



7 Ways a Seasoned, Skilled, and Strategic Intentional Interim Pastor Can Help Your Church Thrive During a Pastoral Transition

The time between pastors is for flourishing, not floundering.

Losing a pastor—whether from death, resignation or dismissal—is never easy. The future is unknown. Often churches feel stuck, weary, or overwhelmed. Those emotions are valid, but they don't have to immobilize your church.

With the guidance of an intentional interim pastor, you can strengthen your church—so you are ready for the next season of ministry. Here are seven ways an interim pastor can help you thrive in a season of transition.

1. The time between pastors can be one of the most compelling periods in the life of a church.

The trained and skilled interim pastor can help the church utilize this time to evaluate, refocus, heal, solve problems, and prepare to call the next pastor.

2. Church attendance tends to go up when a seasoned, skilled, and strategic interim pastor is serving the church.

He brings continuity to the ministry, which helps maintain positive growth. His preaching feeds the people, and they are satisfied and rejoice in the services of their temporary shepherd.

3. Visitor retention increases when pastoral care is present.

Without the stability of consistent pastoral ministry, newcomers may continue their search for a church home and fail to take a second look at your church.

4. People give more. Giving is often generated by need.

If the local church seeks to save money during the interim period and uses guest speakers, they may find it challenging to regain that income when needed to provide for the new pastor. When churches hire a full-time interim pastor from the start of their pastoral vacancy, the congregation knows that the budget needs are similar. They will continue to give as they have been, or more.

5. Allowing an interim pastor to fill the pastor's position strengthens the new senior pastor's leadership.

Some churches reassign a staff member to fill the senior pastor role during the interim. When a staff member steps into the pastor's shoes, it may create some potential difficulty when the new pastor arrives, and the staff person must return to their previous assignment. An interim pastor obviates this potential issue.

6. Church leaders don't burn out.

Having an interim pastor means other leaders don't have to carry an increased load of ministry. As a result, when the permanent pastor arrives, the church leaders are energized to lock arms with their new pastor and jointly serve the church and God's kingdom.

7. The church is not rushed to find a pastor.

Because of their interim pastor's capable preaching and leadership, the church can take the necessary time to prayerfully and diligently engage in the search process for a new pastor. When a top pastoral prospect declines because the church is prospering under the interim pastor, while disappointed, the search team and church can regroup and cast the net again.