

# Code of Ethics for Pastors

*We put no stumbling block in anyone's path, so that our ministry will not be discredited. (2 Corinthians 6:3)*

*Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. (Philippians 1:27)*

All who are called by God to the ministry of the gospel solemnly commit to a life of joyful obedience and selfless service in order to glorify God and enrich his people. Therefore, a minister will:

## Pursue Integrity

*I know, my God, that you test the heart and are pleased with integrity. All these things I have given willingly and with honest intent. (1 Chronicles 29:17)*

- in personal character.

Exalt Christ, not self. Be honest, not exaggerating or overpromising; peace-loving, not contentious; patient, not volatile; diligent, not slothful. Avoid and, when necessary, report conflicts of interest and seek counsel.

- in personal care.

Care for the spiritual, mental, emotional and physical dimensions of your person, for "your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit" (1 Corinthians 6:19).

- in preaching and teaching.

Interpret the Bible accurately and apply it discerningly: "In your teaching show integrity, seriousness and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned" (Titus 2:7-8). Speak the truth in love. Give due credit when using the words or ideas of others.

## Be Trustworthy

*It is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful. (1 Corinthians 4:2)*

- in leadership.

Model the trustworthiness of God in leadership to encourage and develop trustworthiness in others. Use power and influence prudently and humbly. Foster loyalty. Demonstrate a commitment to the well-being of the entire congregation. Keep promises. Respond sensitively and appropriately to ministry requests and needs: "Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much" (Luke 16:10).

- with information.

Guard confidences carefully. Inform a person in advance, if possible, when an admission is about to be made that might legally require the disclosure of that information. Communicate truthfully and discreetly when asked about individuals with destructive or sinful behavior patterns. Tell the truth, or remain discreetly silent: "A gossip betrays a confidence, but a trustworthy person keeps a secret" (Proverbs 11:13).

- with resources.

Be honest and prudent in regard to personal and ministry resources. Refuse gifts that could compromise ministry. Ensure that all designated gifts are used for their intended purpose: "If you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches?" (Luke 16:11).

## Seek Purity

*Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity. (1 Timothy 4:12)*

- in maintaining sexual purity.

Avoid sinful sexual behavior and inappropriate involvement. Resist temptation: "Among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality" (Ephesians 5:3a).

- in spiritual formation.

Earnestly seek the help of the Holy Spirit for guidance and spiritual growth. Be faithful to maintain a heart of devotion to the Lord. Be consistent and intentional in prayer and scriptural study: "Take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ" (2 Corinthians 10:5).

- in theology.

Study the Bible regularly and carefully to understand its message, and embrace biblical doctrine. In forming theology, consider biblical teaching authoritative over all other sources.

- in professional practice.

Identify a minister/counselor who can provide personal counseling and advice when needed. Develop an awareness of personal needs and vulnerabilities. Avoid taking advantage of the vulnerabilities of others through exploitation or manipulation. Address the misconduct of another clergy member directly or, if necessary, through appropriate persons to whom that member of the clergy may be accountable.

## Embrace Accountability

*Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, watching over them—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. (1 Peter 5:2-3)*

- in finances.

Promote accepted accounting practices and regular audits. Ensure that church funds are used for their intended ministry purposes.

- in ministry responsibilities.

Ensure clarity in authority structures, decision-making procedures, position descriptions, and grievance policies. Model accountability at the highest organizational levels.

- in a denomination or a ministry organization.

Ensure compliance with denominational standards and expectations, including regular reports.

## Facilitate Fairness

*Believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ must not show favoritism... Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes, and a poor man in filthy old clothes also comes in. If you show special attention to the man wearing fine clothes and say, "Here's a good seat for you," but say to the poor man, "You stand there" or "Sit on the floor by my feet," have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts? (James 2:1-4)*

- with staff.

Follow approved church and denomination practices in staff selection processes. Advocate for equitable pay and benefits for staff. Provide regular staff team building, affirmation, training, evaluation, and feedback. Be honest with staff regarding areas to celebrate as well as those needing improvement.

- with parishioners.

Ensure appropriate access to staff by parishioners. Preach and teach to meet the needs of the entire congregation. Assume responsibility for congregational health. When asked for help beyond personal competence, refer others to those with requisite expertise.

- with the community.

Build God's Kingdom in cooperation, not competition, with other local ministries. Provide Christian ministries to the public as possible. Encourage good citizenship.

- with a prior congregation.

Do not recruit parishioners from a previous church without permission from the pastor. Avoid interfering in the ministry of a previous congregation.

As a minister of the gospel, I commit to abide by the standards set forth in the NAE Code of Ethics for Pastors.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_