



CHURCH OF THE
NAZARENE

TRINIDAD & TOBAGO

PASTORAL CODE OF ETHICS

A guiding policy document for fruitfulness, integrity, and consistency in ministry throughout the Trinidad and Tobago District.

November 2023

Church of the Nazarene
Trinidad and Tobago District
Pastoral Code of Ethics

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PREAMBLE

“We put no stumbling block in anyone’s path, so that our ministry will not be discredited.” (2 Cor.6:3)

“Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ.” (Phil.1:27)

Ministers of the Church of the Nazarene, Trinidad and Tobago district, called by God and affirmed by the church, must uphold Christian values and conduct, so that their service will be beneficial to their communities and their lives be a witness to the world.

CONDUCT

In relation to God

- A pastor’s ‘specialized knowledge’ is theology – knowledge of/about God. So his/her professionalism is enhanced by disciplined and prayerful reflection on how Christian faith impacts specific situations in the lives of people. Pastors are required to give sufficient time to reading, prayer and theological study so that their spiritual wells do not run dry.

In relation to the Church

- According to the Church of the Nazarene Manual (Articles 1-21, 2017), we discourage any public communication, namely preaching or teaching from our ministers that contradict the doctrine and polity of the Church of the Nazarene.
- As shepherds after God's heart, we oppose any forms of spiritual abuse or manipulation from ministers that can harm the spiritual, emotional, financial or physical well-being of God's people.
- To ensure peace and unity within our local churches, we advise ministers who have ceased ministry in a particular church due to resignation or removal to avoid engaging or interfering in the ministry of the departed church.

In relation to self

- We encourage pastors to be truthful in their speech, and Christ-like in attitude and action toward all persons regardless of race, social class, religious beliefs.

In relation to family

- We encourage pastors to maintain the priority of relationships with their own spouse and family, acknowledging the duty of care they have for their own families and friends giving them the time, love, and consideration they need.

In relation to the congregation

Pastors are encouraged to:

- Practice ministry within the limits of their expertise and to the best of their ability.
- In accordance with the Church of the Nazarene Manual #527 pastors should utilize continuing education and professional development (not necessarily formal education) to improve professional standards of care. (2017)

In relation to the community

Pastors are encouraged to:

- Be an example of upright behavior to the members of both the Church and the community and seek in their example to display Christ-likeness in demeanor and actions.
- Recognize the proper concern by the Church for all aspects of society, including political and justice issues. In doing so, ministers will encourage debate which is respectful of persons, expressed with humility and respectful of proper authority, seeking at all times to further Christian principles. This is in accordance with the Church of the Nazarene Manual Section 28:3 (2017)
- In keeping with Section 933 of the Church of the Nazarene Manual position on social media, we believe the content that we share should be respectful. As in all interpersonal relationships, we believe that the content of our social media should also be a reflection of the sanctified hearts for which we strive. Clergy and laity alike must be mindful of how their activities on social media affect the image of Christ and His church and impact its mission within their communities. Our activities should be life giving and affirming and should seek to uplift all persons. (2017)

In relation to colleagues

- All colleagues in ministry are to be treated with respect, consideration, trust and fairness. Therefore, pastors are encouraged to refrain from making comments that may damage their colleagues' reputations, or damage the wider profession and Church. We need to seek mediation in the face of conflict and where there are differences of opinion, the District Superintendent may be consulted for a final decision.
- For accountability purposes, we encourage pastors to dialogue with fellow ministers when members of the fellow minister's church actively attend theirs.
- Ministers are encouraged to exercise wisdom and fairness when members of other churches seek their personal counsel or raise matters pertaining to their home-church.
- We encourage healthy dialogue and partnership among ministers when dealing with matters pertaining to church members from their respective churches.

In relation to change in leadership of a congregation

- In cases where the minister officially retires from the church, we encourage wisdom and discernment in choosing to relocate or continue worshipping in the same assembly. If due to varying factors (viz. retired minister living in same community) the retired minister wishes to continue in the previous church, we encourage dialogue and relationship with the incoming minister with the goal of having a mutual understanding and establishing healthy boundaries. Their post-retirement role will be to worship with their former church family and support the current leadership. The retired pastor should not entertain any negative discussions about the new pastor.
- The new pastor should view the retired pastor as a reference where necessary, instead of a threat and as far as possible the new pastor and the retired pastor should seek a relationship of trust and mutual respect.

In relation to Finances

- Pastors are expected to be faithful financial stewards living by biblical principles. We hold to fairness, honesty, professionalism and ethical practice when handling financial matters pertaining to the church and instances when the minister is at liberty to request a personal fee for their professional services. We encourage restraint from direct involvement in the handling, disbursement, and spending of church finances according to Section 518 of the Church of the Nazarene Manual (2017).

Confidentiality/Counselor

- Pastors hold a position of sacred trust among their congregation. We demonstrate this trust by exercising confidentiality except when bound by law to report, or if there is evidence of potential self-harm such as suicide or intention to commit harm to others such as murder, referring to trained professionals when issues are beyond our scope of ability and ministering to individuals in appropriate and safely guarded locations.

Avoiding Sexual Misconduct

- Pastors are encouraged to practice sexual purity in their choice of entertainment as well as communication, relationships and physical contact with individuals other than their spouse. This includes avoiding same sex relationships. Unmarried persons in a committed relationship, can benefit from the support and accountability of an experienced minister. See Section 31, Church of the Nazarene Manual (2017)