

# coaching4 clergy

Specialized Training for  
Pastors, Church Leaders and Coaches

## Just what is the pastor's role, anyway?

At every church, there is usually a Board of Directors or some other governing body that hires the pastor, creates a job description and a set of expectations for that pastor, and evaluates how the pastor is doing in their role.

These expectations are laid out to the pastor, of course, but unfortunately that's usually where the conversation stops – and that's a huge problem. These roles and expectations are often never discussed with the congregation at large. They either don't know or they have no say.

So the pastor is being judged by not one but two sets of standards: the official job description set forth by one small group of people, and the unofficial expectations of every other member of the congregation. What's more, there are probably as many ideas about what the pastor should be doing, and how, as there are bodies in the pews.

Pastors feel the weight of these unofficial expectations every day. They may feel they can never measure up or please everyone, especially since there is no consensus about the top three or four areas that the pastor should be focusing on. Pastors end up feeling like they have too much to do, and church leaders worry that their pastors are doing too much. It seems like both parties want the same thing, yet they're miles apart.

Why do pastors feel this burden? For newer pastors, it's the pressure to earn their keep and "do their part" – except they don't know where their part ends and someone else's begins. And as for more experienced pastors, well, sometimes it's easier to do things themselves.

**The key issues are CLARITY and COMMUNICATION.** Clarity and communication brought about through straightforward conversations about roles and expectations. And this conversation needs to happen with the larger church community, so that everyone understands:

1. What areas of strength and expertise does our pastor bring to our church?
2. What are the three or four primary areas of focus for our pastor?



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A similar inventory of volunteers and committees is also helpful, so that everyone can be reassured that the work the pastor is setting aside will be picked up by other, more suitable people.

Once everyone is on the same page, it frees up the pastor to do those three or four things really, really well, and it empowers others to get involved and contribute. The result is that more things are getting done and they're getting done well. And everyone understands just what the pastor's role is, anyway.

(P.S. When you're ready for the nitty gritty of delegation and building a great team, refer to the [Team Building tips from November 2009](#).)

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