

## **First 100-Day Plan**

The first 100 days in a new appointment is a crucial time in the life cycle of a new pastor. The Rio Texas Cabinet encourages all transitional pastors to set aside time prior to the move for dedicated prayer and scripture reading about the new appointment. Also take time to begin development of a 100-day plan.

Think about getting to know your staff and your congregation. How will you get to know your community? Might it be a good idea to meet your school superintendent, chamber of commerce officials, mayor, city council officials, or others? What are you going to preach for the first 100 days? What are the key messages? Help your congregation get to know who you are and what you believe. Show some passion.

Following are some suggested priorities. What else would you add? How would you revise this list? **Build your own worksheet starting with these suggestions:**

### **Before you arrive:**

- Take time to plan for your very first days in your new place. You'll be disoriented and overwhelmed upon arriving, and you don't want to miss out on the opportunities that only happen once.
- Plan how you'll spend your first official day—not unpacking! Whom do you want to call and greet? Where should you be visible? Certainly unpacking will need to happen, but think about you want your very first interactions with your people to happen.
- Think about your first several weeks of preaching. How can you use this time to share some of who you are and where you see hope and joy in this new relationship?

### **First 30 Days: Learning and Building Personal Credibility**

**By July 31**

- Settle into your home and tend to your family's transition needs
- Settle into your office and set your routine workweek
- Gather a team to plan get-to-know-you gatherings in homes
- Hold an initial conversation with church leaders (PPRC, Lay Leader(s), Chairperson of Administrative Board/Council, Finance Chair, and Trustee Chair) regarding the current state of affairs of the church and their understanding of the immediate priorities
- Begin high-priority relationships with leaders, influencers, those with immediate pastoral care needs, and those in the community
- Establish a 3-month preaching schedule
- Hold an "expectations" conversation with the PPRC
- Spend time with each staff member to get to know them personally, their ministry role, and hopes and challenges in their role
- Discover and understand the church's stated and unstated vision for ministry
- Assess the style of leadership you need to bring to the congregation

- Assess the congregation's awareness of and receptivity to the conference vision and the mission and ministry of the UMC through connectional giving
- Determine projects that will need advance planning and support, such as the annual stewardship campaign or a church-wide event
- Are there any "early wins" – areas that you can resolve to help cement your role as a leader?
- Other:

### **Second 30 Days: Seeking Some Early Wins**

**By August 31**

- Assess your first 30 days. Discuss your progress with key lay leadership and submit a brief summary report to your DS.
- Any items from the first 30 days that need to be carried over?
- Assess your team (Lay Leadership and Staff) and determine how you will lead them
- Analyze your early judgments about the congregation for accuracy, adjusting your leadership style to your emerging understanding of the situation
- Identify an important issue that you can address that will have a tremendous impact on the congregation and their perception of your leadership if you deal appropriately with it
- Help the congregational leadership find ways to interact with the conference vision
- Work on ways to communicate the vision of the church and keep it before the congregation
- Any other priorities for the second 30 days?
- Any other "early wins/successes"?
- Other:

### **Third 30 Days: Refine, Identify, Develop, and Assess**

**By September 30**

- Assess your first 60 days. Submit a brief summary report to your DS.
- Any items from the first 60 days that need to be carried over?
- Casual follow up with the key leaders visited in the first 30 days
- Identify resource challenges
- Any strategies arising for finance, budgeting, connectional giving, nominations, structure, and staffing?
- Hold conversation with the PPRC re: personnel development
- Establish another 3-month preaching schedule
- Any other priorities from the second 30 days?
- Any other "early wins/successes"?
- Other:

## **Summary**

You are the pastor and you only have one opportunity to start fresh at each appointment. Undoubtedly, there will be unforeseen challenges that will complicate your best laid plan; however, if you have no plan, that will be evident. As Carl F. George wrote: "If a church leader has a vision that goes beyond being well thought of, a vision that includes *harvest*, then some important decisions must be made intentionally." (Carl F. George, *Leaders*, 126) I hold you in earnest prayer!

## **Note**

A good podcast on this topic by Dr. Lovett Weems, of the Lewis Center for Church Leadership, can be found here:

### **"Leaving Well and Starting Strong: Planning for an Effective Pastoral Transition"**

<https://www.churchleadership.com/podcast/episode-31-leaving-well-and-starting-strong-planning-for-an-effective-pastoral-transition-featuring-lovett-h-weems-jr/>