



CENTER *for*
CONGREGATIONAL
RESOURCES
AT SAMFORD UNIVERSITY

HELPING CHART A COURSE TO THRIVING MINISTRY

Sabbath and Study Leave Programs

Application Information

Center for Congregational Resources
at Samford University
resource@samford.edu
(205) 726-4064

*“And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy,
because on it God rested from all the work of creating
that God had done.”*

- Genesis 2:3

*The spiritual rest which God especially intends in this
commandment [to keep the Sabbath holy] is that we
not only cease from our labor and trade but much more—
that we let God alone work in us and that in all our powers
do we do nothing of our own.*

- Martin Luther

*“He makes me lie down in green pastures;
He leads me beside still waters.
He restores my soul.”*

- Twenty-Third Psalm

Time + Space - Distraction = *Renewal*

Center for Congregational Resources at Samford University Sabbath Leave Program Application

Abraham Heschel observes that the “meaning of Sabbath is to celebrate time rather than space. Six days a week we live under the tyranny of things of space; on the Sabbath we try to become attuned to *holiness in time*.”¹ The nature of pastoral leadership makes the Sabbath a day of work tied to a particular occupational space. The average pastoral leader spends 50-55 hours at work each week being a public speaker, community leader, administrator, family therapist, hospital and nursing home chaplain, wedding or funeral director, and employee.² Even family time is often interrupted by a crisis in the life of a church member. All of this leaves little time for worship, spiritual reflection, extended study, physical fitness, or simply rejuvenating rest. In our busy, consumer-oriented culture, experiencing the “holiness of time” may require the shifting of space. The Center for Congregational Resources has established the Sabbath Leave Program in order to provide non-occupational space for temporarily indulging in *holy time*.

The goal of the Sabbath Leave Program is to provide “holy time” for pastoral leaders to experience emotional, spiritual, physical, and intellectual renewal in the setting of an academic institution with a Christian mission. In this context, pastors will remember or rethink their ministry priorities, interact with other pastoral leaders, experience mental and spiritual renewal, and give attention to personal well-being. Movement toward this goal begins with the application process as pastoral leaders are asked to describe their reasons for requesting a sabbatical or study leave and explain them to their congregations.

Requirements:

Eligibility: The program is open to active ministers, ordained or lay, fully funded or bi-vocational; pastors or church ministerial staff members, denominational or diocesan staff, and others employed in recognized positions of pastoral leadership.

Schedule Options: An applicant may apply for a Study Leave of up to two weeks in length or a Sabbath Leave of four weeks or longer. It is possible to divide the Sabbath Leave time into smaller segments, if a *compelling* reason for doing so is given. Typical lengths of Sabbath Leaves are from 6 to 8 weeks.

The deadline for receipt of Sabbath Leave applications is **February 1**.³ Sabbath Leave plans can begin in May. In some cases, an applicant’s plan can begin earlier. Contact the CCR Director for more information.

Sabbath Leave Project: The Sabbath Leave Program’s goal is to facilitate time away from ministry-related tasks so that ministers experience true Sabbath rest and renewal. However, those accepted to the Sabbath Leave Program are required to complete an individual Sabbath leave project of his or her own design. These projects might include (but are not limited to) creating a brief sermon series, writing essays or poetry, pursuing an avocation such as woodworking or photography, composing music, developing and pursuing a physical health regimen, volunteering in a social service agency or advocacy program, or engaging in a spiritual direction or therapy process.⁴ Sabbath leave resources cannot be used to fund degree programs or academic work towards degree programs.

Residency: Participants in the program are required to be based in Birmingham, AL for their Sabbath leave and to participate in the campus life of Samford University.⁵

A note on travel: Travel within the continental United States will be considered if it meets needs of a coherent Sabbath plan that cannot be adequately met in the Birmingham metropolitan area. We prefer that travel and time away from the Birmingham area not be more than 50 percent of a Sabbath Leave plan. International travel costs are not eligible for funding through the CCR.

Resume: A resume must be submitted with the application.

Proposal: An applicant must submit a 6 to 10 page, double-spaced proposal that includes the elements shown in the “Proposal Content Elements” section found on page 3 of this document. The proposal should present the details of an applicant’s Sabbath goals and the plans proposed to achieve the goals.

