and Professional Supervisor.
- 4) Identify appropriate people to train and transfer ministry/leadership responsibilities to and begin to transfer these items
- 5) Negotiate communication schedule with SA, KCC and Supervisor
- 6) Communicate with Congregation about Sabbatical and Plans
- 7) Develop budget for Sabbatical and submit for final approval

### Phase II – Rest and Recovery ( March ) DATES

- 1) Read: *Isolation* by Shelley Trebesch, *Abba's Child* by Brennan Manning, *The Overload Syndrome* by Dick Swenson
- 2) Finish projects around house.
- 3) Play tennis weekly.
- 4) Go to Bed & Breakfast with Angela.
- 5) Attend Marriage Retreat
- 6) Plan a fishing trip with Sons
- 7) Skip church 2 weeks
- 8) Book in for Physical with GP and with a checkup with a Psychologist / Counsellor

### Phase III – Reflection and Refocus ( April ) DATES

- 1) Read *Connecting* by Larry Crabb and *Reaching for the Invisible God* by Philip Yancey.
- 2) Attend seminar on leadership.
- 3) Take two extended prayer retreats asking God if he wants to say anything to me, one at a facilitated Retreat centre
- 4) Meet with Mentor and Professional Supervisor to clarify perceived issues & discuss future options.
- 5) Complete *Leading from Your Strengths* Assessment.
- 6) Seek to write down what I believe God's vision is for my ministry

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- 7) Attend a different church each Sunday

### Phase IV – Reassignment or Realignment ( May ) DATES

- 1) Clarify my calling.
- 2) Confirm God's direction for realignment in current role.
- 3) Get counsel from Mentor and supervisor.
- 4) Complete Sabbatical Debriefing Questions and send to supervisors SA, and SD.
- 5) Identify what changes I need to implement for the next season (boundaries, responsibilities)
- 6) Identify the key learnings from Sabbatical

### Phase V – Re-Entry and Re-Engagement ( June ) DATES

- 1) Determine right pace to re-engage.
- 2) Communicate to leadership and team my desires and expectations for re-entry
- 3) Prepare a report for Leadership team & membership
- 4) Plan meetings to hear up
- 5) Meet with leadership to discuss any redefinition of role / responsibilities & communicate changes
- 6) Meet with interim leaders to thank them for their ministry

# Guidelines on Sabbatical Leave

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## Appendix 5 – Burnout Inventory<sup>5</sup>

These questions may give you an idea of how heavily you're experiencing burnout. Rate your response to each question on a scale from 1 to 5. (1 = Doesn't describe me at all. 5 = Describes me very accurately.)

- I'm exhausted much of the time, and rest doesn't seem to help much.
- I don't get as much satisfaction from ministry as I used to.
- Most mornings, I dread beginning my ministry responsibilities.
- I feel like a failure in the ministry.
- I don't sleep as well as I used to; or I'm sleeping more than I used to.
- It's more and more difficult for me to deal with people's problems.
- I have more difficulty making decisions than I used to.
- I get very frustrated when things don't go well in the ministry.
- More and more I find myself thinking about leaving The Navigators.
- I feel greatly bothered or guilty about ministry responsibilities not done or not done well.
- I get angry and/or irritable more easily than I used to.
- I often feel a sense of emptiness and depletion, as if I have nothing more to give.
- The ministry gives me very little or no joy.
- I'm concerned that I won't be able to last much longer in the ministry.
- It's getting more and more difficult to do some aspects of the ministry.
- I struggle with feeling pressure to perform and succeed.

\_\_\_\_\_ **TOTAL**

### Assessing Your Level of Burnout

15-29: You probably don't have a problem with burnout.

30-49: You may be experiencing mild to moderate burnout.

50-64: You may be suffering significant burnout.

65-75: You may be in serious trouble.

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<sup>5</sup> Adapted from a similar *Burnout Inventory* prepared by Ken Williams, Ph.D., Wycliffe Bible Translators, Inc as found in Foley, S. & Brown, S., 2019 *Sabbatical Guidelines – A Season of Renewal*, Navigators

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## Appendix 6 – Personal And Marital Health Survey <sup>6</sup>

(Each spouse should fill out a separate survey.

