

How much salary for a Transitional Pastor?

If a church is looking for direction and leadership during the time between the leaving of a pastor and the calling of the next one, a Transitional (or Interim) Pastor is often called to assist the church leadership. When a committee, and subsequently a church, locates a man to serve as Transitional Pastor, the question is often raised regarding how much salary is appropriate. After all, most qualified men who are trained and possess the skill-set to serve as a Transitional Pastor are usually retired, bi-vocational or work for a denomination or association. In other words, they have a day job and the Transitional Pastorate is something they do to serve churches because they love God and His people.

Church leaders need to also understand that a Transitional Pastor, like the pastor of the church, is not a “hireling.” Pastors are not for hire. They are servants of the Lord and called to serve the church. To maintain Biblical integrity, a local church needs to provide a “fair” salary to its ministers. How is fairness determined?

The amount of salary is best determined by what the church expects from the Transitional Pastor and what skills the Transitional Pastor brings to the relationship. The Center for Congregational Health suggests the following processes to calculate a Transitional Pastor salary.

To begin the process, it is important to assess the **former pastor’s** time and salary. Break up an average week into seven days and into 4 segments (early morning, late morning, afternoon, and evening.) Assign a number of hours to each segment. For simplicity sake and in general terms, let’s make it 4 hours.

- Early morning = 5 am to 8:59 am
- Late morning = 9 am to 12:59 pm
- Afternoon = 1 pm to 4:59 pm
- Evening = 5 pm to 9 pm

Each segment equals one unit with a possibility of 28 units per week. In the secular world 10 to 13 units are often assigned to work. A pastor’s work doesn’t fit into as neat a package and it is not uncommon for diligent pastors to work 14 to 16 units per week. This doesn’t take into account being on-call for emergencies. The example below could have been for a Southern Baptist pastor in a growing, multi-staff congregation.

| | SUNDAY | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY |
|---------------|--------|--------|---------|-----------|----------|--------|----------|
| EARLY MORNING | X | | | X | | | |
| LATE MORNING | X | X | X | X | X | | X |
| AFTERNOON | X | X | X | X | X | | |
| EVENING | X | | | X | | | |

What was the salary and housing the church provided for the former senior pastor? Take that amount and divide it by 52 weeks and then divide by the number of units the former pastor was compensated. This process will determine a monetary value for each unit.

$$\frac{\text{Former pastor's salary}}{52} = \text{Weekly salary} \div \text{number of units} = \text{unit \$ value}$$

Example: $\frac{\$50,000}{52} = \$961.54 \div 28 = \$34.34$

Once you have the value of each unit, how many do you expect the Transitional Pastor to invest in your church? Include the windshield time and at least one full unit for preparation for each weekly message.

| | SUNDAY | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY |
|---------------|--------|--------|---------|-----------|----------|--------|----------|
| EARLY MORNING | | | | | X | | |
| LATE MORNING | X | | | | X | | |
| AFTERNOON | X | | | X | | | |
| EVENING | X | | | X | | | X |

If the Transitional Pastor doesn't live on the church field, the value of each salary unit should be discounted by 10-15%. Remember, he will also have travel expenses in addition to his salary. Now, multiply the number of units you expect the Transitional Pastor to be of service by the discounted value you established.

Example: $\$34.34 - 10\% \times 8 = \27.28
 Value of each unit, Less discount, Times Num. of units, equal adjusted weekly salary

This process may seem rather mechanical. However, in hundreds of congregations across America it has been incorporated not only with the Transitional Pastor's salary, but also helps churches and pastors gain a better understanding of compensation commensurate with the call.