

**Bivocational Pastors  
and  
Small Churches:**



*A  
Special  
Opportunity  
for  
Ministry*

**If your church is . . .**

- looking for a pastor;
- a small church with a tradition of full-time pastors, but is now struggling to pay the pastor's salary and benefits;
- considering the area minister's suggestion to have a bivocational minister;

**If your initial response is . . .**

- "Will our church grow with a part-time pastor?"
- "How will we continue our ministries?"
- "Does this mean the best years of ministry are behind us?"

**Then consider some advantages of bivocational ministry:**

Since the pastor's time will be limited, the congregation has the opportunity to take greater responsibility—and to develop a vision—for mission and ministry.

A bivocational pastor can provide well-trained, experienced leadership without total reliance on the church for support.

Money can be redirected to mission and ministry in both the local community and the world.

Bivocational pastors, also involved in occupations outside the church, recognize the day-to-day job concerns faced by congregation members.

American Baptist Churches USA is a denomination of small churches. Over 40 percent of our churches have fewer than 100 members, and about two-thirds of our churches have fewer than 200 members. Twenty-five percent of our churches are served by part-time pastors. But many small congregations have effective ministries with part-time pastoral leadership!

**... and recognize the challenges:**

The bivocational pastor's immediate availability to persons and families in crisis will be limited.

Adequate lay leadership will be needed for effective ministry.

Church leadership must keep in mind the congregation's mission and vision for ministry.

Pastoral leadership must be kept an integral part of church life.



*...to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ...*

Ephesians 4:12  
NRSV

**How your church can  
make bivocational  
ministry work:**

Pray together and plan for the transition to a different kind of ministry.

Develop a vision statement for clarity about mission and ministry, and ways to focus church energy.

Develop clear expectations for both the new pastor and the lay leadership of your church.

Build a sense of mutual accountability between pastor and church leaders.

Carry out periodic evaluations with the aim of a blessed and fruitful ministry together.



**Educational Ministries**

American Baptist Churches USA

Church Vocational Leadership

Department of Education for Discipleship

1-800-ABC-3USA, ext. 2061 • FAX: (610) 768-2056

<http://www.abc-em.org>

P.O. Box 851 • Valley Forge, PA • 19482-0851

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