

# **Personnel Review Process for Pastors and Consistories**

## **Guidelines and Forms for Church Use**

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Prepared by the Synod of Mid-America  
Ministry and Parish Life Committee  
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# Personnel Review Process

**Prepared by**  
Ministry and Parish Life Committee  
Synod of Mid-America  
Reformed Church in America

## Introduction

The Synod Ministry and Parish Life Committee would like to help all pastors and consistories develop or improve their personnel review process. Each year pastors and elders respond to the questions listed in the “Constitutional Inquiry” form according to the Book of Church Order, RCA, (Part II, Article 7, Section h). Question number eight requires the following:

- h. Does the consistory regularly review the performance of:
  - i. The consistory?
  - ii. The board of elders?
  - iii. The board of deacons?
  - iv. The installed minister/s?

The purpose of a good review process should be greater mutual appreciation between pastors and consistory, a heightened awareness of successes and challenges, and a consequent fuller dependence upon prayer and the Holy Spirit. We believe an open process of self-evaluation and personnel review by each other will strengthen the mission and ministry of the church. The opportunity to reflect, at least annually, on how well each is perceived in meeting their commitments to Christ, the church, and one another will tend to build positive and fruitful relationships.

The instruments and procedures we are suggesting are just that—suggestions. Many churches have an adequate process for reviewing personnel in place and we are not suggesting that

you discard it. This document has been developed for those churches that are seeking additional ideas and assistance.

## Step 1

First, review the current *job descriptions* you have on file. Hopefully you have a job description for the pastor/s and all paid professional staff members as well as a brief outline of responsibilities for the consistory, elders, deacons, committee chairpersons, etc. The RCA website has resources available at <http://consistory.rca.org/>.

We also believe time should be set aside at least annually for the pastor/s, elders and deacons to discuss, develop, and agree upon *goals* they would like to accomplish. Usually the number of goals for the church, pastor/s, elders, deacons or any group should not exceed five in number. To clarify each goal it is helpful to develop specific objectives to be accomplished in meeting the stated goal with timelines specified.

## Step 2

Second, establish a Personnel Review Committee whose responsibility would be to facilitate and coordinate the review process. This committee would be responsible for the selection of the process to be used, setting time lines, receiving completed forms, compiling the data from the forms, and reporting the results to the consistory. We suggest that you not assign this to your Executive Committee or some other standing committee. The responsibility of personnel review is frequently overlooked or given a low priority if it is given to a committee with other responsibilities.

Composition of this committee might include: the Vice President of the Consistory, Chairperson of the Deacons, and two or three non-consistory members (preferably some former consistory members). The members from the congregation would normally be suggested by the Executive Committee with consistory approval. The chairperson of this committee may be one of the non-consistory members.

### Step 3

Third, use the procedures and instruments from this document or another source. If you wish to explore additional ideas, procedures, and instruments we suggest you contact:

The Alban Institute, Inc..  
4125 Nebraska Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20016

Ministry Office  
Reformed Church in America  
475 Riverside Drive  
New York, NY 10115

After the goals have been determined for each person or group and a reasonable period of time has passed (usually six months to a year). The pastor/s, elders and deacons would begin a self-evaluation. The purpose of a self-evaluation is intended to:

- a. Assist consistory and pastor/s in understanding, strengthening and improving the work relationship and results.
- b. Provide time for introspection and a chance to communicate openly.
- c. Help each member of consistory and the pastor/s to become more understanding of his/her responsibilities in relationship to the total body.
- d. Provide a time to acknowledge and give thanks for the good things that have taken place during the time period under review.

### The Self-Evaluation Method

In Appendix A you have a model for the self-evaluation of the consistory. The self-evaluation form for the consistory should be given to both elders and deacons. A self-evaluation form for the pastor/s is found in Appendix B.