Your responses should be discussed with a medical practitioner, mentor, counsellor and/or psychologist)

### 1. GENERAL INFORMATION

In what area or areas of difficulty would you like help?

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What results you would like to see?

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If you're comfortable, please list any physical conditions that may impact your sabbatical.

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When was the last time you had a physical?

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Please indicate any conditions that apply to you:

- |  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Headaches             | <input type="checkbox"/> Anxiety                       | <input type="checkbox"/> High blood pressure      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Insomnia              | <input type="checkbox"/> Panic attacks                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Nightmares               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fear                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Dizziness                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Irritability             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Loneliness            | <input type="checkbox"/> Fainting                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Loss of initiative       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Indecisiveness        | <input type="checkbox"/> Depression                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Drug problems            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Racing heartbeat      | <input type="checkbox"/> Inferiority                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Alcohol problems         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Constipation          | <input type="checkbox"/> Nerves                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Nervousness              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Vomiting              | <input type="checkbox"/> Rejection                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Stomach problems         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Abandonment           | <input type="checkbox"/> Appetite loss                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Suicidal thoughts        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Smoking               | <input type="checkbox"/> Work difficulty               | <input type="checkbox"/> Memory loss              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Economic difficulty   | <input type="checkbox"/> Weight gain                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Problems at home         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Weight loss           | <input type="checkbox"/> Anger                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Sexual control problems  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Guilt                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Marital difficulty            | <input type="checkbox"/> Problems with parents    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sexual addiction      | <input type="checkbox"/> Attention deficit             | <input type="checkbox"/> Phobias                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Eating disorder       | <input type="checkbox"/> Sleep too much                | <input type="checkbox"/> Obsessions               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Loss of hope          | <input type="checkbox"/> Strange thoughts              | <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty concentrating |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty relaxing   | <input type="checkbox"/> Problems with pornography     | <input type="checkbox"/> Abuse by spouse          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Learning difficulties | <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulties with friendships |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tiredness             | <input type="checkbox"/> Abusive to spouse             |   |

Do any other physical/emotional conditions apply to you?

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<sup>6</sup> Adapted from survey presented in Foley, S. & Brown, S., 2019 *Sabbatical Guidelines – A Season of Renewal*, Navigators.

# Guidelines on Sabbatical Leave

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## 2. STRESS LEVEL

How would you evaluate your level of stress on a rating of 1-10 (10 = high stress)? Explain.

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Are you struggling with attitudes such as resentment, anxiety, fear, pride, etc.?

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How would you rate the level of pressure you feel to perform and succeed?

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What relaxes and refreshes you?

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How would you evaluate your level of restlessness?

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## 3. RELATIONSHIPS

Do you have unresolved conflicts with people that need to be addressed?

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Do you experience feelings of loneliness, isolation, or insecurity?

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## 4. PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

What have you always wanted to do but never had the time?

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In what character areas do you feel the need to grow?

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In what ways are you developing your God-given gifts and design?

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# Guidelines on Sabbatical Leave

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## 5. SPIRITUAL INTIMACY

Assess your spiritual intimacy with God by assigning each aspect a number from 1 to 10 (10 = excellent).

- \_\_\_\_\_ My intimacy with Christ is truly vibrant and growing.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The Word and Spirit of God are speaking to me and guiding my mind, decisions, and significant relationships.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I have passages and promises from God for life and ministry that motivate me in my walk with Him.
- \_\_\_\_\_ In my time alone with God I'm growing in thankfulness, praise, and worship.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Intercessory prayer tends to be foundational to everything I do.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I'm praying and believing God for my life, ministry, and significant relationships.
- \_\_\_\_\_ My spiritual disciplines are strong and consistent.
- \_\_\_\_\_ My motivation to live a life of devotion to Christ in purity of heart, ministering out of interest in the welfare of others, is strong.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The joys, hardships, sufferings, and circumstances of my life are drawing me to a deeper love for and dependence on Christ.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I have a consistent inner sense that God deeply loves me, is present within me, is for me, and is active in my life.

Is there a spiritual discipline that I sense is weak and would like to grow in?

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Reflect on the above parameters of your spiritual life, as well as any others that come to mind. Talk to God about them and ask Him to speak to you. Is He putting His finger on some area of your spiritual life, urging you to develop in it? If so, what?

