

THE CHURCH'S RESPONSIBILITY FOR PASTORAL CARE

The local church, beginning with the board, needs to recognize their own responsibility in protecting the mental, emotional and spiritual health of their pastor.

- **The budget should include provision for him/her to attend one or two conferences or retreats each year** where the pastor can find refreshment and renewal. This should be in addition to regular vacation time, not part of it.
- **Respect the pastor's study time.** Apart from an emergency, she/he should be allowed to have undisturbed blocks of time to prepare for preaching and teaching. If the pastor is weak in preaching, the whole church will suffer.
- **Don't demand more from the pastor than she/he can give.** Pastors are human and imperfect. Pastors need your prayers and encouragement as much as you need theirs. Understand that she/he can't please everyone, and sometimes the person the pastor won't please will be you!
- **Consider granting the pastor a sabbatical.** Every seven to 10 years the pastor should be offered a paid leave of 10 to 12 weeks (not including regular vacation time) to seek spiritual and mental refreshment, do research or writing, travel, or pursue other activities that will disconnect them for a time from the routine demands of ministry and provide a time for renewal. Even Jesus realized the importance of stepping away from the ministry for a time.