

Affirmation of Ministerial Ethics in the Baptist General Conference

The following standards are set forth in an effort to create professional understanding and to preserve the dignity, maintain the discipline and promote the integrity of our chosen profession—the ministry of Jesus Christ.

My Person

- I will endeavor to pray daily, to read, study and meditate upon God's Word; and to maintain extended times of contemplation.
- I will plan times to be with my family, realizing my special relationship to them, and their position as important members of my congregation.
- I will seek to keep my body physically fit through proper eating habits and planned exercise, renewing myself through weekly time off and through vacations.
- I will try to keep myself emotionally fit, keeping in touch with my feelings and growing in healthy control of them.
- I will strive to grow through comprehensive reading and through participation in professional educational opportunities.
- I will be a servant of God seeking to maintain a life of purity, integrity and truthfulness.
- I will avoid lust, pornography and sexual sin.
- I will not abuse my own body and will avoid addictions of all kinds.
- I will not emotionally, verbally, physically or sexually abuse my spouse, my children or any other person.
- I will seek professional help promptly when I need personal support or intervention.
- I will seek to develop accountable relationships with one or more of my peers of the same gender.

My Calling

- I will seek to conduct myself consistently with my calling and commitment as a servant of God.
- I will give priority to my congregation and will accept added responsibilities only if they do not interfere with the overall effectiveness of my ministry in the congregation.
- I will consider a confidential statement made to me as a sacred trust.
- I will responsibly exercise the freedom of the pulpit, speaking the truth of God's Word with conviction in love; and will acknowledge any extensive use of material prepared by someone else.

My Finances

- I will advocate adequate compensation for my profession and will assist the congregation in understanding that a minister should not expect or require fees for pastoral services to them.
- I will be honest in my stewardship of money, paying bills promptly, asking no personal favors or discounts on the basis of my professional status.
- I will give tithes and offerings as a good steward.

My Congregation

- I will seek to regard all persons in the congregation with equal love and concern, and undertake to minister impartially to their needs and refrain from behavior that will be divisive.
- I will treat all those in the church with dignity and respect, while retaining the right to establish close friendships within the congregation.
- I will exercise confidence in the lay leadership, assisting in their training and mobilizing their creativity.
- I will seek to lead the church in a positive direction. I will remain open to constructive criticism and to suggestions intended to strengthen our common ministry.
- I will candidate at only one church at a time. I will respond promptly and definitely to a call, and I shall seek to deal fairly with the church I am presently serving.

My Colleagues

- I will seek to maintain supportive, caring and accountable relationships with my colleagues in the ministry. I will seek and honor all commitments made with other pastors, and I will respect the pastoral relationships that my neighboring pastors have with their parishioners.
- I will, upon my departure, sever my pastoral relations with the congregation, recognizing that all pastoral functions should henceforth rightfully be conducted by my successor. I will not agree to perform any pastoral services in a church I have previously served until I have first obtained permission from the current pastor.
- I will, upon retirement or withdrawal from the ministry, refrain from engaging in pastoral functions within our church fellowship unless requested by the pastor.

My Denomination

- I will cooperate with the personnel of the Baptist General Conference and of the district in which I serve, and offer responsible criticism in order that our common service in the kingdom of God might be more effective. In the event that I seriously violate the vows I have made to God and my church, I will submit to the restoration/reconciliation process established by my denomination and my church. Furthermore, I will use my influence to affirm and edify the fellowship of this church with the district and the Baptist General Conference.

(revised October 1998)

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