



Sabbath Leave Program

Application Information

reSourcing  pastors

Resource Center for Pastoral Excellence
AT SAMFORD UNIVERSITY

(205) 726-4064
resource@samford.edu

Resource Center for Pastoral Excellence 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 Resource Center for Pastoral Excellence 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 pastoral leaders with emotional, spiritual, physical, and intellectual renewal in an academic environment. In this context, pastors will remember or rethink their ministry priorities, interact with other pastoral leaders from different traditions, and engage students in vocational exploration. This 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 ministers, ordained or lay, full time or bi-vocational, senior pastors or church staff members, denominational or diocesan staff, and others employed in recognized positions of pastoral leadership.

Schedule Options: An applicant may apply for study leaves from two to four weeks in length and Sabbath leaves from four weeks to as long as an entire academic semester (15 weeks). It is possible to divide the time into smaller segments, if a *compelling* reason for doing so is given.

The deadlines for receipt of applications are **February 1, June 1, and October 1.**³ Applications must be made *at least* three months prior to a proposed leave.

Sabbath Leave Project: Those accepted to the Sabbath Leave Program will be 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 sermon series, writing essays or poetry, composing music, teaching or sitting in on a class, developing and pursuing a physical health regimen, planning and completing an art or photography project, volunteering in a social service agency or advocacy program, or engaging in a spiritual direction or therapy process.⁴ Sabbath leave resources cannot, however, be used to fund degree programs or 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 only will be considered if it meets needs of a coherent Sabbath plan that cannot be adequately met in the Birmingham metropolitan area. As general guidelines, time away from campus should not constitute more than 50 percent of a sabbatical or study leave.

Resume: A resume must be submitted with the application.

Proposal: An applicant must submit a 6–10 page, double-spaced proposal that includes the elements shown the following page that spells out the details of his or her Sabbath leave goals and plans.

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, continued salary, pulpit supply⁷, and limited travel (see note on travel above).

Campus Resources Available: Once on campus, participants will have access to the university libraries, computer labs, writing center, classrooms, chapel services, gymnasium, track, pool, weight-room, and other recreational facilities. A student personal trainer is available for one-on-one weekly sessions for a small fee that can be included in the budget. In addition, participants will 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 serve as guest lecturers in Divinity School or religion courses, speak at weekly undergraduate Convocation services, participate in Divinity Chapel services, or present their sabbatical work at faculty shop talks. Importantly, the presence and availability of Sabbath Leave Program pastoral leaders will 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 in the campus community. Resources are provided by the Resource Center for shared meals, entertainment, and/or special educational activities or speakers for groups of SLP participants. A Campus Resource Facilitator will also be in regular contact with participants to support and provide informal, low-key accountability for each participant's Sabbath experience.

REQUIRED APPLICATION DOCUMENTS:

Each of the following must be submitted *by email to resource@samford.edu* on or before the chosen application deadline (see above, "Schedule Options"); **AND** an *original* of each of the following must be postmarked on or before the chosen application deadline:

- 1. Applicant's Resume**
- 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 Resource 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 will also participate in an evaluative follow-up with Resource 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:

Purpose and Rationale: *Why are you applying to the Resource Center for Pastoral Excellence Sabbath Leave Program?*

Successful proposals will establish relevancy to 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?*

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 relate to the overall 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 Resource 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/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 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. 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 Resource Center for Pastoral Excellence office at resource@samford.edu or 205-726-4064.
- ¹²The goal of the Sabbath Leave Program is to provide pastoral leaders with emotional, spiritual, physical, and intellectual renewal in an academic environment. In this context, pastors will remember or rethink their ministry priorities, interact with other pastoral leaders from different traditions, and engage students in vocational exploration.