These self-evaluations forms for the consistory would be given unsigned to the Personnel Review Committee for tabulation. Likewise, the pastor's self-evaluation form should also be given to this committee. The self-evaluation process for the consistory and the pastor can proceed simultaneously or they can be

done apart from each other.

Time should be set aside on the consistory agenda or at a special meeting called to give an adequate amount of time for meaningful interaction. It is recommended that the Personnel Review Committee report directly to the consistory.

### Personnel Review Method

We consider the self-evaluation process an extremely important first step. In addition, the consistory may wish to use the evaluation instrument in Appendix C. This instrument has a work sheet for tabulation that could be used by the Personnel Review Committee.

It is suggested that the "personnel review" instrument chosen for use by the elders for review of the pastor/s (Appendix D) be done very soon after the self-evaluation form is completed. Each elder would give their unsigned personnel review form of the pastor directly to the Personnel Review Committee for tabulation and interpretation.

Normally the Personnel Review Committee would not become involved with any staff members, including assistant pastors, that do not report directly to the consistory. However, the senior pastor may wish to work closely with the Executive and the Personnel Review Committees as he/ she goes about their own performance review of individual staff members. Some of the same instruments may be used or revised for this process.

Likewise, the Personnel Review Committee upon the receipt of the consistory evaluation would develop a composite or tabulation of the consistory responses. Prior to the meeting to review the evaluation composite of the consistory, the committee should provide copies of this information to both pastor and consistory. Again, the Personnel Review Committee would interpret the composite and lead the discussion. Remember, the time set aside for the review should allow adequate time for good communication.

## Other Methods

If the pastor/s is working with clearly *defined goals and specific objectives* the evaluation process may be centered around these points. When the task of ministry is divided into various areas of responsibilities as outlined in a *job description* it would seem advisable to select a more personalized method of evaluation. This type of evaluation process may lend itself to a more frequent review and update.

Another form of evaluation would include *members of the congregation*. If you wish to reach beyond the consistory to evaluate the ministry of your church you can go directly to the congregation with an evaluation instrument or an evaluation via the telephone. The process for large membership churches would be to randomly select members for inclusion in the evaluation process. This method might be used periodically, possibly, every three to five years. The same forms which follow may be used for members to evaluate pastors and consistory. They may be revised to meet special needs.

## Summary

Self-evaluations and personnel reviews may seem cumbersome and time consuming. If they are done only to satisfy a requirement of the

governing body you have missed the point. The evaluation process is a tool used to grow in mutual commitment, accountability and effectiveness in ministry. A valuable by-product can be a greater openness in communication. Thereby all aspects of your ministry and mission in the church and community will benefit.

Some may say, “Things are going so well we don’t need to take the time to go through this process.” This is the ideal time for a personnel review. Too frequently we have found a pastor and consistory at odds with each other because they avoided the review process and open discussion. Tensions and misunderstood communications will be reduced if you regularly follow a procedure for personnel review as a means to find ways to improve ministry.

A variety of forms are provided in the appendices for your use. You are encouraged to choose what fits best for your situation. The process suggested certainly can be modified to your own style of management, organization and need.

Again, the end result of a good review process should be greater mutual appreciation between pastors and consistory, a heightened awareness of successes and challenges, and a consequent fuller dependence upon prayer and the Holy Spirit. Give it a try!



## Consistory Member's Self-Evaluation

A-1

*This evaluation form can be given to consistory members for their self-evaluation.*

1. What is your current role? \_\_\_\_\_Deacon \_\_\_\_\_Elder

2. What do you like most about your current responsibilities?

(Select 3 and number 1—3 in order of preference.)

\_\_\_\_\_The opportunity to be involved

\_\_\_\_\_The people I work with

\_\_\_\_\_The challenge of the work

\_\_\_\_\_I am doing God's will

\_\_\_\_\_My talents are being used

\_\_\_\_\_Feeling good about myself

\_\_\_\_\_God is using me

\_\_\_\_\_God's work is being done properly

Other things, such as: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. How are you growing spiritually as a leader by being involved on the consistory?