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## Guidelines on Sabbatical Leave

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### 6. MARITAL INTIMACY

Independently of one another, please assess the following areas of your marriage by assigning each aspect of intimacy a number from 1 to 10 (10 = excellent). Then compare with the responses of your spouse.

#### Aspect of Intimacy

- \_\_\_ 1. Our spiritual closeness through prayer and sharing the Word together is rich.
- \_\_\_ 2. Frequent times of quality communication and special times away together are high priority.
- \_\_\_ 3. We practice honest confession and genuine forgiveness when we hurt one another.
- \_\_\_ 4. My spouse is good at sharing appreciation, and at speaking and showing love.
- \_\_\_ 5. My spouse and I often agree on important issues concerning values and beliefs.
- \_\_\_ 6. We generally understand and appreciate each other's differences.
- \_\_\_ 7. We often share deep feelings and strong emotions like grief, sadness, and joy.
- \_\_\_ 8. We give each other undivided attention when listening or talking.
- \_\_\_ 9. Our communication is characterized by sharing on important and significant issues.
- \_\_\_ 10. The handling of finances isn't usually a source of tension in our relationship
- \_\_\_ 11. My spouse and I understand and accept our marital roles.
- \_\_\_ 12. My spouse is responsive and sensitive to my needs and desires concerning our relationship.
- \_\_\_ 13. My spouse and I experience community and meaningful relationships with a few close friends.
- \_\_\_ 14. We're comfortable in our relationship with our children.
- \_\_\_ 15. My spouse and I take part together in recreation, relaxation, and rest.
- \_\_\_ 16. We have good and meaningful relationships with our in-laws and parents.
- \_\_\_ 17. We partner together in some areas of common interests, and in ways that are consistent with individual design and desires.
- \_\_\_ 18. Generally, I am satisfied with our level of sexual intimacy.

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## 7. ASSESSING YOUR LEVEL OF INTIMACY

Record your responses to the questions and share your responses with one another. Identify and talk about areas of significant agreement and disagreement.

Areas of Agreement

Areas of Disagreement

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As a couple, what are your three greatest strengths?

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As a couple, what are your three greatest weaknesses?

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Identify and agree on one or two issues as most important to focus on during your sabbatical.

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## Guidelines on Sabbatical Leave

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### 8. CAREGIVING AND COUNSELING

You are encouraged to discuss your results with a medical practitioner, mentor, counsellor and/or psychologist)

Is there anything else you'd like to discuss or explore?

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Is there any area in which you seem unable to make progress on your own?

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Have you seen counsellors in the past? In what areas did you seek help? Was it helpful to you? If so, how?

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# Guidelines on Sabbatical Leave

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## Appendix 7 – Twelve steps to renewal<sup>7</sup>

### TIPS FOR PLANNING YOUR OWN PERSONAL RETREAT

- 1. Admit your need for rest.** There's no shame in being tired because you're serving others. You're only human.
- 2. Put it on the calendar.** Once you determine your need for a rest, get a date on the calendar before it fills up. Stick to it! Resist the inevitable temptation to cancel as the time draws near.
- 3. Get the support of your family and friends.** Share with your husband why you'd like to try a personal retreat; after all, he's the one who'll hold down the fort when you're gone. Ask your close friends to pray for you through the process.
- 4. Resist taking someone else.** A personal retreat is a great idea, so everyone who hears your plans will want to come along. For maximum renewal, keep it solo. Encourage them to take their own personal retreat.
- 5. Don't feel guilty.** While it's true that you're leaving behind needs and tasks, the *unselfish* thing is to make renewal a priority. You'll return strengthened for the tasks at hand.
- 6. Customize your retreat.** Think through what's restful for you. Rustic or luxurious? Active or quiet? Mountains or ocean? Near or far?
- 7. Include the nature element.** The heavens do declare His glory and are the perfect setting in which to be renewed.
- 8. Take advantage of resources.** Check with your ministry organization for retreat venues in your area designed especially for ministry workers. These are usually low-cost and sometimes offer counseling and other resources.
- 9. Think creatively.** Consider off-season church camps, a friend's mountain cabin, or an inexpensive motel in a place you'd like to visit.
- 10. Address the whole person.** Include elements of rest and renewal for your body, mind and soul.
- 11. Take a well-stocked tool chest.** Be prepared. Pack your Bible, a devotional and other Christian books, a songbook or hymnal, and your journal. (But don't feel bad if you don't use much of what you bring.) For the whole person, pack a good novel for lighter reading, as well as your favourite snacks.
- 12. Have great expectations.** Expect God to meet you in a special way. He specializes in giving rest to the weary. All He asks of us is to come.

