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GUIDELINES AND PRACTICES OF MINISTRY SUPPORT FOR THE SENIOR PASTOR

► A senior pastor's schedule can get filled quickly, and he or she can easily become overloaded and overworked. Coordinating priorities and goals with an attentive ministry assistant will help solve this problem and assist a senior pastor in reaching his or her peak performance.

The sample schedule and responsibilities in this chapter are designed for this purpose. They are guides and models for planning and coordination and can be adapted and expanded as needed. The next chapter will cover the duties of a ministry assistant in greater detail, but this chapter gets things started by providing an idea of what ministry support is about.

Remember, almost every organization, including the church, functions best when all its components, especially the main ones, work together according to a well-devised plan.

SENIOR PASTOR'S WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Monday

8:00-11:00	Morning Office Hours
11:00-12:00	Meet with Ministry Assistant
12:00-1:00	Lunch with Pastoral Staff
1:00-3:00	Pastoral Staff Meeting
3:00-5:00	Meeting with Executive Pastor and Worship Pastor

Tuesday

At Home—Study Day—All Day

Wednesday

Office Hours/Appointments—Including Breakfast/Lunch

Thursday

Away Day

Friday

At Home—Church Projects

8:00-12:00 Morning Off

1:00-5:00 Church Work at Home and Office—
Alternating Biweekly

Saturday

At Home

Sunday

At Church

6:30-7:30 Study

8:00-1:00 Church

4:00-8:00 Church

MINISTRY ASSISTANT'S WEEKLY RESPONSIBILITIES

General Duties

1. The ministry assistant is to meet with the senior pastor on Monday morning and set the priorities of work for each day of the week.
2. It is the responsibility of the ministry assistant, while meeting with the senior pastor, to record every task to be done, every call to be made, every e-mail to be sent, and so on, and to report the status on these items at the first available opportunity of each workday. This can be done best if the ministry assistant uses the same list as the senior pastor for recording such work. The Tasks feature in Microsoft Outlook is a good tool to use for both scheduling and reporting.
3. Upon the senior pastor's return after being out of the office, the ministry assistant should immediately advise him or her of all phone calls, pressing business, or other pertinent information he or she must know.

4. By Wednesday noon, the ministry assistant should meet with the senior pastor to report any projects that are unlikely to be completed within the workweek and to collaborate on the priority of work for the remainder of the week.
5. On the days when the senior pastor is in the office, the ministry assistant should meet with him or her as early as possible, reporting the following:
 - All phone calls, how they were handled, to whom they were given, if a response is needed, and so on
 - New appointments, and requests for or cancellation of appointments
 - Status updates on current projects, with estimated times of completion
 - General information that must be communicated
6. On the days when the senior pastor is working at home, the ministry assistant must be prepared to report in the above fashion at 11 A.M. and 4 P.M.
7. On the days when the senior pastor is working at home and there is no phone contact at 4 P.M., the ministry assistant should leave a message on the senior pastor's answering machine at the end of the workday about the next day's appointments.
8. It is the responsibility of the ministry assistant to do the following:
 - Keep the senior pastor on schedule for his or her appointments
 - Remind the senior pastor of his or her appointments
 - Screen the senior pastor from interruptions
9. Before going to lunch, attending a meeting, keeping an appointment in or out of the office, or being absent or unavailable for any other reason, the ministry assistant must leave any messages, phone calls, upcoming appointments, and so on, on the senior pastor's desk.
10. It is the responsibility of the ministry assistant to schedule needed appointments with the senior pastor for the following purposes:
 - To discuss projects in process

- To seek information to complete a project
 - To receive new projects
 - To communicate for any reason
 - To ask for assistance in shifting part of the workload to another assistant
11. It is the responsibility of the ministry assistant to request information from the senior pastor about work he or she needs to have done, or when the ministry assistant is running out of things to do.
 12. When the senior pastor is planning a business trip or a vacation, it is the responsibility of the ministry assistant to do the following:
 - Request an appointment or information about work that should be completed during the senior pastor's absence
 - Request phone numbers, hotel names and locations, and other pertinent information about where the senior pastor may be reached
 13. The ministry assistant must advise the senior pastor about any "hot spots" either among staff or congregation members so redemptive action can be taken in a timely fashion.
 14. The ministry assistant should concentrate on duties related to the work of the senior pastor and volunteer for work in other ministry areas only after consulting with the senior pastor.