4. How are you setting a good example by your faithful attendance at worship services, educational programs, and special events?

5. How are you encouraging others to participate in the worship and educational programs of the church?

**A - 2**

6. What are your goals for the church for the next 5 years?

a.

b.

c.

7. What are you doing to accomplish these goals?

Goal a,  
1)

2)

3)

Goal b,  
1)

2)

3)

Goal c,  
1)

2)

3)

8. I believe we as deacons/elders could be more effective if we:

a.

b.

9. Are you an exemplary steward of your God-given resources, giving of yourself and funds regularly and substantially?



10. Is your own personal life in order? Read I Timothy 3:1—7 and respond to these Biblical truths.

a.

b.

Feel free to add any additional comments that would be of interest or benefit to the consistory.



1. What are your goals for the church for the next 5 years?

a.

b.

c.

2. What are you doing to accomplish these goals?

Goal a,

1)

2)

3)

Goal b,

1)

2)

3)

Goal b,

1)

2)

3)

3. What I like most about my responsibility is: (Check more than one if you wish. Prioritize with numbers, 1 being highest.)

\_\_\_ The work itself

\_\_\_ The people I work with

\_\_\_ Administration

\_\_\_ The challenge of it

\_\_\_ The opportunity to lead

\_\_\_ Planning

\_\_\_ The physical environment

\_\_\_ Pastoral calling

\_\_\_ Evangelism

\_\_\_ Preaching and preparation

\_\_\_ Small group leadership

\_\_\_ Counseling

**B - 2**

\_\_\_ Working with new members \_\_\_ Mission projects \_\_\_ Teaching

\_\_\_ The sense that I know what I'm doing and doing it well

\_\_\_ The opportunity to make an important contribution

Other things, such as: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. What are some of the accomplishments you feel best about?

5. In the year ahead, my priorities are:

a.

b.

6. In what areas do you wish you could have more support from the consistory?

a.

b.

7. The ministry of the church would be more effective if:

a.

b.

8. I would like to have additional training and/or professional development in these areas:

a.

b.

9. I see my top priorities as: (Select 7 and rate 1—7, 1 being highest.)

- |                                |                     |                        |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|------------------------|
| ___ preaching                  | ___ evangelism      | ___ worship leadership |
| ___ equipping                  | ___ teaching        | ___ youth ministry     |
| ___ pastoral care              | ___ adult education | ___ counseling         |
| ___ administration/programming |                     | ___ other (explain)    |

10. Feel free to add any additional comments that would be of interest or benefit to the Performance Review Committee, the elders and/or the consistory.



Please rate each of the following statements by circling the number which best describes your own opinion.

- |    | 1               | 2 | 3        | 4 | 5      |   |
|----|-----------------|---|----------|---|--------|---|
|    | Needs Improving |   | Adequate |   | Strong |   |
| A. | 1               | 2 | 3        | 4 | 5      | The <b>organizational structure works</b> effectively. (You feel good about the number of committees, the number of consistory members on committees, the way in which material is referred to or recommended from committees, etc.)  |
| B. | 1               | 2 | 3        | 4 | 5      | Consistory members do all they can to make sure consistory <b>meetings run effectively</b> . (i.e. Do the members do all they can to make certain they start on time, that business is transacted appropriately, that discussion does not wander from proposals on the floor?)    |
| C. | 1               | 2 | 3        | 4 | 5      | The Consistory has effectively supervised the <b>care of the church's property and financial interests</b> .  |
| D. | 1               | 2 | 3        | 4 | 5      | Major decisions have been appropriately <b>undergirded with prayer</b> .  |
| E. | 1               | 2 | 3        | 4 | 5      | <b>Decisions have been based upon the Word of God</b> and upon the stated purpose of your congregation.   |
| F. | 1               | 2 | 3        | 4 | 5      | Consistory members discussed and related in a non-defensive, congenial, positive, problem-solving and loving <b>manner</b> . (tempers have not flared, there have been no unkind personal remarks, confidentiality has not been violated, reconciliation has been effected, etc.) |
| G. | 1               | 2 | 3        | 4 | 5      | There is a positive and <b>cooperative spirit among Consistory</b> members.   |
| H. | 1               | 2 | 3        | 4 | 5      | The Consistory shows <b>proper respect toward the pastor(s)</b> as their spiritual leader(s).   |
| I. | 1               | 2 | 3        | 4 | 5      | There is harmony and <b>cooperation</b> between the <b>Elders</b> Board and the <b>Deacons</b> Board.   |
| J. | 1               | 2 | 3        | 4 | 5      | The Consistory <b>as a team ministers appropriately to the needs of the members</b> of the congregation and community.  |
| K. | 1               | 2 | 3        | 4 | 5      | The Consistory <b>ministers appropriately is aware of and sensitive to the needs of the pastor(s) and family</b> .  |

