

7. The pulpit ministry at this time should focus on hope. The messages should encourage the congregation to unite, grow, heal and begin the transition for a new pastor .



*A Ministry of the Baptist  
Churches of Illinois made  
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How to Say  
"Good Bye"  
To Your  
Church.



The manner in which  
you leave your  
church says a lot  
about who you are.

## Seven Steps to Concluding a Ministry.

Saying goodbye with grace require the pastor to consider his relationships to God and others. Leaving a congregation is a grief process no matter the circumstances; therefore, take this time of departure as a time to learn and grow.

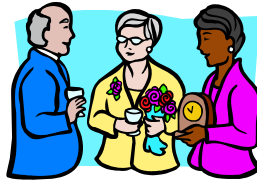
### 1. Invest your remaining time wisely.

Pastors should be intentional in using the time between announcing the resignation and the pastor's actual departure to bring closure to this ministry. Closure will be important for various individuals, shut ins, persons the pastor is counseling, groups in the congregation and other special relationships in the community. The pastor should decide who will need a visit, a letter, or a phone call, to enable the person to emotionally and spiritually enter into a new relationship.

### 2. Wrap up the pastor's responsibilities.

This is the time to make good use of the deacons, giving them an orientation to the pastor's ministries so they can pick up and continue that ministry. Work in the interim time to turn over files, history, and assignments to appropriate persons in leadership roles. By the time the pastor is ready to leave, the pastor should no longer have any functions to perform. The pastor's desk will truly be empty.

**3. It is time for reconciliation** Visit, if possible, those people with whom the pastor has experienced difficulties. To the best of the pastor's ability restore these relationships. The pastor's goal is to eliminate emotional baggage for the pastor, and congregation so each can enter into new relationships with out fear.



### 4. Be Graceful.

Depending on the nature of the departure, the congregation may or may not be providing a formal time to honor the pastor. Nevertheless, grace requires the pastor to say thank you to the congregation. Especially to those members who have loved and supported him and his family, while he has served the church. The pastor will decide how best to show appreciation by: letter, card, visit, or telephone call.

### 5. Be clear about the pastor's reasons for leaving.

Many people in the congregation will not understand why the pastor is leaving at this time. Hearing the pastor affirm that God has called him to a new place of service, will be helpful to the congregation. The pastor should tell the congregation that he and his family are grateful for the time God has allowed them to serve the congregation. Certainly there are times when the reason is obvious retirement, etc.

### 6. What about unpleasant departures?

Unfortunately there may be a time when the departure is not pleasant, these times will require grace, skill and tact to bring closure to the ministry. The pastor should ask the church leaders if he could invite the Director of Missions or Church Minister's Relationship Director from the SBC State Office to meet with the church leaders.

The CMR director will ask the church leaders to gracefully offer the pastor an appropriate departure process, including severance and insurance. He will also work with leaders to identify issues that need to be resolved before calling a new pastor. He will encourage the church to call a Transitional Interim Pastor.

Pastors should not make major decisions under times of stress. Pastors should not use this time to attack persons or groups in the church. The grace the pastor demonstrate now will pay rich dividends later. The pastor's goal is to bring closure to his ministry and help the church prepare for their future.

The pastor should be clear to inform the members that he will not accept invitations for weddings and funerals unless he has first discussed it with the church's new pastor.

