

Arkansas Annual Conference Clergy Effectiveness Assessment

Definition and Explanation of Clergy Effectiveness

Out of a shared commitment to enhancing clergy effectiveness in local churches throughout the Arkansas Annual Conference, the Cabinet offers the following definition and explanation of our understanding of clergy effectiveness. All references are to paragraphs in the 2008 Book of Discipline.

Clergy effectiveness encompasses all aspects of a clergyperson'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.

Determining clergy effectiveness is an art, not a science. Any evaluation should be a process including conversations between the clergyperson, the Pastor/Staff Parish Relations Committee, and the District Superintendent.

There should be sensitivity to differences in personality, health and family issues, and the characteristics of the ministry context. At the same time, there are parameters of lifestyle and performance of ministerial duties which are necessary for effective ministry. To these standards all clergy must be accountable.

I. Integrity of Heart and Life (¶304.2)

Effective clergy will:

1. Demonstrate personal faith in Jesus Christ and live in such a manner that the love of God is incarnate in their daily activities.
2. Follow spiritual disciplines, such as prayer, Bible study, Sabbath rest, spiritual retreat, periodic sabbatical, fasting, and participation in the sacramental life of the church, which are necessary for personal spiritual formation.
3. 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 and intellectual growth.
4. Make lifestyle choices that lead to physical and emotional health.
5. Be honest and forthright in all verbal and written communication.
6. Demonstrate the highest integrity in financial matters both within and outside congregational or agency life.
7. Be self-reflective regarding all aspects of spiritual formation, ministry, and personal life.
8. Uphold the theological integrity of the church.

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 (§303.3; §328). Effective clergy demonstrate skills necessary to create and maintain healthy and nurturing relationships in all aspects of life.

Effective clergy will:

1. Exercise leadership in such a way that ministry is the work of the entire congregation and gifts for ministry among the laity are recognized, nurtured, and affirmed (§303.4; §328).
2. Conduct ministry in cooperative and supportive relationship with other staff persons.
3. Meet regularly with P/SPRC and participate openly and honestly with P/SPRC in the process of evaluation (§334.2b, c).
4. In appointments to extension ministry, engage in appropriate supervisory sessions with those to whom he or she is accountable (§343.1).
5. 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 will deal with issues relevant to spiritual formation and growth in ministry.
6. Demonstrate communication skills that include effective listening and authentic relating.
7. Respond appropriately when either praise or criticism is offered.
8. Seek out needed help when any relationship is strained or broken.
9. Set appropriate ethical boundaries in all relationships so that issues of sexual misconduct or harassment are never in question and appropriate sensitivity to cultural diversity is demonstrated. In singleness, keep dating relationships from becoming a detriment to ministry and uphold the covenant of celibacy. In marriage, exercise fidelity within the marriage covenant and give appropriate attention to nurturing their families.
10. Avoid pastoral interference in the ministry settings of other clergy.
11. Grow and adjust to change while maintaining balance.
12. Show openness to and works well with people of diverse backgrounds.
13. Live responsibly within their income and communicate any changes in church compensation to the District Superintendent.
14. Exercise ministry under appropriate supervision of the UMC through the office of the Bishop and District Superintendent.

III. Competence in Skills Necessary for Ministry

Effective clergy demonstrate gifts for ministry that allow them to oversee the total ministry of the local church (§340):

1. Making disciples for Jesus Christ.
2. Guiding, supporting, training, and partnering with laity for ministry in the world.
3. Proclaiming the Word of God through preaching and teaching.
4. Giving leadership in implementing God's vision and purpose for the congregation.
5. Offering pastoral care in times of illness, crisis, or death.
6. Providing priestly leadership in planning and leading worship and administering the sacraments.
7. Providing prophetic leadership that calls the congregation to evangelistic mission beyond its walls and to justice in society.
8. Providing professional leadership in areas of time management, supervision and management of staff and volunteers, and financial oversight.
9. Supporting the vision and goals of the annual conference.
10. Developing growth in stewardship as a spiritual discipline within the congregation.
11. Using modern technology to enhance aspects of church programming and congregational life.
12. Intentionally developing a plan for continuing education/spiritual formation that is approved by both the P/SPRC and the District Superintendent.

These paragraphs in the 2008 Book of Discipline may be helpful:

¶258.2 - Election and duties of P/SPRC

¶340 Responsibilities and duties of elders and licensed pastors

¶341 Unauthorized conduct of pastors

¶432.1 Consultation between District Superintendent and congregation concerning appointments

¶432.2. - Consultation between District Superintendent and pastor concerning appointments