

# **Cary Alliance Church Sabbatical Policy**

## **Revised Version**

**January 6, 2016**

### **- Introduction**

- This document contains general guidelines for administration of the Cary Alliance Church Sabbatical Policy for church staff. The elders reserve the right to deviate from these guidelines for any specific sabbatical proposal as deemed appropriate.

### **- What is a Sabbatical?**

- Sabbaticals are specifically aimed at reinvigorating and renewing the mind and heart of the pastor through research, purposeful travel, reading, writing, personal Bible reading, prayer, meditation and worship. They are a time for updating professional skills and refreshing the pastor's spiritual life and calling. Eugene H. Peterson said, "If help is to be given to a pastor in midcourse, it is not going to come by infusion of intellect, but by renewal of spirit." In other words, a significant aspect of a sabbatical is a pastor's time alone with God and His word.

### **- Why a Sabbatical Policy?**

- The responsibilities of a pastor generally require that they be on call 24/7 in order to meet the needs of the congregation. Therefore, except for vacation time, a pastor is never really free from his pastoral duties.
- The variety of information and skills that the modern pastor is required to master or possess in some measure needs periodic updating. It is difficult for pastors to upgrade skills during the normal routine of ministry. It is difficult not because the pastor is busier than anyone else but because of the irregular nature of the pastoral tasks.

### **- How are sabbaticals productive?**

- Sabbaticals benefit both the pastor and the congregations because they can result in renewed commitment to the church, increased spiritual vitality, renewed emotional health, rediscovered zeal for ministry and rekindled sense of God's calling. They can lead to enhanced job performance and increased effectiveness in ministry. They can allow the pastor to improve in one or more competencies, acquire new skills, stay current with professional developments and pursue an area of theological interest.
- Sabbaticals, to be productive, need to be carefully planned to benefit the congregation as well as to enrich the pastor's ministry.

### **- What does a sabbatical look like?**

- The sabbatical policy at Cary Alliance Church would cover all full-time ordained pastors.
- Each pastor would be eligible for a sabbatical after completing six consecutive years of service with the Alliance and would be eligible for subsequent sabbaticals after each six years are completed.
- The proposed sabbatical length would be up to three months depending on the goals of the sabbatical.
- The pastor requesting a sabbatical would summarize his request in a few paragraphs to the elders at least nine (9) months before the requested time. After general elder approval they would prepare a detailed proposal indicating their objectives and goals for the sabbatical, the desired timeframe and the expected outcome of the sabbatical.
- During the sabbatical the pastor would maintain his normal salary and benefits. In addition, Cary Alliance Church would contribute up to \$1,000/month to assist in the costs of the sabbatical. If the pastor would like the church to consider additional funding, the sabbatical request would have to be submitted early enough for the additional funding to be considered in the annual church budgeting process.

- During the sabbatical the pastor would provide the elders with a monthly update. On his return, the pastor would present a report detailing the results of the sabbatical to the elders and give a verbal summary to the congregation.
- Only one pastor would be able to take a sabbatical in any given church budget year.

- **What a sabbatical is not**

- Sabbaticals are not vacations, nor are they a reward for good work, or simply a “perk” for the pastor. Sabbaticals are not just time off for the pastor from his normal responsibilities to do with as he pleases.
- A sabbatical is not to be used by the pastor to explore other job opportunities. Similarly, it is not a time for the church to evaluate other candidates for the pastor’s position.