Applicants are encouraged to contact the center’s Director either by phone at (205) 726-4064 or email at mkwilson@samford.edu for assistance with proposal preparation and identification of resources available on campus and in the Birmingham area. Applicants who seek assistance generally submit better proposals than those who do not receive assistance.

Budget Options: Applicants may apply for funding up to \$6,000 to cover food, lodging, travel to and from Birmingham, resources including books and periodicals⁶, recreation activities, consultations with experts in a field of study, pulpit supply⁷, and limited travel (see note on travel above).

Campus Resources Available: Once on campus, participants have access to the university libraries, computer labs, writing center, classrooms, chapel services, gymnasium, track, pool, weight-room, and other recreational facilities. Participants will also be able to sit in on classes.

There are many resources for vocational enrichment, along with arts and leisure experiences available on campus as well as in the greater Birmingham area.⁸ Pastoral leaders on Sabbath leave will also have many opportunities to contribute to campus life. They may participate in Divinity Chapel services, speak in undergraduate Religion classes, conduct small group conversations or other learning experiences. The presence and availability of Sabbath Leave Program pastoral leaders provide opportunities for both formal and informal mentoring with Divinity School and undergraduate ministerial students.

An important part of the Sabbath leave experience is connection with others on leave and/or in the campus community. Resources are provided by the center for shared meals, entertainment, and/or special educational activities or speakers for groups of SLP participants. A Campus Resource Facilitator may also be requested by participants to support and provide informal, low-key encouragement to help participants achieve their Sabbath Leave goals.

REQUIRED APPLICATION DOCUMENTS:

Each of the following must be submitted *by email to resource@samford.edu* on or before February 1; **AND** an *original* of each of the following must be postmarked on or before the February 1:

- 1. Applicant’s Resume and photo**
- 2. Sabbath Leave Proposal, Timeline, and Budget**
- 3. Institution Support Form (an electronic copy not required)**
- 4. Brochures or other information about any conferences or continuing education events included in the Sabbath Leave plan (an electronic copy not required)**

Sponsoring Church, Denominational Office, or Church-Related Agency Responsibilities:

1. An appropriate official must review the applicant's proposal and sign the attached institution support form after discussion with a leadership group.
2. *Successful applicants* will be asked to appoint a SLP liaison⁹ as a contact point between the pastoral leader on leave, the Center, and the church, denominational office, or church-related agency. SLP liaisons will be responsible for facilitating appropriate organizational support of the pastor's Sabbath leave.¹⁰ The SLP liaison may also participate in an evaluative interview/phone conversation with Center staff at the end of the sabbatical process.
3. Sponsoring churches, denominational offices, or church-related agencies must provide matching financial support for participants. While dollar-for-dollar matches are encouraged, we recognize that many churches are not in a position to provide this, and will thus allow for "in kind" resources to be offered as a match.¹¹ Congregational matches must be listed in the proposal budget.

Proposal Content Elements:

Sample proposals and other planning resources can be viewed at this web link:

www.samford.edu/congregational-resources. Click on the "Resources for Clergy" then "Sabbath Leave and Study Leaves" to view sample proposals.

Purpose and Rationale: *Why are you applying to the Center for Congregational Resources Sabbath Leave Program?*

Successful proposals will establish relevancy to one's current ministry position and make a strong case for the needs addressed in the plan.

Plan: *What do you propose to do during your Sabbath leave to help you fulfill your desired purpose?*

Describe the resources on and off campus you will utilize and the activities your Sabbath Leave Project will include to accomplish your purpose. Be as specific as possible.

Compatibility: *How does your proposal match the stated goal of the Sabbath Leave Program?*¹²

Benefit: *How will you, your family, your congregation or ministry context, and others benefit from your participation in the Sabbath Leave Program? What are some results you hope to realize?*

Preparation: *How will you prepare your congregation or ministry context for this experience?*

Include a brief discussion of the role lay or other leaders (and your SLP liaison) will play, ways you plan to educate your congregation or ministry context about your leave, and concrete steps you will take to cover your responsibilities while on leave.

