

What is Pastoral Excellence?

Pastoral excellence is a specific approach to nurturing the lives and ministries of clergy. It invites pastors to connect with each other through a structured community of peers, explore Christian practices for thriving throughout the life of their ministries, and rediscover the beauty of their calling and vocation by cultivating imagination through border crossing.

Why commit to a structured community of peers?

Pastoral excellence begins with the conviction that leading a community of faith requires being shaped by one. Pastors often endure isolation in their work, with little space to reflect about their ministries, few resources to explore their vocations, and limited opportunities to foster meaningful, life-giving friendships. Peer learning communities provide opportunities to engage in spiritual and theological practices and reflections, to discover resources and strategies for honing pastoral leadership skills, and to form holy friendships and receive mutual support.

Why are Christian practices important to the life of faith?

Christian ministry requires tremendous self-giving. Pastors who give continually without attention to their own spiritual, theological, physical and interpersonal needs can experience low morale and burnout. Pastoral excellence encourages the creation of space in the lives of pastors to embody Christian practices that sustain soul, mind, body and relationships.

What is border crossing? How does it cultivate imagination?

Christian ministry is beautiful. Pastors experience the love, joy, peace, grace and power that shine forth in the life of God's church. The attention pastors pay to budgets, committees and administrative duties should be balanced with activities that evoke wonder in this wondrous calling. Pastors need "interruptions" from day-to-day routines to cultivate their imaginations. Reading across disciplines, reflecting about art, music and literature, and engaging in cultural experiences allow pastors to cross imaginative borders, in order to reconnect with the telos -- the end -- of their ministries and see anew the beauty of their calling to serve God in the church and the world.