



Guidelines for Minister Rotations

As you may be aware, the Mission Committee found it beneficial to form the Small Church Study Committee in an effort to assist those congregations with limited resources. As part of that effort surveys were sent to each of the elders as well as to the brethren in the small churches. One of the topics in that survey was the current minister rotations to support small churches. In our evaluation of the responses, overwhelming support was given to this practice.

One brother wrote *“The rotating minister support has been very helpful. Without this help the congregation would be spiritually under-served and the fellowship would be minimal.”* It has been a great blessing to our brotherhood through the years and encourages fellowship between the congregations. It continues in the way of the Apostles as shown in Acts 8:14 *“Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John.”*

Some observations and suggestions were made that need to be communicated both to the serving ministry and the receiving congregations. We wish to suggest ways the ministry of larger congregations can be of greater benefit to the smaller churches they are called upon to support with Godly teaching. The suggestions concern the need for:

- 1) Better communication between the small churches and the scheduled minister.**
- 2) Greater consistency in the scheduling of the minister rotation.**
- 3) A servant heart.**

Communication

There are several areas where communication between the small churches and the scheduled ministers can be improved. These include when trading rotations, visits outside of rotations, and when communicating about the logistics and accommodations for the visit.

- **Trading with another church** - If you trade your scheduled rotation with another church, make sure the receiving church is notified as soon as possible of the trade.
- **Visits outside of rotation** - Visits outside of the rotation system are encouraged, but need to be communicated. If your plans lead you to a small church at a time other than for a scheduled rotation, please call ahead and let them (and the church that is scheduled for rotation) know of your plans at the earliest possible date. Sometimes the scheduled church is having difficulty finding a church to trade with them, or is forfeiting a special home church occasion (e.g., baptisms, wedding, etc.).



- **Prior to Arrival** - Visiting ministers are encouraged to call 3-4 weeks before the scheduled service to verify dates and to begin to determine how to best serve the church. If you are flying, it is important to call before you purchase the tickets. Logistic such as accommodations, fellowship during the weekend, special events at the local congregation, numbers planning to attend from the visiting church, etc. should be discussed. There should be openness and flexibility on the part of both the local church and visitors concerning needs and expectations to prevent miscommunications.
- **Lodging** - Often the same families host many weekends in a row and they need a break. In other instances, they are desirous of the fellowship that hosting guests affords. When communicating with the host church, it is important to be flexible when determining accommodations (e.g., hotel vs. home).
- **When there is only one home minister** - Be sensitive to the fact that the ministers in small churches are very often used. Be aware of this both when you are visiting and when they travel to be in one of our larger churches.
- **Comments about size** - As you leave your home church to serve a small congregation, remember that Jesus gladly would leave the ninety and nine for one that needed his care. Don't speak negatively or express disappointment about size when visiting the church or when you return to your home church. By reflecting a positive message and a willingness to serve, the brethren can be strengthened in their walk.
"For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Matt 18:20

Consistency in scheduling the minister rotations

- Sending churches, in an effort to make the duties more "equitable" between their local ministers, traditionally rotate their ministers through a served congregation. However, this may not be the best way to serve smaller congregations.
- A different minister each week/month without some consistency does not give them the intimate feeding and spiritual care they may need individually. As an example, one elder asked us to send the same minister each time to a certain church. This gives our brother opportunity to develop relationships in that congregation.
- Consequently, it is recommended that the sending church assign a minister (based on acquaintance with the congregation and/or spirit led calling he may have) to serve the receiving congregation for a period of years. This would yield benefits which reach beyond the short single visits that have taken place in the past. The quality of the fellowship and service of specific needs is enhanced as relationships are developed. Prayer can be more effectively and consistently offered, other resources/support can be provided and the oneness of the small church with the national congregation will be encouraged.



A Servant Heart

- The sending church, and especially the visiting minister, should view the minister rotation as an opportunity to serve God and His children. Be open to fulfilling the needs of the congregation besides preaching on Sunday. This could include Saturday evening fellowship/singing/topical Bible Study, bringing your children or young group to fellowship with their young people, serve a couple who is far way from family support by babysitting their children, etc.
- It is important to make yourself available but not press yourself upon the church. It is helpful to realize this is a type of mission opportunity, and to seek out ways to be of service rather than defaulting into a vacation mode.
- The objective is to view the visit as an opportunity to be sent from the serving congregation for the glory of God and ministry to the saints. Romans 10:15 states *“And how shall they preach, except they be sent? As it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!”*

The work has truly been blessed in the past, and yet there continues to be much work to do. *“Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.”*
Matt 9:37-38.

May God grant each one the grace to continue this work of nurturing and providing for our churches that need ministerial support to feed the flock.