

So you are a staff employee who also happens to be a member of the church?

This dual relationship has many ramifications that we want to be sure you have thought through and are aware of as you navigate this balance of roles and responsibilities.

- 1) **Elected roles in the church.** When you were hired as a staff employee, you become ineligible to serve on session or an elected position within the church. This is primarily to avoid the creation of a conflict of interest. As a staff person, to serve on the governing board of the church or in an elected position, places you in a more influential position than other staff, supervisors, or even the pastors. In particular, serving on session, you will be asked to make decisions that influence the personnel, budgeting, salaries, and evaluations of other staff, which would not be appropriate.
- 2) **Support of leadership.** As a church member, we would anticipate there will be times that you do not agree with the leadership or direction the church is going or disagree with primary decisions that have been made. As a church member, we encourage all members to be open and direct and express their thoughts to the leadership of the church. As a staff employee, you are considered part of the leadership and implementation of the leadership decisions of the church. This means that if session makes a decision about something, you are expected to support and abide by that decision and act with confidence in working to pursue a successful end. Session members themselves, agree that although they may discuss and debate in the course of a meeting, when they leave the meeting they will all support and abide by the decision of the majority. As employees of the church and under the supervision of the pastor/head of staff and the session, it is your role to support the directions and leadership of the church.
- 3) **Conflict with church members and staff.** As a church member, there are times you will get angry with another member of the church or with a member of the staff of the church. As a staff employee, there are times you will become angry or find yourself in the middle of a conflict with church members or other staff employees. In all cases above, we as a Christian community follow the biblical mandate of Matthew 18 to go directly to that person and try to find reconciliation. If that is ineffective, then it is agreed to add a third person to the conversation to try and help facilitate communications and work toward reconciliation. As a staff employee, the same model is true. We encourage you to go to the staff employee you have issue with to work toward reconciliation. If that is ineffective then we encourage you to involve the direct supervisor to try to work toward reconciliation. If the conflict is not resolved, then you are to involve the Pastor/Head of staff to work toward reconciliation. If the conflict is with the Pastor/Head of staff, then they need to be approached first. If reconciliation is not reached, or you feel you were unheard, at this time a member of personnel is brought in to try to reach reconciliation. It is important to note that reconciliation may or may not mean your request is answered in the manner you would like. The time to engage personnel is only when there has been an injustice or lack of fairness in the decision.

At no time, as a staff employee of the church, are you to discuss with other church members conflicts with other staff or the Pastor/Head of staff. This sounds odd and a difficult request to honor; but we ask this because involving members of the church in a dispute overall undermines the authority and leadership of the church. If you will, consider an alternative environment with similar challenges as the educational system. If the teachers become angry at each other or at the principal, it would not be appropriate for them to discuss their grievances with the parents of the kids or the kids they themselves teach and are there to serve. The same is true for church members. We have an established line of complaints and discussion process for grievances and do expect that as a staff employee you will abide by these.

- 4) **Pastoral care needs verses supervisory needs.** Within the dual relationship of being a member of the church and being an employee of the church are experienced by the employee, it is important to note there is also a dual relationship that exists for the pastor as well. They must be at the same time, the caring compassionate pastor- aware of the members needs, feelings, and issues; and as well, the employer who is charged with the stewardship of the churches resources ensuring employees are functioning in manners that they are being paid for by the church. Typically, this is accomplished; unless there is a conflict or a challenge with the job performance of the staff employee. The pastor is asked to discipline, correct, or reprimand the staff employee for something related to their work. We recognize in doing so, it is a challenge for the pastor to also give and for the employee member to receive care. If such a need is determined, a pastoral relationship will be offered and developed for you with another pastor to reach out and care for your needs.

- 5) **The demands on your time as being employed by the church means you are always working.**

We are very mindful how easy it is for all members to see you as an employee of the church. This perception impacts not only your employment hours at the church; but as well your volunteer hours by confusing them in many ways. Many staff, who have shared the same situation you are in, report that they are asked, when they come to worship, to go do a task that is typically done during the workweek. Some even respond that they start to avoid non-work church gatherings for fear they will be asked yet again to work, when they are here just to be a member. We want to encourage you to have the moments of being just a member of the church without the employment obligations following you into worship. We want to encourage you to set appropriate boundaries in defining your roles with members. The Pastor/Head of Staff will work with you to ensure and develop communication opportunities and skills to help educate members, as to your roles and identified hours.

- 6) **In the case of Termination of your employment**

None of us go into a job position anticipating it will not end well. So our hope is that this section is primarily to name our expectations under extraordinarily difficult circumstances, hoping we will not encounter this situation. But should you find you are being dismissed or leaving the position at the church in conflict, we do want to be clear as to our expectations. We would

expect that you would not participate in gossiping, discussing the conflict with other members of the church, as this potentially causes division and divisiveness within the church itself. It also does not provide the Biblical approach to dealing with conflict within the Body of Christ or the opportunity for reconciliation.

As you can tell, we are very aware of the difficultness in nature of this dual relationship, and why we are hesitant to place anyone in this position. It is a challenge to work for the church and also see the church as a place where our needs are met. But to serve the church in a manner that calls forth the best and avoids division from within, it does require is that what is expected of staff employees is of a higher calling and greater responsibility for the church's well being..

Overall, the intent of this resource is to help articulate expectations and the challenges of being both a member of a church and being employed by the church. As a personnel board we want to work with you to deal with the challenging nature of the dual relationship that exists, so that in both roles, you feel empowered , supported ,and enabled to do your best.

It is the preferred policy of the Personnel Team hiring practices of Church of the hills not to hire members. This does not mean we do not hire members when we feel they provide exceptional qualifications and skills needed for the position. It does mean we are mindful of how challenging it is to work and worship sharing these two roles.