

SECTION IV



PARSONAGE
GUIDELINES

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Adopted 1990

Parsonage Standards *The Mississippi Conference*

~~Strike through~~ = delete

Single underline = addition

(Bold) = explanation

Whereas, parsonage standards are needed to provide a uniformity so that ministers and churches may know what is expected of each other, to keep moving expenses with changing furniture and storage to a minimum, and to help clear the way for appointments to be made based upon abilities and gifts rather than upon size and needs of families - with the understanding that some churches provide housing allowances, but that these standards apply to most of the parsonages in the Mississippi Conference at the present - in order to provide an atmosphere by which clergy are able to care for their families and recharge for ministry and to provide economy, convenience and good will for both parsonage families and churches, the following guidelines are recommended as parsonage standards:

I. The parsonage should have:

- A. At least three bedrooms (four bedrooms, if possible) with ample closet space in each (double closets, if possible). In two story houses, one bedroom with a full bath should be on the ground floor. The parsonage should be accessible to persons with handicapping conditions
- B. At least two full baths with shower and tub facilities in each
- C. A family room or den.
- D. A living room separate from the den (if possible).
- E. Adequate room in the kitchen for family meals or a breakfast nook.
- F. An adequate dining room. It would be best for the parsonage family for the dining room to be separate from the living room.
- G. Adequate kitchen cabinets with counter tops of standard heights.
- H. Adequate storage space.
- I. Dry storage, space large enough for extra mattresses, furniture, trunks, books, out-of-season clothes, etc. (Basements are not usually satisfactory.)
- J. Sufficient electrical receptacles, fire extinguishers and smoke detectors complying with building and/or fire codes.
- K. Modern energy efficient central heating system and central air conditioning, and an attic exhaust fan. These systems should be designed so that unused areas can be turned off.
- L. Insulation in ceilings, floors and exterior walls to meet current codes.
- M. Storm windows (or insulated windows) and storm doors.
- N. Garage or carport (double, if possible).
- O. Adequate security devices.

II. The pastoral charge should provide:

- A. Inside the house:
 - 1. Appliances
 - a. Frost-free refrigerator with freezer compartment
 - b. Kitchen stove
 - c. Standard water heater: 40 gallon minimum; quick recovery; energy efficient
 - d. Washing machine
 - e. Dryer
 - f. Dishwasher

2. Basic furniture for each room, plus
 - a. Chests
 - b. Bedroom chairs
 - c. Bookcases
 - d. Lamps
 - e. Curtains and draperies
 - f. Carpeting or other floor covering for entire house
- Discarded furnishings and previously owned furnishings should not be placed in the parsonage.

3. Double sink in the kitchen
4. Telephone—either purchase a phone or pay base rental
5. TV cable connections

B. Outside the house

1. Power lawn mower, in safe working condition, (if needed)
2. TV antenna (if cable not available)
3. Adequate outside lighting
4. Outside electrical receptacles

III. Care and maintenance

- A. The Trustees are responsible for care and maintenance.
- B. The parsonage family is responsible for routine care of the parsonage and grounds.
- C. The parsonage is to be mutually respected by the pastor's family as the property of the church and by the church as a place of privacy for the pastor's family. The chairperson of the Committee on Pastor-Parish Relations, the chairperson of the Board of Trustees, and pastor shall make an annual review of the church-owned parsonage to assure proper maintenance. (*2004 Book of Discipline, Par. 2532.4*)
- D. Current inventory of furnishings should be kept.
 1. The pastor and the church office (and/or the trustees chairperson) should each have a copy. For insurance purposes, a file should be kept in the church's safety deposit box—photos of each rooms' furnishings, purchase date and cost.
 2. Gifts to the pastor and/or parsonage should be clearly designated.
 3. The Trustees must approve and accept gifts for the parsonage.
- E. A book or file of pertinent information should be compiled by the parsonage family and kept in the parsonage. It should include:
 1. Service and repair phone numbers.
 2. Appliance invoices, warranties, repair information, etc.
 3. Cleaning methods for carpets, draperies, walls, windows, and furniture .
 4. Heating, cooling and plumbing systems warranties; manuals, and service records.
- F. Insurance equal to 90% of the replacement value of the house and furnishings should be carried as minimum, to be paid by the church/charge.
Ministers are encouraged to provide for insurance on their personal property.
- G. The annual church budget should include adequate funds for maintenance.
- H. There should be an annual pest control inspection, and treatment if necessary.
- I. The parsonage should be kept well painted inside and outside. It is preferable that the painting of the parsonage interior coincide with the beginning of pastorates.
- J. The parsonage family is responsible for any and all damage done to the parsonage by their pets.

IV. Changes of pastors

When an impending move is evident, the chairperson of the Trustees and the chairperson of the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee should meet at the parsonage with the pastor and inspect the parsonage using the following guidelines:

- A. A complete check of the inventory shall be made.
- B. Each room shall be inspected for needed repairs, refurbishings, paint, etc.
- C. The electrical, heating, cooling and plumbing systems shall be inspected.
- D. An evaluation of the structure, inside and outside, including furnishings, appliances and systems shall be made.
- E. The pastor shall provide information about the condition of appliances and systems that only the

- person living in the house would know.
- F. The Trustees shall arrange for needed repairs, refurbishings, painting, etc.
- G. The parsonage family shall leave the parsonage in a clean and sanitary condition (including the yard, attic and basement) All personal items shall be disposed of or removed from the premises. The parsonage family shall have repaired at their expense any damage due to negligence and/or pets. If a satisfactory solution/agreement can not be reached by the pastor and church on this matter, the District Superintendent shall be contacted and the superintendent shall appoint a committee of two ministers and two lay persons beyond this local charge to determine the extent of damage that is due to negligence.
- H. If at all possible, utilities should be in the church's name with the parsonage address to avoid termination of services.
- I. ~~If the new pastor finds unacceptable conditions, he/she may contact the Pastor Parish Relations Committee Chairperson. (Delete because it has become redundant.)~~
While setting the process for the new pastor's covenant meeting, also set a walk through of the parsonage. The outgoing pastor (and spouse), representatives of the Parsonage Committee (Trustees), representatives of the Pastor (Staff) - Parish Relations Committee, the incoming pastor (and spouse) and the District Superintendent shall participate in the walk through.

It is further recommended that, in keeping with the reference to annual conference parsonage standards in paragraph 256.3f of the 1988 *Book of Discipline*, ~~The Mississippi Conference approve a standing rule regarding the provision of adequate housing for the pastors of the conference (As far as can be determined, this has never come to the floor of the Annual Conference, but continues to be printed in the guidelines. We either need to act on it or delete this portion)~~ and that all these guidelines here presented, having been refined and approved, ~~be printed each year in the conference journal immediately following the Standing Rules. (This line was in place to empower the new Standing Rule that was never implemented. Unless we act on developing a Standing Rule, it is redundant and should be stricken from future printings. Also, in light of the attempt to manage growing costs of the Journal, it was decided in executive session some years ago, that these guidelines should be printed periodically instead of annually... making sure that they appear at least once per every quadrennial period, with annual Journal reference to the last time it was published.)~~

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