

Frontline Bible Church

Sabbatical Policy

I. Purpose of Sabbatical Leave

The primary purpose of the Sabbatical Leave is the personal and professional development of the pastors while being relieved of their regular duties associated with their ministry to our church. It is intended to be a mutual benefit for both the pastor and the church. Its purpose is to provide the pastor opportunities for personal and professional development to increase effectiveness in ministry, exposure to and study of new ideas, time for spiritual growth and reflection, and spiritual and physical renewal and refreshment. The majority of the time spent on the Sabbatical Leave should reflect this purpose. Shorter periods (Not to exceed 25%) of prescheduled times spent in some public service to the church or community, in physical and mental relaxation (vacation), or in other spiritual renewal and refreshment are appropriate.

II. Terms

- A. Full time, ordained pastors can apply for a Sabbatical Leave
- B. Pastor must have at least 5 years of continuous, full time, salaried service before being eligible for a Sabbatical
- C. Following initial sabbatical, subsequent ones may be taken after 5 years of additional service
- D. First full year after sabbatical becomes year 1 towards the next Sabbatical
- E. Sabbatical Leave can be taken for a period from 1 to 6 months depending on years of service (See Sabbatical Leave Reference Table)
- F. Sabbatical Leave can be taken all at once or maybe taken in segments
- G. In multi-staff setting, only one pastor may take a sabbatical during a given year
- H. Pastor is completely released from all duties during the sabbatical as is normally taken away from where church is located
- I. Sabbatical time is separate and distinct from vacation time. However pastor will receive 50% to 75% vacation time during the year the sabbatical is taken. (See Sabbatical Leave Reference Table) That vacation, however, should not be taken within two months before or after the sabbatical leave unless approved by the board.

III. Conditions

- A. Plan must be submitted to the Board 9 months prior to the sabbatical and before the budget has been determined for fiscal year in which sabbatical is to be taken
- B. Plan must include: project proposal, measurable goals, time and work schedule, reporting schedule, and description of benefits to both pastor and congregation
- C. If taking classes, course of study doesn't need to lead to an academic degree
- D. Since a Sabbatical Leave is for the benefit of the church as well as the pastor, a pastor may apply for a Sabbatical Leave only if there is clear intent to return to full ministry for an additional 1 to 2 years at the end of the Sabbatical Leave period. (See Sabbatical Leave Reference Table)

IV. Duties of the Board

- A. Authority to approve and supervise Pastoral absences from Sunday services is delegated to the Board as specified in the church constitution, under Article II, Section 2C of the By-Laws: The board shall supervise any absences of the Pastors from Sunday services. The Pastors shall be required to have the board's approval to miss a Sunday service unless the absence is due to illness.

Further, as interpreted from Article II, Section 2D, the Board is required to give consideration and approval or disapproval to any requests for time away from standard job functions outside of the allotted vacation time. Requests for sabbatical leave are taken to be included in this category. In

terms of the funding of the sabbatical, if the budget for the sabbaticals additional costs do not exceed the board's financial expenditure limit, this does not have to go before the congregation for approval.

B. Specific Board Duties include the following:

1. Find replacement(s) and/or an interim pastor(s) for the time of sabbatical
2. Check for possible funds to offset expenses incurred by pulpit replacement or interim pastors for congregational care
3. Determine that sabbatical plan will benefit both pastor and congregation
4. Monitor pastor's activities during sabbatical
5. Encourage pastor to consider reviewing their annual performance evaluations when considering objectives and goals for the Sabbatical Leave.
6. Ensure pastor is not contacted for ministry needs during the sabbatical. The Pastor should be contacted exclusively in case of a death in the congregation or a serious health issues involving church members (such as a sudden, critical illness or accident).
7. Inform the Congregation of the Pastor's Sabbatical including the purpose, benefits, and the plan on how we are going to support it (schedule, financials, interim pastors, ect...). Key communications and their timing are as follows
 - a. The start and end dates of the sabbatical should be communicated to the congregation at least 6 months prior to the start date.
 - b. An outline of the proposed sabbatical activities, schedule, and funding plan should be provided to the congregation within a forum format at least 3 months prior to the start date.
 - c. During the sabbatical, progress reports and updates should be provided to the congregation every four to six weeks.
8. The budget must include saving for Sabbaticals: 10% of 3 month's salary for each full time, ordained pastor

C. Board Managed Approval Process:

1. **Phase I** - Determine if the applying pastor is eligible for a sabbatical. (including maximum amount of time off and pay allowed)
2. **Phase II** - Approve the applying pastor's sabbatical overall topic.
3. **Phase III** - Approve the applying pastor's sabbatical proposal.

* The approval of phase I & II do not guarantee the applying pastor can take a sabbatical. Phase III must be approved

V. Financial Arrangements

- A. Pastor receives 10% of his salary per year of full time service and full benefits during sabbatical. Salary is capped at 100% for up to 3 months. (See Sabbatical Leave Reference Table)
- B. Pastor can be reimbursed for appropriate expenses incurred during sabbatical from his normal expense budget
- C. To cover the pastor's costs while on Sabbatical Leave, the pastor is encouraged to search out grants/donations/funds for his sabbatical expenses
- D. A Sabbatical Leave may not be used to accept new additional paid employment. Opportunities to preach or speak should only be accepted as part of the Sabbatical Leave proposal, but such opportunities should be minimized so that the full benefit of the time away may be achieved. Requests to officiate at weddings and funerals may be accepted, provided that they do not interfere with the approved sabbatical plan.
- E. The church will pay the costs to cover the pastor's preaching and other duties while on sabbatical

F. Sabbatical not granted unless budget and savings has sufficient funds

VI. Reporting

- A. Pastor sends monthly reports to the Board/congregation during sabbatical
- B. Pastor submits written and oral reports to The Board/congregation within 2 months of returning after sabbatical
- C. Upon return, pastor and the Board consider best course to be followed as pastor re-enters life of congregation—allowing evaluation of pastor’s responsibilities, new opportunities, and adjustments to pastor’s job description
- D. The Board does a final evaluation of benefits received by congregation one year after end of sabbatical

VII. Application Requirements

The application must contain the following:

- A. A clear statement of the purpose and measurable goals for the Sabbatical Leave;
- B. An outline of the intended use and schedule of the leave time;
- C. The envisioned benefit to the pastor’s personal and professional development;
- D. The benefit to the Congregation and the church’s ministry

Sabbatical Leave Reference Table

Years of full time service since last Sabbatical	% of pay during leave	Paid up to	Time off allowed up to
5	50%	1 month	1 month
6	60%	2 months	2 months
7	70%	3 months	3 months
8	80%	3 months	4 months
9	90%	3 months	5 months
10+	100%	3 months	6 months

Leave time used	Adjusted Vacation time for that calendar year	Expected return commitment
1 month	75%	1 year
2 months	75%	1 year
3 months	75%	1-1/2 years
4 months	50%	1-1/2 years
5 months	50%	1-1/2 years
6 months	50%	2 years