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<sup>7</sup> Adapted from Foley, S. & Brown, S., 2019 *Sabbatical Guidelines – A Season of Renewal*, Navigators

# Guidelines on Sabbatical Leave

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## Appendix 8 – role fit inventory<sup>8</sup>

Carefully read each of the ten statements below and insert the number between 1 and 5 that best represents your response.

|                   |          |         |       |                |
|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
| Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly agree |
| 1                 | 2        | 3       | 4     | 5              |

  

\_\_\_\_\_ In my current role, I’m utilizing my primary gifts and abilities.

\_\_\_\_\_ I’m motivated and challenged in my day-to-day activities.

\_\_\_\_\_ I draw satisfaction and fulfillment from my current contributions.

\_\_\_\_\_ I feel energized and encouraged in my primary responsibilities.

\_\_\_\_\_ I have a sense that I’m making a significant contribution to my organization.

\_\_\_\_\_ The ability to fulfill my current responsibilities comes naturally and easily.

\_\_\_\_\_ I receive feedback from others that I’m in a good role-fit.

\_\_\_\_\_ I experience little frustration in my current role.

\_\_\_\_\_ I don’t experience unmanageable stress in my current role.

\_\_\_\_\_ My relationships with co-workers are generally free of conflict.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Total**

### INTERPRETING YOUR SCORE

|         |            |
|---------|------------|
| 40 – 50 | Maximizing |
| 15 – 39 | Moderate   |
| 0 – 14  | Marginal   |

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<sup>8</sup> Adapted from Foley, S. & Brown, S., 2019 *Sabbatical Guidelines – A Season of Renewal*, Navigators

# Guidelines on Sabbatical Leave

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## Appendix 9 – Sabbatical Best Practices – Brian Howard<sup>9</sup>

- Create a plan 9 months in advance
- Discuss funding as a team
- Prepare your staff
- Divide into 3 sections - disconnect, rest, connect
- Educate both elders and congregation
- Get counselling during your Sabbatical
- Don't expect that Sabbatical will fix your compulsive issues
- Be prepared for relearning how to be a Christian.
- Don't leave your wife or family behind
- Needs to be fun in there
- Don't underestimate the place - don't be in a place of tension
- Get out of town
- Help your team understand the why's. Why would we pay you to be on a Sabbatical? Why extra money? Because your bills continue.
- Spend time with Jesus every day. Silence and Solitude every day
- Have a Sabbatical Policy
- Have a Plan or what you are going to do
- Don't wait until it is an emergency
- Be honest about your fills and your drains (Netflix all day is not filling)
- Don't work on your dissertation. (That's not Sabbatical)
- Create and encouragement team
- Burner phone
- Don't have dinners with people in the church
- A Plan for Texting

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<sup>9</sup> From the *Sabbatical Policy*, Disciples Church.

# Guidelines on Sabbatical Leave

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## Appendix 10 – Ten Steps To A More Fruitful Sabbatical – Brian Croft<sup>10</sup>

**26/08/2014**

I recently returned from sabbatical. My church totally relieved me of duty for the months of June and July. I was banned from Sunday services at our church and was kept in the dark about pastoral issues they faced during this two-month period.

Leading up to this time, I sought counsel from many pastors who had been given similar time off. I was struck by how many shared of different regrets once their time was done. So I tried to use my Sabbatical in the most fruitful way possible. Here are a few lessons I learned.

**1. Delight in your wife.** Have plenty of date nights. Care for her. Study her. Learn from her. Laugh with her. Enjoy her. Reflect on your years of ministry together. Realize she needs this time as much as you do. Resolve to make it a great benefit to her soul. Seize time to delight in her while the busyness that often cuts into your time together is temporarily relieved.