Timeline: *What is the proposed schedule and timeline for your Sabbath leave?*

This should be a list-form summary of the plan laid out above with specific dates of arrival, departure, and other activities (see website or contact the Center at (205) 726-4064 for examples).

Budget: *What is the budget necessary to fund your proposed Sabbath leave?*

Be as detailed as possible, including an *itemized* list with brief explanations of projected expense items as well as your congregation's matching contributions where appropriate. (see website for example).

Applications to/Involvement in Other Programs: *Have you applied to or are you currently participating in other programs for sabbatical or study leaves, peer support, etc.? If so, please list and describe them.*

End Notes

- ¹Abraham Joshua Heschel, *The Sabbath: Its Meaning for Everyday Life*, Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1951, p. 10.
- ²Brunette-Hill, S., Finke, R. “A Time for Every Purpose: Updating and Extending Blizzard’s Survey on Clergy Time Allocation.” *Review of Religious Research*, vol. 41, 1999, pp. 47-63.
- ³Notification of acceptance within six weeks of the deadline.
- ⁴Pastoral counseling will be provided for Sabbath Leave Program participants through our partner, Samaritan Counseling Center. In addition, there are Franciscan and Benedictine retreat centers less than an hour’s drive from Samford’s campus. Opportunities for off-campus retreats and/or spiritual direction can be easily and inexpensively arranged.
- ⁵Sabbath leaves begin with an on-campus orientation and end with an exit interview before the last day on campus.
- ⁶Those within easy driving distance of Samford are encouraged to live at home. Funded resources do not include computer hardware. Funds for books and periodicals may not exceed \$300.
- ⁷No more than \$250 per week may be budgeted for pulpit supply
- ⁸Many faculty members are available for consultation. Contact the Center’s Program Director for more information at (205) 726-4064. Sabbath Leave Program participants may also attend campus lecture series, Samford Theater productions, athletic events, and concerts. They also may sample Birmingham’s arts and culture including the Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, the Alabama Ballet, the Birmingham Museum of Art, and the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute and Archives. In addition, Alabama boasts the nationally-recognized Robert Trent Jones golf trail, a number of state parks with hiking, camping, fishing and boating facilities, and gulf beaches.
- ⁹A SLP liaison may be the same person who signs the letter of institution support or another congregational, denominational, or church-related agency leader.
- ¹⁰This may include educational, administrative, and worship-based processes for clarifying the need for and nature of Sabbath leave. It could also include providing for commissioning rituals prior to Sabbath leave, encouraging prayer and other support for the pastoral leader and his/her family during Sabbath leave, and working with the pastoral leader to celebrate and share Sabbath Leave Program outcomes.
- ¹¹For example, congregations or agencies might commit to covering the cost of pulpit supply, continuation of salary, travel costs, lodging, meals, etc. Address further questions about congregational matching to the Center for Congregational Resources office at resource@samford.edu or (205) 726-4064.
- ¹²The goal of the Sabbath Leave Program is to provide “holy time” for pastoral leaders to experience emotional, spiritual, physical, and intellectual renewal in the setting of an academic institution with a Christian mission. In this context, pastors will remember or rethink their ministry priorities, interact with other pastoral leaders, experience mental and spiritual renewal, and give attention to personal well-being.

Video Resource Available

A video highlighting the Sabbath Leave Program is available on DVD and at our website, www.samford.edu/congregational-resources, that includes topics such as:

- “Why take a Sabbath leave?”
- “What kinds of things do ministers do on Sabbath leave?”
- “The benefits of a Sabbath leave for pastoral leaders and congregations.”

Contact our office at (205) 726-4064 for a complimentary copy of the DVD. This resource is an excellent way to begin a discussion about sabbaticals and/or study leaves with lay leaders and family members.