## C - 2

- L. 1 2 3 4 5 The Consistory has provided for the **spiritual** nurture of the congregation through services of worship and other activities and organizations.
- M. 1 2 3 4 5 The Consistory has provided for the appropriate **administration of the sacraments** in instances of sickness.
- N. 1 2 3 4 5 The Consistory is fulfilling its responsibility **to the pastor(s)** by providing for financial, spiritual, and personal needs.
- O. 1 2 3 4 5 The Consistory has put its **goals and priorities for the year in writing**, has communicated these to the congregation, and is regularly evaluating progress toward these ends.
- P. 1 2 3 4 5 The consistory with the pastor demonstrate a high degree of team work in ministry.
- Q. 1 2 3 4 5 The consistory with the pastor form a highly effective team in equipping and leading the congregation in ministry to the community.
- R. 1 2 3 4 5 The Consistory has made **provision for training** both Elders and Deacons to improve their skills and become more knowledgeable about their tasks and responsibilities.
- S. 1 2 3 4 5 Members come **prepared for meetings**; they read and study advance materials.
- T. 1 2 3 4 5 Members are **knowledgeable** about the Bible and current spiritual issues facing the church.
- U. 1 2 3 4 5 Members are **loyal** to the Reformed Church in America.
- V. 1 2 3 4 5 Members **understand the structures** of the RCA—consistory, classis, regional and General synod functions and church order.
- W. 1 2 3 4 5 Members are deeply committed **and exemplary** leaders.

Comments: (Use back of sheet or extra paper if necessary.)



## Summary of Responses — Consistory Personnel Evaluation

**C -3**

Topic	1	2	3	4	5
A. organizational structure works					
B. meetings run effectively					
C. care of the church's property and financial interests					
D. undergirded with prayer					
E. decisions have been based upon the Word of God					
F. manner					
G. cooperative spirit among Consistory					
H. proper respect toward the pastor(s)					
I. cooperation between Elders and Deacons					
J. aware of and sensitive to the needs of the members					
K. aware of and sensitive to the needs of the pastor(s)					
L. needs and spiritual nurture					
M. private administration of the sacraments					
N. responsibility to the pastor(s)					
O. objectives and priorities for the year in writing					
P. equipping team					
Q. team-work					
R. provision for training					
S. prepared for meetings					
T. knowledgeable					
U. loyal					
V. understand the structures					
W. committed and exemplary					



**Use of the Instrument:** *The five ranges in the instrument are defined as follows:*

*Distinguished: Outstanding performance clearly obvious to all*

*Commendable: Performance noticeably better than competent*

*Competent: Satisfactory*

*Adequate: Acceptable but it may be helpful to discuss ways we can strengthen this area*

*Discussion Required: See discussion questions A, B, and C at the end of this section*

*Each participant is requested to place a circle around the word which most closely represents his/her appraisal of performance in a given area.*

1. General Leadership: How would you personally judge how well the pastor provides direction, inspires enthusiasm, motivates others, and gets cooperation from individuals and groups toward meeting the goals of the church?

