

Exit Interview

With Departing Pastor

1. Ask the pastor to talk about things she/he feels good about their work with the congregation.
2. Ask about barriers to effective ministry. These barriers might be in the congregation, or community, or the pastor.
3. Ask about the relationship between the pastor and session.
4. Ask about advice they might give to the next pastor.
5. Talk about appropriate and inappropriate contact with the congregation after the pastor, associate pastor or other staff person has left.*

With the Session

The Moderator of session appointed by presbytery should be present for this interview.

1. Discuss positive growth in the life of the congregation during the pastor's time with the congregation.
2. Discuss any difficulties there might have been in the relationship between the pastor and session/congregation.
3. Discuss ways the session might build a strong relationship with the next pastor.
4. Discuss appropriate and inappropriate contact with the congregation after the pastor has left. This is important.*
5. Plan ways the session might lead the congregation to disengage with the former pastor, associate or other staff person.*
6. Give a brief overview of the call process.
7. Begin discussion about maintaining regular worship and congregational life during the transition and search for new pastoral leadership.
8. Discuss the benefits of the session appointing a transition team consisting of session members and significant members of the congregation.

Minutes should be taken by the COM Liaison or the Clerk of Session including information such as church/place, date, time, participants, etc. The COM interviewing team should send written copies of the official exit interview with any additional comments/observations to the COM Moderator, presbytery office, and Pastor to the Presbytery.

*See next page

Statement of Ethics for Departing Pastors

To be read to the gathered church upon their departure:

When a pastor leaves a charge there are bonds of affection between the minister and members of the church which continue to be cherished. Relations of friendship continue, but the pastoral relationship does not. In order to spare ministers and church members from embarrassment, and to encourage the new pastoral relationship that will be established, the Presbytery directs that the church be reminded of these requirements, which are consistent with the Form of Government:

G-2.0905 Officiate by Invitation Only

After the dissolution of the pastoral relationship, former pastors and associate pastors shall not provide their pastoral services to members of their former congregations without the invitation of the moderator of session.

Instructions for the outgoing pastor:

The departing pastor bears the primary responsibility for helping members of the congregation he or she formerly served understand that it is no longer appropriate for the former pastor to officiate at services for them. Church members should not request a former pastor to perform pastoral duties. If requested, the pastor should tactfully decline, and only be considered when the request is made by the moderator of the session.

A former pastor and his or her family should seek a new congregation in which to worship.

A former pastor of a congregation should avoid conversations about what has happened in the church after her or his departure.

Under no circumstances should the former pastor indicate disapproval or disappointment about the decisions or leadership of the interim pastor or the new installed pastor or other church leadership to church members.

The spirit of this statement applies to all pastors of the church (commissioned, installed, interim, designated, etc.), whether retired or not, and whether they have ever served as pastors of particular churches.

