

THE PASTOR



PURPOSE/DUTIES: The word “pastor” is the same Greek word as “shepherd.” Just as shepherds care for their flocks, pastors likewise lead, feed, teach, protect, equip, encourage, and pray for the flocks under their care. The pastor is one of God’s gifts to the local church (*Ephesians 4:11-12*). The pastor is “the spiritual overseer” of the areas of ministry of the Local Fellowship (*By-Law 9.03*) See our EMCC website (emcc.ca) for more information.



BIBLICAL INSIGHT: *Prophets, Priests, & Kings!*

In the Old Testament some individuals were chosen to be prophets, some to be priests, and some to be kings. Jesus Christ held all three offices!

In a general sense, the pastoral ministry overlaps all three roles. In a “**prophetic role**” (*i.e.* “*bringing God to the people*”), the pastor stands before his people preaching Biblical truth with passion and conviction. In a “**priestly role**” (*i.e.* “*bringing people to God*”), the pastor serves in the midst of his people by praying with, visiting, caring for, and encouraging them with a heart of compassion and sensitivity. And in a “**kingly role**” (*i.e.* “*leading the people*”), the pastor leads his people into maturity and ministry by articulating church vision, sharing in the oversight and administration of church programming, and representing the church to the community in official functions.

Practical Insight: Every pastor is unique in personality and giftedness. Some are stronger as “prophets,” some as “priests,” and some as “kings/administrators.” Each local congregation is unique also. The ideal fit is one in which the strengths of the pastor match the needs of the congregation.

Historical Insights: Over the centuries different groups emphasized different aspects of the pastor’s role. The Reformers emphasized the pastor as the “**teacher of God’s Word.**” To them the “breaking the Bread of Life” included feeding the flock by preaching. In the 1600’s the Puritans stressed the role of pastor as “**the physician of the soul.**” Pastors were to probe the spiritual condition of their parishioners and restore spiritual health as needed. In the Methodist awakening of the 1700’s pastors became the “**organizers and overseers of small groups**” for the purpose of nurturing believers. In the twentieth century, larger churches and the complexities of society have expanded the role of the pastor to include “**recruiting, motivating, and administrating people and programmes.**” Care should be taken that pastors do not become merely “church managers” rather than “shepherds of souls.”

QUALIFICATIONS:

Scripture clearly teaches (*1 Timothy 3, Titus 1*) that there are standards by which Christian leaders are to be held accountable.

Pastors must demonstrate:

1. Testimony to a vital born-again experience with our Lord Jesus Christ.
2. Character traits and spiritual maturity evidenced by the fruit of the Spirit (*Galatians 5:23-23*) with an attitude of servant leadership.
3. Daily living consistent with a Christian world view and lifestyle as reflected in the Scriptures.
4. Spiritual gifts for ministry as identified by the local church and district leaders.
5. A clear call by God for spiritual vocational leadership.
6. Commitment to our denominational “Articles of Faith and Practice.” (see emcc.ca website)
7. Support for the programs of our denomination.

CALLING AND CREDENTIALS:

Pastors are much more than mere employees of a local church. Pastors are called by God to serve the local church in an official leadership capacity. Local church members affirm God's calling when they invite a person to serve as pastor. Our denomination (EMCC) assists in recognizing God's call through a credentialing process toward ordination. (*see Appendix #2, EMCC Articles of Governance, 3.1.3.2 and 3.2*). Pastors are required to sign a Ministerial Covenant Agreement with the EMCC annually (3.3.1) (*website: emcc.ca*)

SELECTION:

Each pastor is to be selected in accordance with the following guidelines: (*our By-Law 9.02*)

1. Each pastor shall be chosen, so far as is reasonably practical, following guidelines established by the Policies and Procedures of the EMCC.
2. A Lead Pastor shall be selected, upon recommendation of the Board, by the Members at a duly convened meeting, by a vote of not less than 75% of the Members present. Criteria and procedure for proxy votes and/or total membership minimum percentage (*if applicable*) will be clarified to the congregation in advance of the congregational vote.
3. Additional pastors may be added to the pastoral team as needed upon approval of the lead pastor recommended to the Church Board and Elders, with feedback from the congregation via a non-binding vote or other means if so desired.

GENERAL JOB DESCRIPTION:

1. The senior pastor is responsible (with the elders) for the "spiritual oversight" and "shepherding" of the flock, casting vision, promoting prayer, and handling confidential and sensitive matters.
2. The pastor, elders, and church board serve as a team (with different roles) within the boundaries of the Scriptures, our church by-laws, and congregational direction.
3. Core areas of pastoral ministry include preaching and teaching God's Word (1 Timothy 4:13), "shepherding the flock," (1 Peter 5:2), evangelism and community outreach (2 Timothy 4:5), leadership development (Ephesians 4:11-14), and prayer (1 Timothy 2:1). Pastors should also be encouraged in their participation in our Athabasca Ministerial Association, overseeing worship services, conducting weddings, officiating funeral services, officiating baby dedications, counselling, home/hospital visitation, representing the church in official community functions, and other ministry opportunities as the Lord leads.
4. The pastor and elders will be responsible for overseeing the observance of the Lord's Supper on a regular basis.
5. The senior pastor will be entitled to an annual "discretionary Sunday" taken at his choosing when he will not be required to preach. This is not considered a holiday or reason to be absent.
6. The senior pastor is an "ex officio" member of all boards and committees but does not have the right to vote or make motions.
7. The pastor is a member of the Nominating Committee.
8. The annual EMCC pastors' salary guidelines (including salary, vacation time, housing, etc.) will be followed as much as is reasonably practical.
9. A review of the pastor's ministry, resignation, or removal shall be in keeping with our by-laws (*section 9*) and the policy of the EMCC.

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