

SABBATICAL POLICY
Richland, Washington
(Columbia Community Church)

Rationale:

Members of the pastoral staff serve in a unique position in their full-time ministry. The demands of pastoral ministry are great and often draining physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Despite the use of accumulated vacation time, pastors often find themselves stressed and spiritually depleted over the years.

Recognizing the importance of maintaining strong, effective, and long-term pastoral leadership, it is the desire of Columbia Community Church to provide a time of personal and spiritual refreshment and professional growth for the pastors.

Sabbatical Policy

1. The term “sabbatical” means the pastor is relieved of all routine and emergency duties during the time granted. Prior to the sabbatical the pastoral and church leadership will develop a plan for covering the pastor’s duties during the absence. Sabbatical is separate and distinct from accrued vacation. No vacation time should be used within 4 weeks before or after sabbatical.

2. All pastoral staff shall be eligible for sabbatical upon completion of seven years of service at Columbia Community Church. Eligibility will be reached following the staff member’s anniversary date.

3. Additional time shall be allowed after each five-year period following the initial leave. Two additional weeks will be added for each five-year period. Maximum leave shall not exceed twelve weeks. See table below.

YEARS OF SERVICE	SABBATICAL ALLOWED
7 years	8 weeks
12 years	10 weeks
17 years	12 weeks (maximum)
Beyond 17 years	See item 9

4. Scheduling shall be based on seniority at Columbia Community Church. No two pastors may be on sabbatical at the same time. Leave must be taken within one year of eligibility.

5. The senior pastor shall submit a sabbatical proposal in writing to the Board of Directors outlining how the time will be used. Other pastoral staff shall first present a written request to the senior pastor following the same guidelines. The request shall then be presented to the Board of Directors for final approval.
6. The proposal should include the following:
 - type of ministry-related activity planned for sabbatical;
 - other plans for physical rest, personal recreation, family responsibilities, intellectual stimulation, and spiritual renewal;
 - strategy for coverage during the sabbatical;
 - commitment by the pastor for continued service at the church.
7. A written report shall be presented to the Board of Directors at the conclusion of the sabbatical. It should include how the time was invested and what benefits were realized.
8. The pastor's full wages and benefits shall continue during the sabbatical. No compensation shall be given for unused sabbatical time.
9. Pastors should covenant with the church to serve at least two more years with the congregation after the sabbatical.
9. The Board of Directors will address exceptions to the above policy on a case-by-case basis.