**2. Enjoy your kids.** I have never before had such an extended period where I can focus on time with my kids. I needed to make sure they were not only a primary focus, but that my heart was taking in this time with them and truly enjoying them. Many pastors expressed regret to me on this front. So we spent time at the pool, parks, out of town a bit, reading, wrestling, laughing, riding bikes, and whatever else they wanted to do.

**3. Be intentional with spiritual disciplines.** I committed to have times of reading God's Word that were long and covered large portions of text. I usually spend most of my time "staring at the trees" for sermon preparation; for this break I allowed "the forest" to feed my soul.

I also had intentional times of silence and prayer for the sake of my own soul, asking God for guidance on a vision for our church for the next ten years, as I've just finished up my first ten as pastor. Additionally, I renewed a helpful discipline I've neglected: journaling. Embrace the basic spiritual disciplines we exhort our people to engage in that we can often let slide in our own lives.

**4. Be consistent with physical disciplines.** Commit to sleeping eight hours a night. Try to renew regular exercise—for me, this meant a three to four day a week workout plan. And resolve to eat well. If you do none of these well in your normal grind, a sabbatical can be a great time to recommit to stewarding your body and energy well. I lost ten pounds on my sabbatical and was reminded how much sleep I actually need to be at my best to serve the Lord. Do not underestimate how poorly you care for your body during the grind of ministry.

**5. Be mentored by a faithful dead pastor.** Dead pastors from different moments in history can teach us about pastoral ministry in ways modern pastors cannot. I chose the great 18th century English Particular Baptist Andrew Fuller (1754-1815) to mentor me during this time via his writings. It was so encouraging! Pick one, then immerse yourself in his life and ministry and allow him to teach you.

**6. Learn about preaching from a faithful living pastor.** I chose Ted Donnelly, who pastored in Northern Ireland for over 35 years until his health recently declined. He is known in Britain as one of the most gifted, Spirit-filled preachers in the last half century. I listened to his sermons and learned much. God also fed my soul through His Word in the process. Choose someone you don't know very well but would be a helpful instructor to push you to grow in your preaching.

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<sup>10</sup> As it appears on 9 Marks website, <https://www.9marks.org/article/ten-steps-to-a-more-fruitful-sabbatical/>.

## Guidelines on Sabbatical Leave

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**7. Visit other churches.** It can certainly be restful and encouraging to worship among your people with your regular pastoral duties relieved. But the inevitable conversations that will arise can make a Sabbatical less of a break if you spend Sundays in your own church. So I made sure my responsibilities at church were covered so that I could worship at other churches for the entire sabbatical.

If you go to other solid churches where the Word is preached you will experience Christian fellowship. There is much to learn from other churches and pastors. You may experience something in their public gathering you then choose to bring back to your church. If you do not have many choices, pick a couple of solid churches during your sabbatical where you can simply attend, relax, and be fed while sitting with your family.

**8. Put off the tasks you normally put on.** A Sabbatical will not be truly restful if you hang on to what normally wears you down. This is why my fellow pastors banned me from writing a book or preaching anywhere, both of which are a normal part of my ministry. Although many take sabbatical time to write—which is fine for some—my fellow pastors were right to forbid me from doing so. Make sure you are honest with yourself about the things that wear on you. And make sure set them down for this time, even if they are things you love to do.

**9. Play golf.** Golf is relaxing yet humbling for most of us. There are layers of reasons this is good for your soul. I shot some of my best rounds of golf in years during my Sabbatical and beat my very competitive father for the first time in my life. Clearly, the favor of the Lord was upon me. If not golf, find some other relaxing, humbling way to have fun that's tough to fit into your regular grind.

**10. Truly rest.** I typically don't rest well. But I realized through others' counsel that if I came to the end of my time off and my wife and I did not feel refreshed and rested, we would have defeated the purpose of this gift from our church and squandered this opportunity. Whatever will help you rest from the rat race of your regular labors and refresh your soul is what you should do.

If you are planning for an upcoming sabbatical, I hope this begins a helpful conversation between you and your fellow pastors about what would be the best way for you to benefit from this gift. Be intentional. Involve others in your church to help determine the best way for you to spend your time. Listen to your wife's input. And pray God would grant you to rest well and wisely, so that fond memories vastly outweigh regrets when you return to the normal routine of ministry.

**By Brian Croft**