

Clergy Effectiveness: A Working Definition

Out of a shared commitment to enhancing clergy effectiveness in local churches throughout the Texas Annual Conference, the Cabinet, Board of Ordained Ministry, and District Lay Leaders offer the following definition and explanation of our understanding of clergy effectiveness. All references are to paragraphs in *The Book of Discipline 2000*. Clergy effectiveness encompasses all aspects of a clergy person's life and can be demonstrated by integrity of heart and life, wholeness in building and maintaining relationships, and competence in skills necessary for ministry.

I. Integrity of Heart and Life

- + demonstrate personal faith in Jesus Christ and live in such a manner that the love of God is incarnate in their daily activities
- + follow spiritual disciplines (prayer, bible study, Sabbath rest, participation in the sacramental life of the church) necessary for personal spiritual formation
- + live balanced lives which demonstrate an appropriate work ethic regarding time and attention spent in work for the congregation or agency where appointed as well as appropriate time for family and recreation
- + make lifestyle choices that lead to physical and emotional health
- + be honest and forthright in all verbal and written communication
- + demonstrate the highest integrity in financial matters both within and outside congregational or agency life
- + be self reflective regarding all aspects of spiritual formation, ministry, and personal life

II. Wholeness of Relationships

Clergy within the UMC exercise their ministry within covenant relationships with God, other ordained clergy, members of the congregation or agency to which they are appointed, spouse, family, and friends. (303.2,3,4; 304.2; 319) Effective clergy demonstrate skills necessary to create and maintain healthy and nurturing relationships in all aspects of life.

Effective clergy will:

- + set appropriate boundaries in contacts with persons so that issues of sexual misconduct or harassment are never in question and appropriate sensitivity to cultural diversity is demonstrated
- + exercise leadership in such a way that ministry is the work of the entire congregation and gifts of ministry among the laity are recognized and nurtured (303.4; 319) In appointments to extension ministry, gifts for ministry among laity serving in conjunction with ordained clergy will be nurtured and affirmed.
- + set appropriate boundaries as single persons so that dating relationships do not become a detriment to ministry and that the covenant of celibacy in singleness is upheld
- + exercise fidelity in their marriage covenants and give appropriate attention to nurturing their families

- + hold themselves accountable to a group of peers for growth in discipleship and the exercise of ministry. It is expected that this group will meet regularly and deal with issues relevant to spiritual formation and growth in ministry.
- + meet regularly with SPRC and participate openly and honestly with SPRC in the process of evaluation (325.2c) In appointments to extension ministry, clergy will engage in appropriate supervisory sessions with those to whom the clergyperson is accountable.
- + exercise their ministry under appropriate supervision of the UMC through the office of the bishop and district superintendent.
- + demonstrate communication skills that include effective listening and authentic relating
- + respond appropriately when either praise or criticism is offered
- + seek out needed help when any relationship is strained or broken
- + participate in annual performance review with SPRC and district superintendent using documents supplied by the district superintendent. In appointments to extension ministry, yearly inventory documents will be provided by the district superintendent and will be completed by the clergyperson.

III. Competence in Skills Necessary for Ministry

A. Skills necessary for pastoral ministry (elders, local pastors)

Effective pastors demonstrate gifts for ministry that allow them to oversee the total ministry of the local church. (331.1)

Effective pastors will demonstrate skill in:

- + guiding, supporting, training, and equipping laity for ministry in the world
- + proclamation of the Word through preaching and teaching
- + pastoral care in times of illness, crisis, or death
- + priestly leadership of planning and leading worship and administering the sacraments
- + prophetic leadership that calls the congregation to mission beyond its walls and justice in society
- + administrative leadership in implementing the vision and purpose of the congregation, time management, supervision and management of staff and volunteers, and financial oversight
- + use of modern technology to enhance aspects of church programming and congregational life
- + the intentional development of a program of continuing education which is approved by both SPRC and the district superintendent, or by the supervisor in appointments to extension ministry

B. Skills necessary for the ministry of deacons

Effective deacons will demonstrate gifts for servant ministry in the world and leadership with the church that calls the church to ministry in the world. (319)

Effective deacons will demonstrate skill in:

- + teaching and proclamation of the Word of God
- + leadership in worship and assisting elders in the administration of the sacraments

- + forming and nurturing disciples of Jesus Christ
- + conducting marriages and burying the dead
- + leading the congregation in its servant outreach to the world

Recommendations for the future:

The definition of clergy effectiveness is broad and encompasses all aspects of ministry. As steps are planned to implement a program designed to increase effectiveness among clergy, expectations must be clear and spelled out in detail.

Whereas: The Task Force recommends that The Texas Annual Conference 2004 session support this definition of clergy effectiveness; and

Whereas: The Task Force will develop program strategies of continued education and nurturing that will address clergy needs for effectiveness; and

Whereas: The Task Force recognizes a covenant responsibility to the clergy who are no longer effective and/or called to representative ministry who need assistance through vocational transitioning;

Therefore Be It Resolved: That The Task Force is requesting authorization from The Texas Annual Conference session 2004 to fully develop a proposal for “Faithfulness In The Clergy—A Call To Effectiveness” that will implement the aforementioned goals and be reported at the 2005 session of The Texas Annual Conference.

Note: This resolution was adopted by the 2005 Texas Annual Conference. Its content is also found in the brochure “Faithfulness in the Clergy: A Call to Effectiveness”, and is printed in the 2005 Journal, pages J-1 and J-2.