Phone Duties

1. The ministry assistant should use a phone logbook exclusively for the senior pastor's calls.
2. The ministry assistant should record every phone call received for the senior pastor, including the following:
 - Those that require no response
 - Those handed off to other staff members
 - Those resolved or answered by the ministry assistant
 - Any other calls handled in any other way

The ministry assistant should also inform the senior pastor of such calls and how they were handled.
3. The ministry assistant should try to make phone appointments for those who want to speak with the senior pastor by phone.

Appointments

1. The ministry assistant should make all appointments for the senior pastor for Wednesdays and on alternating Fridays. Exceptions should be made only in consultation with the senior pastor.
2. The ministry assistant should remind the senior pastor of all appointments at the beginning of each day when he or she is in the office, or discuss upcoming appointments on the phone at the end of those days he or she is working at home.

Priority of Discussion with the Senior Pastor

1. Report all phone calls; how they were handled; to whom they were given; what response, if any, is required.
2. Advise of upcoming appointments, requests for appointments, and cancellation of appointments.
3. Give status update of all work in progress with estimated time of completion.
4. Priorities will be adjusted and a new schedule of completion set.

SENIOR PASTOR'S CONTINUING RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Preparing sermons
2. Engaging in professional reading and leadership development
3. Facilitating staff leadership development
4. Meeting with all pastors bimonthly
5. Meeting with all church board members semiannually
6. Shaping the vision
7. Communicating the vision
8. Arranging for Wednesday night classes for adults
9. Facilitating church board leadership development
10. Raising funds for the church
11. Calling first-time visitors
12. Calling and praying for families weekly
13. Sending cards to the bereaved and for new births
14. Fulfilling district/regional responsibilities

SENIOR PASTOR'S OCCASIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Officiating at Communion
2. Receiving members
3. Baptizing believers
4. Providing healing services
5. Dedicating/baptizing babies
6. Officiating at weddings
7. Officiating at funerals
8. Overseeing the church calendar
9. Entertaining special guests/speakers
10. Arranging revivals, speakers, missionaries

MINISTRY ASSISTANT'S ADDITIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Year-End Reports to District/Region

- Provide membership numbers as needed.

Interns

- Schedule appointments.
- Prepare planning objectives.
- Prepare operations manual.

Weddings

- Assist only with those involving the senior pastor.
- Keep the senior pastor informed of all weddings for information purposes.

Funerals

- Assist only with those involving the senior pastor.
- Keep the senior pastor informed of all funerals for information purposes.

Stewardship Campaign in Conjunction with the Senior Pastor

- Schedule dates.
- Plan and implement an all-church mailing.
- Design brochure and take to printer.
- Have commitment cards printed.

- Plan/order remembrance (cup, key chain, magnet, etc.).
- Leadership dinner
 - Schedule time.
 - Hire caterer.
 - Plan and gather decorations.
 - Send invitation letter to leadership people.
 - Call leadership people.
 - Set up.
- Banquet
 - Assign committees—name tags, hosts, greeters, decorations.

Membership

- Schedule dates for receiving members.
- Place announcements in bulletin for upcoming classes and membership days.
- Send letters to those who indicate interest in membership.
- Send for transfers, as requested, for all those who want to transfer their membership.
- Send transfers, as requested, for all those who move or attend another church.
- Compile list of those who are joining.
- Keep membership list current.
- Have membership certificates ready for those who have joined.

Baptism

- Schedule dates.

Baby Dedication

- Schedule dates.

Church Board

Annually

- Set up refreshment schedule.
- Set up notebooks.
- Create files to keep minutes for auditor and permanent files.

Monthly

- Send reminder note to board.

- Send reminder one week before the board meeting to all pastors for their board reports.
- Remind those who are bringing refreshments.
- Create agenda.
- Write pastor's monthly report.
- Copy and collate reports, and so on, and put in notebooks.
- Send previous month's minutes to board members before next scheduled meeting.
- Set up room—refreshments, paper products.

Nominations/Elections

- Schedule nominating committee meeting.
- Contact members to serve on committee.
- Prepare materials for meeting.
- Write letters to all of the nominees—expectations.
- Make sure pictures and short bios are available for each nominee and placed on bulletin board two weeks prior to election.
- Put announcements in bulletin.
- Request tables for elections.
- Prepare ballot for elections.
- Recruit tellers to staff the election tables.
- Have supplies ready—membership list, pencils, ballots.
- Recruit tellers to count and tally the ballots.
- Send letters to all nominees—congratulations and condolences.