

## Implementing The Evaluation Process

**Step 1 :** The Session identifies who will manage the evaluation process (e.g., the Personnel Committee, a special task force, some other constituted group).

**Step 2:** The Session defines the purpose of the evaluation. An overarching purpose of any evaluation process should be to clarify—both for the person(s) being evaluated and for those who perform the evaluation, i.e., the pastor and the elders---the goals and expectations associated with one or more aspects of church leadership.

National Capital Presbytery provides sample processes of two types:

- Ministry Evaluation, which focuses on evaluating the ministry of the session members in their capacity as leaders of the congregation. *It centers on the shared ministry of the session—pastors and elders.*
- Pastor Evaluation, which focuses on the performance of the pastor, but aims to evaluate performance based on previously established priorities.

**Step 3:** The assigned group should develop a list of lessons learned from past experiences with evaluation in any context. This list might be posted on newsprint and kept in mind through out the entire process.

**Step 4:** The assigned group should identify an overall plan for the process including:

- A. A review of the purpose of the evaluation as established by the Session. This is critical.
- B. The overall schedule for the evaluation process, including steps 4C, 4D, and 4E below. A minimum of THREE MONTHS should pass between the time the criteria for the evaluation are established (Step 4C) and the actual evaluation takes place! Conducting the evaluation somewhere between three and six months after the criteria are established gives the person(s) being evaluated an opportunity to meet or begin to meet the criteria and to receive feedback.
- C. Who will establish the criteria by which the group will, in fact, be evaluated. How will those being evaluated participate in negotiating and establishing those criteria? (In the case of Ministry Evaluation, the criteria are the expectations embodied in the covenant among pastor and elders. In the case of Pastor Evaluation, they are the goals and priorities shown on the form.)
- D. Who will provide evaluation information and how will they be involved? (e. g., Who? The entire congregation, a selected group; How? Data from forms, small group consensus-building meetings, etc.).

E. How and by whom will persons being evaluated be given the feedback, and what will they be expected to do with it?

**Step 5:** The group then implements the plan, especially focusing on the establishment of the expectations on which the pastor and elders will be evaluated.

**Step 6:** The group managing the process should evaluate the process itself to identify lessons learned, what might be done the same, and what might be done differently.

Although this process is intended to be self-implementing, the Ministry Relations Team of the Committee on Ministry is available to help churches adapt these basic steps to their needs. And here are some ground rules to observe in designing and implementing the process:

- Constructive communication among session and with the congregation is key. The congregation needs to expect the same things that the session expects of itself.
- Someone has to be in charge. Every congregation needs a personnel committee, or at least a committee to guide the evaluation process.
- The purpose of ministry evaluation is not to solve problems among session members or within the congregation.
- Evaluation of employed members of the church staff requires different approaches. We are considering only ministers at this point.
- Differing church sizes and cultures require different evaluation processes. However, simplicity is best in all cases.
- Successful ministry evaluation does not mimic the corporate performance model (the better you do the more you make) or the school model (assigning a grade)
- Evaluation should not be done at the time the terms of call are considered annually. Spring is a good time for evaluation.
- Negativity is to be avoided at all costs.