

## **Mutual ministry review**

Most congregations require an annual evaluation or review of the minister(s) each year. Below are some suggestions to make this process as useful as possible.

**Make sure the right people are in the room.** What body should conduct the review? Sometimes this information is outlined in the minister's letter of covenant/call or in the congregational by-laws. If it isn't, the group of lay leaders that works most closely with the minister (with input as appropriate from others) should facilitate this conversation.

**Be clear about the purpose of the review.** What does everyone involved hope to accomplish? The review will be an exercise in fruitlessness, maybe even frustration, if it's being done merely to check off a box.

**Frame the conversation in terms of mutual ministry.** Ministry is collaborative, not performative. How are pastor and parish in this together? Where have we helped each other grow or made each other stronger this year? What do we need from one another in the coming year?

**Set helpful metrics.** What mile markers will tell us how well we are living into God's call? (Having a functional mission statement makes these criteria much easier to establish.) The wrong metrics prompt focus on surface rather than substantive issues.

**Look backward and forward.** What have we noticed and what do we hope for? Examining – though not lingering in – the past can be a springboard for promising conversations about what lies ahead.

**Welcome the opportunity to minister in the midst of the review.** Framing the conversation in terms of mutual ministry allows the participants to check in with one another, not just as fellow constituents of the church but also as people.

**Use feedforward for constructive feedback.** How can we leverage difficulties into positive changes? Useful criticism starts with what we've learned and where we are now, then looks ahead to what we can do differently.

**Agree on intervals and means for feedback through the year.** Concerns and celebrations don't need to wait until the formal review. What are the logical times of year for all parties to touch base with each other, and what's the most helpful way to go about that?

**Re-covenant as needed.** What about the covenant we've been operating under needs to change? As shifts happen, intentional tweaks to how minister and congregation relate to each other need to be made.

**Below are some questions that could be useful toward these ends.**

*This past year*

At the beginning of last year, what did we believe God had called us to do and be together? In what ways did we live into that? What obstacles did we encounter, and how did we navigate them? What did we learn?

Where did we notice God at work most powerfully in our ministry together this past year? When were we most energized and engaged?

How have we grown as minister and congregation since the last review?

As individuals, how are we doing spiritually, mentally, emotionally, and physically?

*This coming year*

What do we believe God is calling us to do together in the coming year? What are some first steps in living toward that vision? What obstacles do we anticipate?

How can we create even more space for the Spirit to move in, among, and through us this year?

What changes do we need to make to address obstacles that remain from last year or that we anticipate for the coming year? What resources and leadership do we need to overcome these challenges?

What are our self-care plans for the coming year? How can we support and hold each other accountable?

In what areas do we want to grow as minister/disciples? How might we go about that? How can we support and hold one another accountable?

*Specifically for the minister*

How well does your position description match what you actually do? What do you need to stop doing? What needs to be updated in your position description to make it more accurate?

How well does your compensation align with your needs and responsibilities? What adjustments need to be considered?

*Loose ends*

Coming out of this conversation, what follow-up is needed? Who will do it, and by when?

Which aspects of this conversation need to remain confidential? How do we define confidential?



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