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## Sample Codes Of Ethics<sup>1</sup>

### Pastor Or Senior Minister Code

(Includes basic obligations for all ministers)

#### PREAMBLE

As a minister of Jesus Christ, called by God to proclaim the gospel and gifted by the Spirit to pastor the church, I dedicate myself to conduct my ministry according to the ethical guidelines and principles set forth in this code of ethics, in order that my ministry may be acceptable to God, my service beneficial to the Christian community, and my life a witness to the world.

#### RESPONSIBILITIES TO SELF

1. I will maintain my physical and emotional health through regular exercise, good eating habits, and the proper care of my body.
2. I will nurture my devotional life through a regular time of prayer, reading of Scripture, and meditation.
3. I will continue to grow intellectually through personal study, comprehensive reading, and attending growth conferences.
4. I will manage my time well by properly balancing personal obligations, church duties, and family responsibilities, and by observing a weekly day off and an annual vacation.
5. I will be honest and responsible in my finances by paying all debts on time, never seeking special gratuities or privileges, giving generously to worthwhile causes, and living a Christian lifestyle.
6. I will be truthful in my speech, never plagiarizing another's work, exaggerating the facts, misusing personal experiences, or communicating gossip.
7. I will seek to be Christlike in attitude and action toward all persons regardless of race, social class, religious beliefs, or position of influence within the church and community.

#### RESPONSIBILITIES TO FAMILY

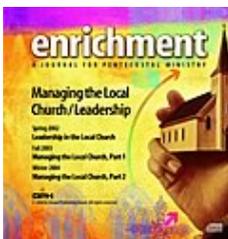
1. I will be fair to every member of my family, giving each the time, love, and consideration each needs.
2. I will understand the unique role of my spouse, recognizing that his or her primary responsibility is as marital partner and parent to the children and secondarily as church worker and assistant to the pastor.
3. I will regard my children as a gift from God and seek to meet their individual needs without imposing undue expectations upon them.

#### RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE CONGREGATION

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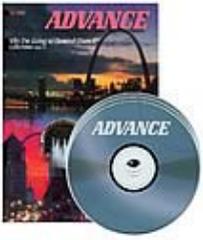


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1. I will seek to be a servant minister of the church by following the example of Christ in faith, love, wisdom, courage, and integrity.
2. I will faithfully discharge my time and energies as pastor, teacher, preacher, and administrator through proper work habits and reasonable schedules.
3. In my administrative and pastoral duties, I will be impartial and fair to all members.
4. In my preaching responsibilities, I will give adequate time to prayer and preparation so my presentation will be biblically based, theologically correct, and clearly communicated.
5. In my pastoral counseling, I will maintain strict confidentiality, except in cases in which disclosure is necessary to prevent harm to persons and/or is required by law.
6. In my evangelistic responsibilities, I will seek to lead persons to salvation and to church membership without manipulating converts, proselytizing members of other churches, or demeaning other religious faiths.
7. In my visitation and counseling practices, I will never be alone with a person of another sex unless another church member is present nearby.
8. I will not charge fees to church members for weddings or funerals; for nonmembers I will establish policies based on ministry opportunities, time constraints, and theological beliefs.
9. As a full time minister, I will not accept any other remunerative work without the expressed consent of the church.
10. In leaving a congregation, I will seek to strengthen the church through proper timing, verbal affirmation, and an appropriate closure of my ministry.

### RESPONSIBILITIES TO COLLEAGUES

1. I will endeavor to relate to all ministers, especially those with whom I serve in my church, as partners in the work of God, respecting their ministry and cooperating with them.
2. I will seek to serve my minister colleagues and their families with counsel, support, and personal assistance.
3. I will refuse to treat other ministers as competition in order to gain a church, receive an honor, or achieve statistical success.
4. I will refrain from speaking disparagingly about the person or work of any other minister, especially my predecessor or successor.
5. I will enhance the ministry of my successor by refusing to interfere in any way with the church I formerly served.
6. I will return to a former church field for professional services, such as weddings and funerals, only if invited by the resident pastor.
7. I will treat with respect and courtesy any predecessor who returns to my church field.
8. I will be thoughtful and respectful of all retired ministers and, upon my retirement, I will support and love my pastor.
9. I will be honest and kind in my recommendations of other ministers to church positions or other inquiries.
10. If aware of serious misconduct by a minister, I will contact responsible officials of that minister's church body and inform them of the incident.

### RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE COMMUNITY

1. I will consider my primary responsibility to be pastor of my congregation and will never neglect ministerial duties in order to serve in the community.
2. I will accept reasonable responsibilities for community service,

- recognizing that the minister has a public ministry.
3. I will support public morality in the community through responsible prophetic witness and social action.
  4. I will obey the laws of my government unless they require my disobedience to the law of God.
  5. I will practice Christian citizenship without engaging in partisan politics or political activities that are unethical, unbiblical, or unwise.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES TO MY DENOMINATION**

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1. I will love, support, and cooperate with the faith community of which I am a part, recognizing the debt I owe to my denomination for its contribution to my life, my ministry, and my church.
2. I will work to improve my denomination in its efforts to expand and extend the kingdom of God.

## **ASSOCIATE MINISTER CODE<sup>2</sup> (EDUCATION/MUSIC/YOUTH/ETC.)**

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1. I will be supportive of and loyal to the senior pastor or, if unable to do so, will seek another place of service.
2. I will be supportive of and loyal to my fellow staff ministers, never criticizing them or undermining their ministry.
3. I will recognize my role and responsibility to the church staff and will not feel threatened or in competition with any other minister of the church.
4. I will maintain good relationships with other ministers of my special area of ministry.
5. If single, I will be discreet in my dating practices, especially in relation to members of my congregation.

## **PASTORAL COUNSELOR CODE**

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1. I will have a pastor/counselor to whom I can turn for counseling and advice.
2. I will be aware of my own needs and vulnerabilities, never seeking to meet my personal needs through my counselees.
3. I will recognize the power I hold over counselees and never take advantage of their vulnerability through exploitation or manipulation.
4. I will never become sexually or romantically involved with a client or engage in any form of erotic or romantic contact.
5. I will demonstrate unconditional acceptance and love toward all counselees, regardless of their standards, beliefs, attitudes, or actions.
6. If I am unable to benefit a client, I will refer him or her to another professional who can provide appropriate therapy.
7. I will maintain good relationships with other counselors and therapists, informing them and conferring with them about mutual concerns.
8. I will keep confidential all matters discussed in a counseling setting unless the information is hazardous for the client or another person or by law must be disclosed.
9. I will offer my assistance and services to fellow ministers and their families whenever needed.
10. I will support and contribute to the ministry of my church through personal counseling, seminars, lectures, workshops, and group therapy.
11. I will seek to support the policies and beliefs of my church without unduly imposing them on any counselee.

1. This sample code is generic example of numerous ministerial codes, and it has been edited to include the most significant emphases, both principles and specific guidelines, in each category. To write a code, a minister should evaluate his own ministry obligations in light of the text discussion, then utilize this sample code as broad statements of possibilities for a personal code of ministerial ethics.
2. The "Sample Code" of the associate ministers and others that follow will include only those obligations in addition to the Senior Minister Code, which uniquely apply to each special ministerial role.

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