

GUIDELINES FOR CONSULTING WITH THE COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY
DURING A PERIOD OF SEPARATION OR DIVORCE

When a pastor or associate pastor is facing a marital separation or divorce, the Committee on Ministry will seek to minister to the congregation through the session, to the clergy member, and to the spouse and family. The primary goal shall be the support and undergirding of the ongoing and viable ministry of the congregation.

If separation or divorce is imminent, it is the responsibility of a pastor to consult with the moderator of the Committee on Ministry. Committee on Ministry will appoint a team to go with the pastor or associate pastor to the session meeting at which the separation or divorce is announced and provide an opportunity for the session to discuss the matter without the pastor or associate pastor present. The team should plan to be available to the session and pastor on an ongoing basis. Where appropriate, the session should be encouraged to make public support of their pastor's or associate pastor's ministry with the congregation.

The pastor or associate pastor, session and Committee on Ministry shall assess the impact of the separation or divorce on the congregation and the pastor's or associate pastor's effectiveness in ministry, and work together to insure the ongoing ministry of the congregation. Also, the Committee on Ministry will work with the pastor or associate pastor in support of his/her ongoing ministry.