

An Exercise In Recognizing and Prioritizing the General Duties of Pastoral Ministry

During a Staff/Pastor Parish Relations meeting use the following exercise to help the committee, and the pastor, test assumptions about what is most important in the pastor's work at your church. If your church has clearly identified its mission and vision, then weigh the duties, as you prioritize these, in light of the congregation's mission/vision. Good opportunities to use this exercise are: 1) the first or second meeting of this committee, when new members join the existing group; 2) the arrival of a new pastor or clergy staff; 3) as part of a session with your pastor in setting goals for his/her ministry.

STEP 1: EACH MEMBER, AND PASTOR, LISTS FROM 1-10 (1 - least important of the top ten, 10 – most important of the top ten) the most important of the more than 25 specific duties of a pastor given in section 340 of The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church 2004.

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
6.	7.	8.	9.	10.

STEP 2: PREPARE A CONSENSUS LIST OF THE S/PPRC, NAMING THE TOP TEN PRIORITIES FOR THE MINISTRY OF THE PASTOR (1-lowest, 10-highest). This can be done by totaling points from each of the member's lists, or through a conversation. In either case, test the final list with the whole group to reach consensus if possible. The pastor, during this step, holds on to his/her list.

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
6.	7.	8.	9.	10.

STEP 3: SHOW ON BOARD OR NEWSPRINT TWO COLUMNS: On the left side list the S/PPRC's consensus of pastoral duties; on the right side, list the pastor's assumptions (top ten) pastoral duties.

STEP 4: DISCUSS AND MOVE TOWARD CONSENSUS FOR ONE LIST THAT REPRESENTS BOTH THE S/PPRC AND THE PASTOR. This could take another meeting (or two!).

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
6.	7.	8.	9.	10.

STEP 5: DRAW A LINE BESIDE THE CONSENSUS "TOP TEN" DUTIES OF THE PASTOR (make another column), and repeat Steps 1-4; this time, ASSIGN A CERTAIN NUMBER OF HOURS TO EACH OF THE TEN PRIORITIES, ASSUMING A TOTAL OF NO MORE THAN FORTY-FIVE HOURS* FOR THE WORK WEEK. Following the guidance of step 4, be sure and try to reach consensus if possible.

(* an arbitrary suggestion for this exercise, not meant to recommend a standard)