Distinguished      |      Commendable      |      Competent      |      Adequate      |      Discussion Required

Explanatory Comments:

2. Administration and Organization: How would you rate the pastor in organizing the work of the church? Does the pastor work well with the consistory in program planning and goal setting for the life and ministry of the congregation?

Distinguished      |      Commendable      |      Competent      |      Adequate      |      Discussion Required

Explanatory Comments:

3. Conduct of Worship: Do the worship services express true adoration and praise to God? Does the pastor promote joy in worship? Is there a caring atmosphere? Are the people's concerns for themselves, for others, and for the world lifted in prayer?

Distinguished      |      Commendable      |      Competent      |      Adequate      |      Discussion Required

Explanatory Comments:

4. Preaching: How well do the pastor's sermons speak to the needs of the congregation? Are the sermons biblical, inspiring, enlightening, challenging, and warmly presented?

Distinguished      |      Commendable      |      Competent      |      Adequate      |      Discussion Required

Explanatory Comments:

## D-2

5. Personal Relationships: Is the pastor effective in personal relationships? Is the pastor friendly and sincere, easy to be with, and does the pastor relate well to all age groups?

Distinguished    |    Commendable    |    Competent    |    Adequate    |    Discussion Required

Explanatory Comments:

6. Pastoral Care: How well does the pastor provide pastoral care by visiting the sick, the shut-ins, the bereaved, and prospective members?

Distinguished    |    Commendable    |    Competent    |    Adequate    |    Discussion Required

Explanatory Comments:

7. Pastoral Counseling: How would you rate the pastor as a pastoral counselor? Do people feel free to call on the pastor? Do you feel the pastor respects confidentiality?

Distinguished    |    Commendable    |    Competent    |    Adequate    |    Discussion Required

Explanatory Comments:

8. Christian Nurture: Is the pastor an effective teacher? Does the pastor encourage and support efforts in teacher training, the development of curriculum, and goals for the Christian Education program?

Distinguished    |    Commendable    |    Competent    |    Adequate    |    Discussion Required

Explanatory Comments:

9. Evangelism: Does the pastor teach and model a life of discipleship?

Distinguished    |    Commendable    |    Competent    |    Adequate    |    Discussion Required

Explanatory Comments:

10. Equipping: Does the pastor help congregants identify their spiritual gifts and how and where to use them for the building up of the body of Christ?

Distinguished    |    Commendable    |    Competent    |    Adequate    |    Discussion Required

Explanatory Comments:

11. Stewardship: How would you evaluate the manner in which the pastor preaches and teaches the stewardship of time, talent, and money?

Distinguished    |    Commendable    |    Competent    |    Adequate    |    Discussion Required

Explanatory Comments:

12. Denominational Emphasis: How well does the pastor support the programs and concerns of the classis, regional synod, and the General Program Council of the Reformed Church in America?

Distinguished    |    Commendable    |    Competent    |    Adequate    |    Discussion Required

Explanatory Comments:

13. In which areas would you affirm your pastor?

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

14. What one area should the pastor give greater emphasis in the coming year? (Are we trying to micro-manage the pastor? Are your requests of the pastor in harmony with the pastor's gifts? In order to give greater emphasis to an area, the pastor may need to give less emphasis to something else.)

a. \_\_\_\_\_

***Discussion Questions for any above area marked "Discussion Required":***

- A. *Do the goals for our church require the pastor to be gifted in this area?*
- B. *No minister has all the gifts desired for every area of ministry. In what ways can others assist with 1) encouragement, 2) a team effort through lay assistance, 3) additional training, and/or 4) hiring someone to fill an area of need?*
- C. *Is there sufficient concern to invite the chairperson of the Classis Pastoral Relations Committee or the Synod Minister to discuss your concern/s with you?*