

CLERGY WELLNESS & SUPPORT

Rev. Gerald J. DeSobe, Ph.D.

Surprising facts about clergy life

Surprising facts about clergy life

- While around people a lot, according to a Fuller Theological Seminary study, 70% of clergy report not having someone they consider "a close friend."

Surprising facts about clergy life

- While around people a lot, according to a Fuller Theological Seminary study, 70% of clergy report not having someone they consider "a close friend."
- Psychological studies show that as a group clergy have a high need to please others (parishioners) and are much more sensitive to the criticism they receive from parishioners than those parishioners realize.

Surprising facts about clergy life

- Psychological studies also show that clergy are very hesitant to express anger, even when appropriate, and this tendency is reinforced by parishioners who feel that clergy should be like Jesus and never feel and/or express anger (thus overlooking scriptural references to the contrary).

Surprising facts about clergy life

- Psychological studies also show that clergy are very hesitant to express anger, even when appropriate, and this tendency is reinforced by parishioners who feel that clergy should be like Jesus and never feel and/or express anger (thus overlooking scriptural references to the contrary).
- Members of clergy families report feeling they do not have a pastor to whom they can go with issues that trouble them.

Surprising facts about clergy life

- In one Annual Conference currently 68% of the clergy are taking anti-depressant medication while a 2014 study in Scientific American notes 8-10% of U.S. adults take these medications.

Surprising facts about clergy life

- In one Annual Conference currently 68% of the clergy are taking anti-depressant medication while a 2014 study in Scientific American notes 8-10% of U.S. adults take these medications.
- According to UMC leaders, clergy feeling isolated leads to ineffectiveness in ministry and leaves clergy vulnerable to acting in appropriate ways.

TEXAS ANNUAL CONFERENCE CENTER FOR CLERGY EXCELLENCE

Rev. Gail Ford Smith, Director

PROGRAMS DESIGNED TO SUPPORT CLERGY

PROGRAMS DESIGNED TO SUPPORT CLERGY

- Clergy wellness program with Houston Methodist Hospital which provides training in stress reduction and financial incentives for demonstrated healthier living decisions (weight loss, blood pressure reduction, etc.). Requires participation in a Clergy Wellness seminar and ongoing monitoring of physical well-being.

PROGRAMS DESIGNED TO SUPPORT CLERGY

- Providing an Employee Assistance Program for clergy and their families where through the services of faith based counseling centers (Epiphany Counseling & Consultation and Krist Samaritan Center) 25 sessions of counseling per year per family members are available for an affordable \$15.00 copay per session.

PROGRAMS DESIGNED TO SUPPORT CLERGY

- "Covenant Groups" are sponsored for Commissioned Clergy for two years as a way to prevent feelings of isolation and develop long term collegial relationships that will help prevent feelings of isolation.

PROGRAMS DESIGNED TO SUPPORT CLERGY

- Provides the opportunity for psychological testing and career counseling for those considering leaving ministry to help them transition to a new career in a supportive fashion.

CONGREGATIONAL SUPPORT OF CLERGY NEEDS

CLERGY "BILL OF RIGHTS"

Clergy and their families need a "Bill of Rights" that is supported by leaders in a congregation.

Some items that need to be included are:

- Clergy must take all of their vacation days each year

CLERGY "BILL OF RIGHTS"

Clergy and their families need a "Bill of Rights" that is supported by leaders in a congregation.

Some items that need to be included are:

- Clergy must take all of their vacation days each year
- Clergy must take at least one day off per week

CLERGY "BILL OF RIGHTS"

Clergy and their families need a "Bill of Rights" that is supported by leaders in a congregation.

Some items that need to be included are:

- Clergy must take all of their vacation days each year
- Clergy must take at least one day off per week
- Clergy should not have more than two evening meetings per week

CLERGY "BILL OF RIGHTS"

- Recognition that Clergy spouses are not members of the church staff and have neither more or less responsibility for participating in church life than other church members

CLERGY "BILL OF RIGHTS"

- Recognition that Clergy spouses are not members of the church staff and have neither more or less responsibility for participating in church life than other church members
- Encouragement by church leaders that clergy participate in some kind of support group where they feel safe to share their real feelings about how their ministry is going