

A BRIEF OVERVIEW of the VICAR SUPERVISOR'S HANDBOOK

1. **Thanksgiving.** The seminary faculty is keenly aware of the importance of the vicar year and is thankful to God for the service provided by the supervising pastor. The supervising pastor was chosen by the Assignment Committee with this service in mind.
2. **Purpose.** The vicar year fits nicely into the overall objectives of seminary training in that vicars learn skills and attitudes desirable for ministry in the contemporary world. The vicar will receive these skills and attitudes by observing and working with the supervising pastor. For this reason the vicar is assigned primarily to a pastor, not to a congregation.
3. **Policies.** A good overview of the basic policies of the vicarship program may be found on pages 2–3 of the handbook. Two policies worth noting are vacation time—two full weeks (A.5.) and expectations for supervising pastor/vicar meetings (C.1.). Vicars appreciate regular feedback, far more than a supervising pastor might imagine.
4. **Preaching.** A good summary of our expectations for the vicar's homiletical instruction may be found on pages 6–7 of the handbook (**Goals**). It would be good for the supervising pastor to (re)familiarize himself with the terminology we use so as to speak to the vicar about his preparation in terms he can understand. The vicar needs structure at this point in his development as a preacher, and he will be served well by a supervising pastor who can emphasize the basic building blocks of the classic deductive style of preaching. Plunging directly into alternate styles of preaching may prove only to confuse a man who has yet to master the basics.
5. **Worship.** Supervising pastors best train their vicars in this area by emphasizing careful presiding at the service, purposeful planning of worship, and a pastoral approach to working with all the brothers and sisters who assist in worship.
6. **Teaching.** The supervising pastor needs to work with the vicar throughout the process, providing counsel in the development of the lesson, observing the vicar teaching in various settings, and offering feedback on strengths and weaknesses.
7. **Calls and Counseling.** The supervising pastor should allow the vicar to observe him in many types of pastoral calls, and then allow the vicar to make those calls himself. While the vicar should not be asked to render formal pastoral counseling, he may be able to observe some, especially premarital and wedding planning sessions (with the permission of the counselees). It would be good if the supervising pastor stayed abreast of any spontaneous counseling the vicar had the opportunity to offer, so as to debrief and direct him.
8. **Time Management.** It is important that vicars demonstrate the ability to make and keep schedules. Faithfulness in meeting deadlines is at a premium.

9. **Evangelism.** We understand that individual vicars and individual congregations have different ways of doing evangelism, as well as different comfort levels. What is important here is the vicar's experience in working with a congregational committee, in making calls (including law/gospel presentations) himself, and in seeing a prospect through a Bible Information Course.
10. **Pastoral Leadership.** It is imperative that the supervising pastor regularly share his godly goals for the congregation with the vicar, and then model the loving leadership that involves God's people in meeting these goals.
11. **Groups.** While the vicar should not be put in charge of any group or organization (including the youth group), he should be expected to participate in them and learn how they support the congregation's gospel ministry.
12. **Administration.** The vicar learns the most in this area by observing careful planning and faithful meeting of deadlines by his supervising pastor.
13. **Vicar Report.** The report itself is self-explanatory. We encourage the supervising pastor to take his time in filling it out in as thorough a fashion as possible. We ask him to share the report with his vicar. It is imperative that the supervising pastor read the prologue as well as the guidelines that follow the report.
14. **Problems.** If a significant problem arises in connection with the vicar's ministry or family that is proving difficult to resolve locally, the supervising pastor is encouraged to get in touch with the faculty advisor without delay.