

WELCOMING YOUR NEW PASTOR

You can have a great honeymoon period with your new pastor if you take the time to plan. If you will take care of several essential items to help him (*and his family*) to build relationships early and put down roots, you will have helped lay a solid foundation for a long-term pastor/church marriage. Here are some ideas to help your team welcome your new pastor.



This section includes:

- TWO WEEKS before your Pastor's first Sunday
- ONE WEEK before your Pastor's first Sunday
- The DAY your Pastor moves into the community
- The Pastor's FIRST SUNDAY with the church
- AFTER your Pastor's first Sunday
- The Search Team Becomes a Transition Team
- Host a Special Installation Service and Reception
- Schedule a "*How Things Work Here*" Orientation for the church and community

TWO WEEKS before your Pastor's first Sunday

- Confirm new Pastor's salary and benefits will begin upon his arrival.
- Confirm the payment of moving expenses.

ONE WEEK before your Pastor's first Sunday

- Send a letter **to** the church members (and prospects) **from** the new pastor.
- Schedule special prayer times for the pastor's family (in homes or at church facilities).
- Assist in the moving process.
- Make sure his new office is ready for his arrival before he arrives.
- Have church members collect non-perishable food to fill the new Pastor's pantry.
- Ask your church's children to draw "welcome" or "We're Glad You're Here" pictures for the new Pastor.
- Ask church members to write "welcoming" letters. Bind them in a scrapbook to present the first Sunday.

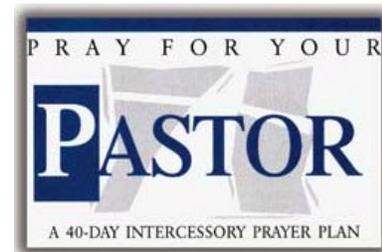
The DAY your Pastor moves into the community

- Have a group meet him at his new home and assist in the unloading process.
- Provide childcare for the pastor's family during the move (if necessary) or have a place for older children to go play with new friends (if parents are comfortable with this option).
- Provide one or more meals for his family the day he arrives. Provide a few snacks, too.
- Host a **“Welcome Party”** for the pastor and his family; including gifts (buy something for each family member that would be special to them. For instance, a die cast car for a little boy, a pint of strawberries for the wife, a flash drive for the pastor with the church directory and other church documents already loaded on it, etc.).

The Pastor's FIRST SUNDAY with the church

(This first Sunday of ministry is an essential part of launching a great ministry for your new pastor with your church. Make it a real celebration. Don't miss this opportunity to start laying a great foundation for many years of fruitful ministry.)

- If there is a transition from an Interim Pastor, have the Interim Pastor make a formal introduction of the new pastor and “transfer” leadership to the new pastor (see suggestions in Appendix ??).
- Present a scrapbook of **“Welcome Pictures”** from children and **“Welcome Letters”** from adults (could be two different books).
- Present a new **Bible** to both the pastor and his wife, embossed with their names. Find out their preferred translation so that it will be a Bible they will want to use daily. Have church members sign the inside front and/or back covers of the Bibles as a special memento of the church's prayer commitment.
- Distribute copies of the **“Pray for Your Pastor”** booklet to all members present. Available from the North American Mission Board (www.NAMB.net), this guide directs members in 40-days of prayer for their new pastor. This booklet should be ordered 14-18 days in advance.
- After the morning worship service, **plant a tree**. Find a visible location somewhere on church property and have a brief ceremony after the service to plant the tree. As you watch the tree grow over the years, it will remind the pastor and congregation of the growing relationship between the pastor and people. Photograph planting the tree, then put a plaque up with the photograph in the church recognizing the event so new members will know of this historic event, when you called a new pastor.



- Pass out **index cards** to the congregation on the pastor's first Sunday after sharing a list of the favorite things of the pastor's family members. Then, ask the congregation to give their recommendations for the "best" in the area for such things as Hamburgers, Mexican Food, shopping, sporting goods, home decor, etc. Plus, ask for the "best" place to buy the basics like groceries and gas. After compiling the list, the pastor's family will be able to visit the places recommended by church members and send Thank You notes to each member who made a suggestion. It will be a great relationship builder.

AFTER your Pastor's first Sunday

- Schedule **Sunday Lunch** for the pastor and his family with church families for the first several months of his ministry (i.e. at homes or in restaurants). It is a great way to help the pastor get to know the church families quickly and visa versa.
- Encourage the men of the church to invite the pastor to their place of business. Possibly have breakfast or lunch together and tour the work place.
- Schedule special prayer times for the pastor's family in all the church gatherings during the first month of the transition.
- Be sure your new pastor gets to know your local associational leadership and other denominational leaders.
- Be sure your new pastor is aware of any regular gatherings of local pastors. When does the local association meet with pastors (i.e. weekly lunches, a monthly breakfast, etc.)?

The Search Team Should Become a Transition Team

It is highly recommended that the church approve that the Search Team members become a Transition Team for the first year of ministry for the new pastor. They will already have the strongest connection with the pastor and his family because of the search process.

This Transition Team can act as a liaison to help address any concerns or questions by either the congregation or the pastor and his family during the transition process. This team can help the new pastor avoid many "landmines" which could surprise him in this new place of ministry. A recommended schedule for meeting together would be as follows:

- Months 1-3 – Meet once per month
- Months 5-11 – Meet every other month, or as necessary in months 9-11.
- Month 12 – Final meeting, usually a dinner or cookout with the group to celebrate a great first year together. The pastor may even host this in his home.

This new Transition Team should remain in place no less than one year.

Host a Special Installation Service and Reception

- Schedule a **special installation** for the Pastor's first Sunday during the morning or evening worship service or at a time during the first few weeks of his ministry.
- Another option is to select a non-worship time so neighboring church leaders and members can participate. Community guests are also more likely to participate at a non-worship time. *(If done after the pastor's first Sunday, it allows the church to **celebrate first**, then, share the celebration with the community at a later time.)*
- Invite local dignitaries (*i.e. Mayor, Senator, Congressman, etc.*) to bring an "official" community welcome to the new pastor.
- Following the installation service, the church might host a reception for everyone to meet the new the pastor and his family.

Schedule a "How Things Work Here" Orientation for the church and community

Church Orientation will cover many things including:

- Discuss expectations for first business meeting. If there are items pending from a previous business meeting, be sure the pastor is aware before the next meeting.
- Give the new pastor copies of the Church's normal business meeting agenda.
- Discuss procedures used during church meetings (*i.e. use of Robert's Rules of Order or some other meeting guideline approved by the church*).
- Review church procedures for business reimbursements, days off, vacation and sick leave and any other personnel issues.
- Provide a list of key contact people in case of emergencies or special needs.
- Discuss practices or traditions regarding Lord's Supper and Baptism.
- Discuss practices or traditions regarding weddings and funerals in the church.
- Discuss practices or traditions regarding any other practical issues in the church. Do not assume he will "know."

Community Orientation will cover many things including:

- A key church leader such as the Search Team chairperson or deacon chair should introduce the pastor to community leaders, the Director of Missions, and other community ministers.
- Accompany the pastor's family when they enroll the children in school and help them learn their way around the community.
- Some female members of the Pastor Search Team (or a spouse) should take the pastor's wife on a community tour and identify service providers.
- Church leaders should provide all appropriate help to the pastor's wife if she is seeking employment