Appendix 1: Sabbath Leave Policies and Procedures

Participant Expectations

While on Leave:

- **Day 1** of a Sabbath leave must be on campus for an orientation session with Center staff members.
- Temporary Samford identification cards are only valid for the time you are on campus.
- A temporary e-mail account is available upon request.
- Sabbath leave time may not be used to take courses for credit, although participants are encouraged to sit in on courses they find helpful.
- Participants must engage in an individual Sabbath leave project of their own design.
- Participants may be asked to discuss their experiences on film for a promotional/educational video. While this is encouraged, it is optional.
- Sabbath leave expenses will only be reimbursed if original receipts (or written records of mileage, reimbursed at \$0.575 per mile or the current prevailing rate) are submitted to the Center office. (Note: Samford University will not reimburse expenses for alcoholic beverages.)
- Reimbursement for meals (with **itemized** receipt) may not exceed \$40 per day.
- No more than \$250 per week will be reimbursed for pulpit supply.
- Funds for books and periodicals may not exceed \$300.

Before Departing from Campus at End of Leave:

- Participate in a one-on-one exit interview with the Center Director.
- Complete a brief exit survey.
- Return temporary campus identification card.

SLP Liaison Expectations

- Successful applicants will be asked to appoint a lay liaison as a contact point between the pastoral leader on leave, the Center, and the church.
- Lay liaisons will be responsible for facilitating appropriate congregational support of the pastor's Sabbath leave.
- The lay liaison may be asked to participate in an evaluative conversation with Center staff a few months after a minister's Sabbath leave ends.

Appendix 2: Budget Planning Helps

The following information is provided *only* as a help in your budget planning.

Please note all prices are subject to change.

Local Accommodations

When considering housing, keep in mind that taxes are 18% and are not usually quoted in the price. The following offer discounted rates for Samford guests:

- TownePlace Suites by Marriott has furnished studio suites with queen beds, full kitchens, and a living area.
500 Wildwood Circle, Homewood, Alabama 35209
205-943-0114, 888-236-2427
www.marriott.com/BHMTH
- Residence Inn by Marriott also has furnished studio suites with queen beds, full kitchens, and a living area.
50 State Farm Parkway, Homewood, Alabama 35209
205-943-0044, 888-331-3131
www.marriott.com/BHMHM
- Premier Living Suites has furnished one-bedroom apartments (1- to 3-month leases available).
205-978-8885, 800-987-8828
www.premierliving.com
- For a complete list of hotels which offer a special Samford rate, go to:
www.samford.edu/admission/hotels

Meal prices on Campus

Cafeteria prices are: Breakfast (\$7.55); Lunch (\$8.60); Dinner (\$10.25)

There is also a food court on campus with various fast food options including a Chick-fil-A.

Meetings with Faculty

Meetings with faculty resource persons at Samford University can be arranged for an appropriate honorarium. A resource list of selected faculty members, their credentials and experience is available upon request.

Samford Fitness Facilities

Sabbath Leave Participants may receive access to the fitness facilities; gyms, fitness classes (as available) and the campus pool. The Homewood/Lakeshore Walking Trail is located directly across from campus. For more information and details, please contact resource@samford.edu.

Pastoral Counseling

Individual pastoral counseling is available through the Samaritan Counseling Center at \$110 per session. Costs can be paid with grant funds. Samaritan direct bills the Center for these costs.

Career Assessment and Coaching

We encourage Sabbath Leave participants to conduct the Birkman assessment process with Mike Tate of *On The Same Page Consulting*. The assessment is a helpful resource for persons at any stage in their ministry career. Cost for this service is \$385 and can be paid with grant funds via direct billing.

Institution Support Form

To be completed by applicant:

Name of applicant: _____

Organization: _____

Denominational affiliation: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____ **E-mail:** _____

I am applying for assistance from the Sabbath Leave Program for:

- A Study Leave of 2 weeks or less.
- A Sabbath leave of 4 weeks or more.

I first learned about the Sabbath Leave Program from _____

Dates of proposed Sabbath leave _____

To be completed by appropriate official:

Please verify support of the applicant's supervisory committee for this application to the Sabbath Leave Program of the Center for Congregational Resources, at Samford University. **Sign and return this form to the applicant.**

On behalf of _____ (name of institution)

I certify that _____ (name of applicant)

has discussed his/her Sabbath leave proposal with and has the support of
_____ (name of committee)

in making this application to the Sabbath Leave Program of the Center for Congregational Resources.

Signed _____

Name (print) _____

Title _____

Date _____





Samford University
Center for Congregational Resources

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www.samford.edu/congregational-resources