

[Insert Church Name]

Christian Code of Ethics

Sample Codes of Ethic

Pastor or Senior Minister Code 1

(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 for this code of ethics, in order that my ministry be acceptable to God, my service be beneficial to the Christian community, and my life be a witness to the world.

Responsibilities to Self

1. I will nurture my devotional life and personal relationship with Jesus Christ through a regular time of prayer, reading of the Scriptures, and meditation.
2. I will continue to grow intellectually through personal Bible study, comprehensive reading, and attending growth minister or pastor conferences.
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. I will be truthful in my speech, never plagiarizing another's work, exaggerating the facts, misusing personal experiences or communicating gossip.
6. I will seek to be Christ-Like in attitude and action toward all persons regardless of race, social class, religious beliefs or position of influence within the church and community.
7. I will maintain my physical and emotional health through regular exercises, good eating habits, and the proper care of my body.

Responsibilities to Family

1. I will be fair to every member of my family, giving them the time, love and consideration they need.
2. I will understand the unique role of my spouse, recognizing his or her primary responsibility is as martial 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 Congregation

1. I will seek to be a servant-minister of the church by following the example of Jesus 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 that my presentation or message will be biblically based and clearly communicated.
5. In my pastoral counseling, I will maintain strict confidentiality, except in cases where 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 and time constraints.
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 and predecessor who returns to my church field.
8. I will be thoughtful and respectful to 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.

Responsibility to the Community

1. I will consider my primary responsibility is 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 the minister has a public ministry.

3. I will support public morality in the community through responsible 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.

Associate Minister Code 2

(Education/Music/Youth/Etc.)

- I will be supportive and loyal to the senior pastor or, if unable to do so, will seek another place of service.
- I will be supportive and loyal to my fellow staff ministers, never criticizing them or undermining their ministry.
- I will recognize my role and responsibility on the church staff and will not feel threatened or in competition with other ministers of my special area of ministry.
- If single, I will be discreet in my dating practices, especially in relation to member of my congregation.

Pastoral Counselor Code 3

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

Military Chaplain Code 4

- I will be an ethical example of a Christian lifestyle in a military setting.
- I will perform my service duties according to the military codes of conduct, recognizing my ultimate allegiance is to God.
- I will be truthful in my reports to my senior officers without divulging unnecessary confidential information.

Notes

1. These “Sample Codes” are generic examples of numerous ministerial codes and they have 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 or her own ministry obligations in light of the text discussions, then utilize these sample codes as broad statements of possibilities for a personal code of ministerial ethics.
2. The “Sample Code” of the associate ministers and others which follow will include only those obligations in addition to the Senior Minister Code, which uniquely apply to each special ministerial role.
3. The “Sample Code” of the Pastoral Counselor has many obvious weaknesses but does deal with the primary issues facing pastoral counselors.
4. These statements have been suggested by military chaplains as additions to the basic code for ministers.