Sabbatical Time

- Defining a sabbatical
- Who is eligible?
- Policy Parameters
  - Resource
  - Sabbatical proposal should include
  - Post-Sabbatical reports should include
  - Sabbatical expenses that generally are reimbursable
  - Emergency "Sabbatical"/Leave
  - Reporting Abuse
- Questions?

Sabbaticals are an important part of the life and career of a healthy pastor or ministry worker. Having a suitable sabbatical plan can help contribute to missionaries being refreshed and refocused. It can also help Reliant missionaries stay on the field long-term, giving them time for refreshment and reflection regarding their ministry path.

Defining a sabbatical

A sabbatical is an extended time of spiritual rest, renewal, rejuvenation, reflection and refocus. It is not a vacation or Paid Time Off (PTO), nor is it only continuing education. It is a guided process where one deliberately trusts God for the outcome as they disengage from normal ministry responsibilities and leadership involvement for study, rest, renewal and evaluation of life and ministry. This can include reading books, attending seminars, studying, writing, prayer, etc. A sabbatical has an intended purpose and plan at the outset. This plan and purpose should be agreed upon between the local church leadership or ministry and the missionary. At the conclusion of the sabbatical, the missionary will give an account of their sabbatical time to both their local ministry leadership and to Reliant.

Who is eligible?

- Pastor/Minister or Field Manager 1, 2 and 3
- Staff Level 3 (2-4 months)
- Staff Level 2 (1-2 months)
- Employed by Reliant at least 7 years
- Generally have been a pastor, field ministry director or Staff Level 2 or 3 role for at least 5-7 years
- Have not already taken a sabbatical within the past seven years
- Employed 40 hours full-time for the majority of their Reliant employment
- MTD status must be in good standing with Missionary Resources
- If there is a substantial MTD deficit or shortfall, the Missionary Resources Director could withhold sabbatical approval until the MTD shortfall has been addressed.

Policy Parameters

Pastors, Ministers & Field Ministry Directors

- 3-6 months in length
- May request another sabbatical after 7 years

Staff Level 3

- 2-4 months in length
- May request another sabbatical after 7 years

Staff Level 2

- 1-2 months in length
- May request another sabbatical after 7 years

Common Sabbatical Parameters
• Full salary and benefits will be paid during the sabbatical.
• Supervisor/Pastor approval (or board or church coach if you’re a pastor) and Reliant approval
• Agreed upon goals of the sabbatical time (can include rest, reading, prayer, time in the Word, continuing education, etc.)
• Planning for the sabbatical should generally begin at least six months prior to its start.
• Three months prior to the start of a sabbatical, a written Sabbatical Proposal must be submitted beforehand to both local church leadership and Reliant for approval (see Sabbatical Request form).
• A summary report after the sabbatical is completed will be submitted to both the local church leadership and Reliant no later than 30 days after returning from the sabbatical.
• A sabbatical should not be seen as a right or mandatory benefit that is automatically earned once every 7 years. If a sabbatical is not taken, it cannot build up or accrue like Paid Time Off (PTO).

Resource

Sabbatical Request Form

• Share the Sabbatical Request Form with mr@reliant.org once completed

Sabbatical proposal should include

• Reason for requesting the sabbatical
• Proposed dates of the sabbatical
• Potential benefits to the individual
• Potential benefits to the church or ministry
• Plan for covering job responsibilities during the sabbatical
• Specific goals and objectives for the sabbatical (books to read, travel involved, journaling, etc.)
• People you are supervising/coaching
• A summary of any anticipated expenses related to the sabbatical
• Proposal should be submitted at least 3 months prior to beginning of the requested sabbatical. (Reliant’s approval process for proposals generally takes up to one week).

Post-Sabbatical reports should include

• Spiritual benefits gained from the sabbatical
• Personal benefits gained from the sabbatical
• Benefits to the local church or ministry (if applicable)
• Summary of how well you met your goals and objectives for the sabbatical
• Summary of how your sabbatical went from your spouse’s perspective (if applicable)

Sabbatical expenses that generally are reimbursable

• Reasonable expenses for travel, meals, and lodging for the employee to participate in activities in which the intent is for training, mentoring, intense study, meditation and reflection or similar purposes
• Meal per diem can be given for significant time away from the home. See Per Diem - U.S. for further details.
• Spousal and family travel, meals or lodging expenses must be deemed reasonable and necessary and are taxable if approved.
• Books, conferences, study courses (Reliant Education Reimbursement Program may apply)
• Reliant sabbatical approval is required before any expenses can be reimbursed
• Please inquire with the Reimbursements Coordinator at reimbursements@reliant.org before making major purchases and plans to ensure the costs will be eligible for reimbursement.

Emergency "Sabbatical"/Leave

• This policy is not meant to address issues related to an emergency leave or a paid or unpaid leave of absence. These can mistakenly be treated or referred to as "sabbaticals." These requests will be handled and processed on a case-by-case basis by Missionary Resources.

Reporting Abuse

• Any abuse or misuse of an approved sabbatical granted by Reliant should be reported directly to the Missionary Resources Director. This could include a missionary returning to work during the time or simply treating the sabbatical like an extended paid vacation.

Other Resources
Questions?

Missionary Resources

Mike Swann, Corl Crawford Van Oss and Kathy Zellinger

Email: mr@reliant.org
Phone: 407-502-0995

Related pages

- Holidays
- Paid Time Off (PTO)
- Leave of Absence
- Insurance Protection
- Retirement
- Continuing Education
- Old Maternity Leave