

# Congregational Health Check-Up

## Pastoral Conversation

---

### Top Tips

#### **Understand the purpose of the pastoral conversation**

The conversation is primarily for pastoral reflection and encouragement. It is not a performance review or interrogation.

#### **Be prepared**

Prior to the pastoral conversation, read any of the information or reports available about the church. This may or may not include the survey results, depending on timing. Those on the conversation team may wish to consider key topics for discussion ahead of time, and perhaps even decide on who might focus on particular topics. However, as noted above, the conversation should not be focused on reviewing reports in depth.

#### **During the conversation**

The sample questions below are a guide only. They can be adapted to the situation, or you may use other questions. It may also be helpful to consider the questions as openings for discussion. The conversation may move in other and perhaps even more important directions – be flexible and move towards conversation rather than Q & A.

#### **Choose participants wisely**

Be mindful of who might be best to be part of the pastoral conversation team. Existing relationships may need to be considered. It is also strongly recommended that a woman should be included within the team, especially when the minister's wife or a female staff member will be present.

### Sample Questions

#### **Opening questions**

- How are you going at the moment?
- What would you like us to know?
- What do you want to talk about today?

#### **Other questions to help you go further (as needed)**

- What has it been like to go through this Congregational Health Check-Up process?
- Are you feeling supported in ministry?

- Joy and encouragement
  - What have you found encouraging over recent months?
  - Has there been anything that has brought you significant joy over the last 6 months or so?
  - If so, how have you celebrated that? Have you been able to share that with anyone?
- Challenges and frustrations
  - What are your current frustrations? How are you dealing with those?
  - As you reflect on that, are there ways you might have contributed to the situation?
  - Who do you share those frustrations with and where do you find support?
- Spiritual life
  - How do you invest in your personal relationship with God?
  - How is that going right now?
  - What progress in your life and godliness do you think your congregation are seeing in you?
- Relationships
  - How are you going with relationships outside of the church?

### **Marriage questions**

*Please note that a number of factors may play into how well marriage questions may land on the ministry couple. Some couples may prefer to not discuss as much, given that the Check-Up process is driven by Presbytery. Still, it's helpful to explore the area of marriage to the degree which is appropriate, since that can be a reflection of overall health. It would also be wise to ensure that questions are asked of each of the husband and wife, without one person dominating the conversation or answering for the other. There could be wisdom in the female member of the conversation team directing some questions to the wife in particular.*

- How is your marriage being impacted by ministry?
- How much do the two of you talk about this together?
- Where do you get support and encouragement in your marriage?
- How are your children going?

### **General questions**

- If resources were no issue, what would you love to see in this church over the next 10 years?
- What kind of help do you think you need to get there?
- What plans do you and the elders have to help the church get there?
- What do you think you need most to remain encouraged in ministry for the next 5 years?
- Tell us about your relationship with the elders?
- Is there anything the Presbytery can help you with?