Selection Committee Members

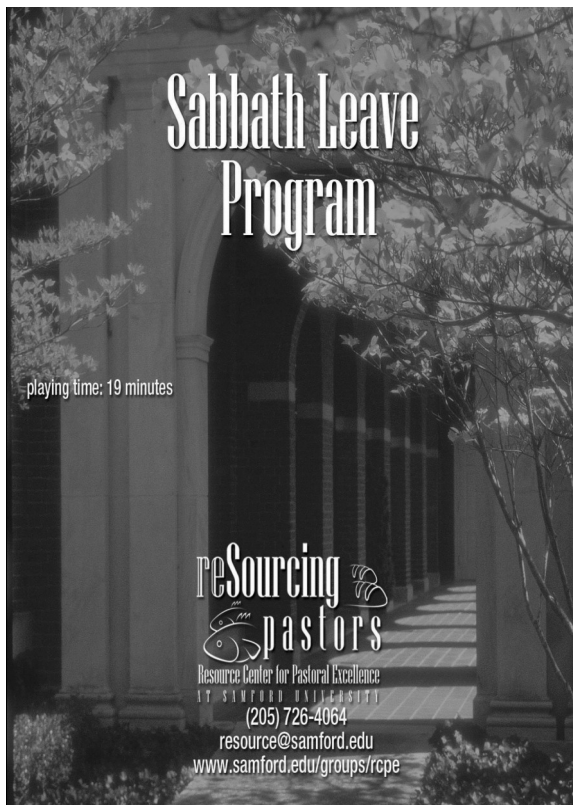
Tom Brown, Pastoral Consultant and Canon Emeritus, Cathedral Church of the Advent

Sondra Coleman, Pastor, St. Luke AME Zion Church

Rodney Franklin, Pastor, First Congregational Church (UCC)

Denise Mullaney, Assistant to the Bishop, North Alabama Conference (UMC)

Michael Wilson, Program Director, RCPE



Video Available

A video highlighting the Sabbath Leave Program is available on DVD and at our website, www.samford.edu/rcpe, 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 Resource 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 receipts (or written records of mileage, reimbursed at \$0.50 per mile or the current prevailing rate) are submitted to the RCPE office. (Note: Samford University will not reimburse expenses for alcoholic beverages.)
- Reimbursement for meals (with receipt) may not exceed \$30 per meal and \$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 Resource Center Director.
- Complete a brief exit survey.
- Return your temporary campus identification card and temporary office keys.

SLP Liaison Expectations

- Successful applicants will be asked to appoint a lay liaison as a contact point between the pastoral leader on leave, the Resource Center, and the church.
- Lay liaisons will be responsible for facilitating appropriate congregational support of the pastor's Sabbath leave.
- The lay liaison will participate in an evaluative conversation with Resource 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 that all prices are subject to change. You will want to keep this in mind when preparing your budget.)

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/travel_and_lodging.html

Meal prices on Campus

Cafeteria prices are: Breakfast (\$6.00); Lunch (\$7.25); Dinner (\$9.00)

There is also a food court on campus with various fast food options from \$1.00 to \$10.00.

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.

Personal Trainers

Student personal trainers are available through the Samford Wellness Program in conjunction with the department of Exercise Science and Sports Medicine.

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| • Fitness Package and Personal Trainer orientation | \$125 |
| • Endurance Performance Package and Personal Trainer orientation | \$170 |
| • Weight Management Package and Personal Trainer orientation | \$170 |

Additional 1-hour sessions with a trainer can be arranged for \$35

Individual fitness tests are available. Please contact resource@samford.edu for more information.

Pastoral Counseling

Individual pastoral counseling is available through the Samaritan Counseling Center at \$100 per session.

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 4 weeks or less.
- A sabbatical leave of 4 weeks or more.

I heard 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 Resource Center for Pastoral Excellence, 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 Resource Center for Pastoral Excellence.

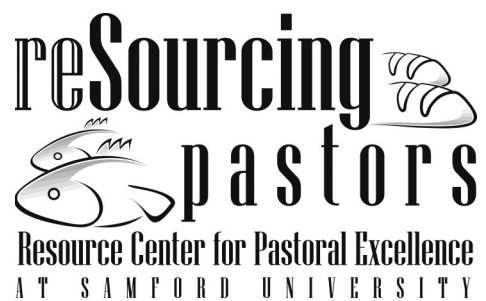
Signed _____

Name (print) _____

Title _____

Date _____





Resource Center for Pastoral Excellence
800 Lakeshore Drive • Birmingham, Alabama 35229
Phone: 205.726.4064 • Fax: 205.726.4285
E-mail: resource@samford.edu
<http://www.samford.edu/rcpe>