



Cooperative Baptist  
Fellowship North Carolina

## FEATURED RESOURCES: PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

### 5 BEST PRACTICES FOR YOUR PERSONNEL COMMITTEE IN 2022

*Many aspects of church life have changed in recent years, but certain elements remain crucial to effective governance. For example, an important role within a congregation is a personnel committee or team that supports, oversees, and evaluates individuals professionally engaged by the church. In an effort to assist your church's personnel committee in 2022, consider these five best practices:*

#### **#1: FOLLOW THE POLICY**

Just as the church constitution and by-laws must be followed by the church body, the personnel policy is the key document that governs all procedures related to staff. When in doubt, consult the policy. If the policy requires annual reviews of the pastor and staff, those reviews must be completed accordingly. If the policy is silent on an important question, or if it is outdated, consider an amendment to guide future committees. The policy does not have to be the length of a corporate HR manual, but it needs to be clear and instructive as well as consistent with broader church procedures (and the constitution).

#### **#2: DOCUMENT ACTION STEPS**

Personnel work is part of the business of church governance. In addition to confirming the committee's work fulfilling policy requirements, it is important to document action steps taken regarding personnel matters. Such documentation serves a number of purposes, including but not limited to protection of team members, clarity of reporting to deacons or other teams when needed, and reference for future committee members. Problems can be preempted when action is documented and when clear communication is made in writing when sensitive or time-critical issues are addressed.

### **#3: COMMUNICATE WITH DEACONS & STAFF**

I have rarely observed personnel committees operating well in a vacuum. Church life is collaborative, and personnel work always involves people. An effective personnel committee typically has regular, open communication with the deacons and pastor. Such communication promotes dialogue and problem-solving, and it can lead to fewer potential surprises and crises to be managed.

I referenced staff reviews above as an example of personnel policy. Not all churches do reviews well. However, reviews are significant in church life as they are in business. If a one-time annual review does not work well for your church, consider other options. Churches have flexibility, but collaboration and assessment are necessary to the process of governance and meaningful staff engagement.

### **#4: OFFER OPTION FOR BENEFITS/TAX ASSISTANCE TO MINISTERS**

It is not a surprise that ministers, like most laity, are not trained as experts about taxes, insurance, or benefits. Similarly, most ministers do not have access to such experts without meaningful cost. The church is paying ministers and offering certain employee benefits (formally or informally). As an additional way to assist the individual and his/her family, a valuable non-financial tool is the option to utilize a resource that helps ensure full advantage is taken of all available benefits and tax savings. If helpful, our team at CBFNC can assist by providing no-cost, confidential consultations to ministers.

### **#5: CLERGY APPRECIATION**

An effective personnel committee is proactive as well as reactive. Many of us know that October is Pastor Appreciation Month. Some churches also recognize ministers on anniversary dates of service. These are great opportunities to recognize staff and express gratitude, but they do not have to be the only ways that churches show appreciation. The personnel committee can be a key advocate for staff, prompting positive steps by deacons and church members throughout the year. This resource from our team describes several great options. Of course, there are many more. While expressing gratitude is the primary goal, we can acknowledge that the stronger and healthier our ministers are, the better equipped and energized they will be to serve the church and the Kingdom.



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