
Recommended Policy for Church Staff Office Hours

A Wisdom Central Response

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"Wisdom Central" is a continuing service of Design Group International™, where consultative expertise is matched to a question many organizations might face. The questions are from real people in real situations.

Question: *What is a recommended policy for church staff office hours?*

Response: Church staff can be divided into three different categories:

1. Pastoral Staff
2. Administrative Staff
3. Staff

Only the largest congregations have enough staff that an administrative staff is also in place. In most cases, staff and administrative staff will normally work during posted office hours or scheduled functions as established by church leaders and in accord with their compensation package. Pastoral Staff face a problem, however, in determining regular office hours due to the many evening and weekend hours demanded of them.

Most Christian traditions recognize that a pastor's work hours will be more than full-time on a regular basis, but they also increasingly recognize that the bigger problem is setting limits to those work hours than it is in getting pastors to fill them. Many traditions encourage pastors to figure their work hours by Full-Time Equivalent Units (FTEs). A unit is a four-hour time block of morning or afternoon or evening. Rather than count three hours as three hours, four hours as four hours or five hours as five hours, any of them would serve as a unit. For example:

- Pastor Graves goes to breakfast at 7 a.m. and stops at the hospital and two nursing homes on his way home, arriving at home at noon. This is the equivalent of one unit of time even though it is five hours.
- Rev. Smith works from eight until noon, then returns for an evening meeting with a church committee. She would report this as two units of time, even though it might be less than eight hours.
- Pastor Miller leads an all-night youth retreat from Friday evening through Saturday noon. The evening when it begins, the all night followed by the next morning as the retreat concludes, equals four FTE's.



A full-time pastor would be expected to serve *and account for* 10-12 FTEs each week (40-48 hours). One of these units is accounted for in the leading of worship services.¹

In a week that exceeds 12 FTEs, the pastor would be expected to take some compensatory time off. In a week where less than 10-12 FTEs are served and is not accorded as vacation time, extra work would be expected in subsequent weeks.

It is important for pastors to account for their FTEs, not because anyone doubts their integrity, but so that they are protected from accusation.

A key aspect to managing one's FTEs is making sure that adequate office hours are maintained. In the case of a solo pastorate, posted morning hours from Monday through Thursday or Tuesday through Friday are often maintained so that congregants can depend on regular office hours while afternoons, evenings and weekends remain flexible. In multiple staff situations, these work hours are scheduled in such a way that days off are rotated so that someone is always at the church, and so that regular staff meetings might be held. In all cases, it is important for half to three-quarters of FTEs be completed during regular office hours.

A sample schedule for a solo pastor might be:

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Morning	Office	Office	Office	Office	Study		Worship Services
Afternoon		Study	Study	Scheduled Visitation or Office			
Evening	Meetings		Church Activities				

Total: 11 FTE's average

¹ Some congregations expect pastoral staff to work a 13th uncompensated unit as their volunteerism to the congregation, as any congregant might be expected to do. In such a case, leading worship services is often considered the 13th FTE.



A sample schedule for a three pastor team might be:

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Morning	Pastors 2,3 in office	Staff meeting	Office (all staff)	Office (all staff)	Pastor 1 in office		Worship Services
Afternoon	Pastor 2 in office	Pastors 1,3 in office	Office (all staff)	Pastors 1,2 in office			
Evening	Meetings	Meetings	Church Activities				

Total: at least 10 FTEs for each Pastoral Staff member

Additional information can be found at: <http://bible.org/article/employment-policy>

APPENDIX

A sample Memo of Understanding using FTEs

**Memo of understanding
with Pastor _____
For the period of 1 December 201_ – 30 November 201_**

This memo of understanding is designed to cover the full time position of Senior Pastor.

I. The _____ Church will:

A. Provide the following pay and benefit package:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---------|
| 1. Salary - | \$_____ |
| 2. Housing – up to | \$_____ |
| 3. Social Security add-on – | \$_____ |
| 4. Educational offset | \$_____ |
| 5. Retirement of 10% of base salary- | \$_____ |
| 6. Health Insurance capped at - | \$_____ |

B. Provide compensation on a monthly/weekly/bi-monthly basis. Payments will be made on the _____ of each month.

C. Support the ministry of our Senior Pastor through prayer, ministry assistance and cooperation with the new structure.

2. The Senior Pastor will:

A. Limit his/her working hours to 10-12 work units per week. A unit is defined as a four hour block – whether morning, afternoon or evening.²

B. Maintain an average of six units per week during posted office hours.

B. Not fail to make use of compensatory time in weeks where time demand exceeds 12 work units.

C. Keep a log of working units per week and provide a monthly report of working units to the Congregational Chair.

² During December 2004 – David is to limit himself to 1-2 work units per week. The time is to be used to complete some advance planning for his responsibilities in 2005.



C. Take ____ weeks of paid vacation during the period provided by this Memo of Understanding.

D. Use the equivalent of at least 2 work units per week for study related to the preaching ministry of the congregation.

E. Limit ministry focus to the following order of priority:

1. Preparation of approximately 45 expository or topical sermons of his/her choosing for Sunday worship services.
2. Prayer, and leadership in prayer.
3. Supervision of all worship service planning,
4. Assistance with developing and implementing congregational visitation, as discerned with the Church Board.
5. Assistance with the discipleship and leadership training efforts of the congregation, taking the lead on pre-marital counseling, baptism and membership preparation and parent-child dedications.
6. Participation in meetings of church leadership.
7. Participation in congregational meetings.
8. Participation in local, district and denominational meetings, when appropriate.

Signed: _____

Date:

Rev. _____

Senior Minister

The _____ Church

Signed: _____ Date:

Mr./Ms. _____

Chair of the Congregation

The _____ Church



About your respondent:

Mark L. Vincent, Ph.D., CSP is the CEO of Design Group International™, an organizational development firm. In addition to youth ministry, pastoral and strategic interim experience, Mark pioneered work in neighborhood ministry to children, congregational leadership development and decision-making, *The Giving Project*, MMA's Stewardship University, firstfruits funding systems for denominations, strategic interim ministry, and capital campaigns. He is the author of books, curricula, leadership training materials, and various articles and monographs. He is also the principal writer for *Depth Perception*, an oft-quoted, bi-monthly column. His doctoral dissertation explored the definition and management of denominational funding systems.

A frequent presenter on organizational leadership and stewardship themes, Mark is a current board member of the Christian Leadership Alliance, a past board member of the Ecumenical Stewardship Center, the founding editor of its annual periodical *GIVING*, and the recipient of a service award from the board of the Christian Stewardship Association. His interests include reading broadly, particularly fiction, biographies, ancient history and various business disciplines.

