

The Function and Assignment of an Overseer

Each Rosedale Network of Churches congregation is encouraged to select and appoint an overseer. The overseer is selected by the congregation subject to the approval of the Executive Board. The overseer serves the congregation by helping give vision to the congregation's life and ministry, providing stability and counsel in times of leadership transition, as a pastor to the pastor, as an advisor to the leadership team and the congregation, and as a link between the congregation and Rosedale Network. Specific job descriptions may be developed in each case as agreed upon by the congregation and the overseer. In most cases it is helpful to develop a written memo of understanding (MOU) so both the overseer and the congregation knows exactly what is expected.

Selecting an Overseer – Qualifications to Consider

Rosedale Network policy states the following regarding qualifications to serve as an overseer: "The overseer of a Rosedale Network congregation shall be an experienced ordained minister with ministerial membership in Rosedale Network." In addition to the qualification stated above, the following criteria should be considered in selecting an overseer:

1. Relatability – Does the person relate well with the pastor, leadership team and congregation?
2. Shared Vision – Is the person's vision and passion for ministry compatible with the life and vision of the congregation?
3. Proximity – In addition to one or two scheduled visits per year, is the person close enough or available enough to provide assistance on relatively short notice if needed? If the overseer is not within reasonable driving distance and a meeting is needed...
 - Can we afford to cover short-notice transportation expenses?
 - Do we have the capabilities of meeting via conference call or video conference?
4. Age/Stage of Life of Pastor – Is our pastor likely to retire within the next 5-10 years? If so, consider selecting an overseer who will be available long enough to provide oversight during the next pastoral transition.

Selecting an Overseer – Procedure

1. A list of 3-4 potential overseer candidates should be identified by the leadership team. If help is needed developing a list of appropriate candidates, please contact Rosedale Network's executive director or conference pastor. This list should be submitted to the executive director of Rosedale Network who will in turn submit it to the Executive Board for approval.
2. Once the overseer candidates have been approved by the Executive Board, the leadership team is free to contact their first choice from the list to determine availability and willingness to serve. If the candidate is not available, the leadership team should move on to the next name.
3. If the congregation is involved in the selection process, generally speaking it is best for the leadership team to narrow it down to one candidate who is willing to serve and present only his name to the congregation for a simple "yes" or "no" approval in order to avoid potential dissension that could arise from comparison of candidates. If the candidate has had no previous contact with the congregation, it would be good to schedule a visit or find some other means of giving the congregation an opportunity to get to know the candidate better.
4. Once a candidate agrees to an appointment as overseer and a MOU is agreed upon, congregational leaders should report the appointment to Rosedale Network's executive director. If a formal installation service is desired, it should be scheduled at the earliest convenience of all parties involved.
5. In the process of re-appointment of an overseer to a consecutive term, the congregational leaders communicate the intentions and actions to the Rosedale Network executive director, with the re-appointment being subject to the approval of the Executive Board. This often happens after the overseer has been asked if he is willing to continue serving.

Overseer Terms

1. The assignment of overseer is for a specified term not exceeding five years, but with the possibility of successive terms.
2. The overseer's service should be reviewed periodically at the initiative of the senior pastor or the appointing board or committee with appropriate congregational involvement.
3. The Executive Board recommends that Rosedale Network overseers, upon reaching age 75, consider relinquishing overseer responsibilities to younger men at the end of their current term.

Q & A Regarding CMC Overseers

1. Does having an overseer add another tier of authority to our church? No. The overseer serves as an advisor. He is not a voting member of the leadership team or the congregation. He is simply there to walk alongside the congregation and assist as requested by the leadership team and congregation.
2. Will this cost a lot? It is up to each congregation as to how much to pay the overseer. At minimum his travel expenses should be covered. Some churches build an additional stipend right into their annual budget. Others pay a per visit honorarium similar to what they would pay a guest speaker. This is something that should be included in the MOU between the congregation and overseer.
3. Does having an overseer give us someone to go to and complain anonymously if we are having problems with our pastor? While each congregation is free to spell out the exact arrangement and expectation for the overseer regarding these kinds of things, generally the overseer will always work in partnership with the pastoral leadership of the church and should share with the pastors and leaders any complaints they hear from the congregation. Disgruntled people should not try to go around their pastors and leaders to the overseer in hopes that he will help them get their way.