



Boundaries Training for Pastor Parish Relations Committees Conversation Guide

Facilitator's Notes

This conversation guide is meant to help make the instruction led by Dr. David Olsen applicable and helpful for your ministry context. This training can be completed as one 3-hour session or divided into 3 sessions of 45-60 minutes.

Video run time: 28:00 min. This is a series of three 45-minute training sessions or they can be combined for a 3-hour training session for church leaders. Great for use with lay leadership and paid and unpaid church staff. This series is designed to help expand the circle of accountability around clergy professional boundaries and the establishment of healthy practices in local churches.

Session 1: What are Boundaries?

This session spells out the role of boundaries in life and the role of clergy professional boundaries, ministry as profession, and the complicated nature of the role of pastor.

*Instructions: Play Session 1. At the end, invite the group to think about the following questions. Before discussion, you might revisit your covenant around confidentiality. Consider sharing the sections on confidential and limited access information from *Healthy Disclosure: Solving Communication Quandaries in Congregations* by Kibbie Simmons Ruth, Karen A. McClintock.*

1. What is the role of the pastor of our local church? How many hats does he or she wear? (Example of "hats" might be: pastor, wife/husband, mother/father, friend, Little League coach, after-school tutor, community activist, volunteer Fire Dept. chaplain.) Ask your pastor to respond to this question.
2. How is our pastor maintaining healthy boundaries? Ask him or her how they are feeling about the stress and strain of the position.
3. What areas might our pastor be struggling in to maintain healthy boundaries?
4. What are the expectations for our pastor? What are the Pastor Parish Relations Committee's expectations? The congregation? The denomination? Discuss any discrepancy between the varying expectations.
5. Invite your pastor to share with you some of the perhaps misguided ideas of what they thought ministry might be before they served a church.
6. Ask your pastor: Share with us a time or situation (without revealing identities) that has challenged your sense of personal, professional, familial, or financial boundaries.



7. Ask your pastor: How are you making space to recharge after particularly stressful or intense times of the church year (e.g., following Holy Week and Easter, at the conclusion of a capital campaign)?
8. Ask your pastor: What is your self-care plan? Do you have a confessor or covenant group in whom to share? Do you have a clergy colleague group for peer learning and fellowship? Do you have a coaching or mentoring relationship with someone?

Take Action:

Take time to establish some protocols and policies based on your conversation. Consider inviting a working group to spend some time working on this in greater detail before your next meeting.

- How do we measure “success” for the role of our pastor?
- How are we evaluating our pastor?
- In addition to accountability measures, do we also include expectations around self-care for your pastor in your yearly evaluation? Spend some time reviewing the continuing education and professional expenses allocation in your pastoral support form.

Visit www.moumethodist.org/boundaryresources for additional resources for group and individual study.

About the Video Host

David Olsen, PhD is an ordained American Baptist minister and the current executive director of the Samaritan Counseling Center of the Capital Region and adjunct faculty member of the Sage Graduate School. Together with Dr. Nancy D. Devor of the Danielsen Institute in Boston, he has co-authored *Saying No to Say Yes: Everyday Boundaries and Pastoral Excellence*. He often consults with congregations and clergy around the integration of spirituality and psychotherapy.

More Boundaries Resources

- *Saying No to Say Yes: Everyday Boundaries and Pastoral Excellence* by David Olsen and Nancy G. Devor
- *Healthy Disclosure: Solving Communication Quandaries in Congregations* by Kibbie Simmons Ruth (Author), Karen A. McClintock
- *Sex in the Parish* by Karen Lebacqz and Ronald Barton
- *Caring Enough to Confront: How to Understand and Express Your Deepest Feelings Toward Others* by David Augsburger
- *Rising Strong* by Brené Brown
- *Healthy Churches, Faithful Pastors: Covenant Expectations for Thriving Together* by David Keck