



### **Cabinet Policy on Dating and Clergy Divorce**

In Matthew 19, Jesus affirmed the permanency of marriage. He left room for a divorce to occur for specific reasons including sexual immorality (Matthew 19:9). Divorce should be a last resort for a pastor and should satisfy the biblical standards set by Jesus. The Cabinet sets the following policies for clergy in the Florida Conference regarding divorce.

1. If a pastor believes that it is likely his/her marriage will end in a divorce, the pastor shall contact his/her presiding elder and meet with the presiding elder before the divorce is filed with the court. Divorce does not necessarily end a pastor's vocation. Accordingly, pastors are encouraged to talk with their presiding elder, sooner rather than later, for support and care.
2. A presiding elder, when speaking to a pastor who may get divorced, shall require counseling for the pastor to ensure the pastor is appropriately processing the situation and can serve as an effective clergyperson. The pastor is expected to sign a release enabling the counselor to prepare a report for the presiding elder.
3. A pastor (divorced, never married, or widowed) shall create a covenant with his/her presiding elder and Staff Parish Relations Committee concerning dating a parishioner in the church they serve. This covenant must be followed by the pastor.
4. The presiding elder shall inform the chair of the pastor's Staff Parish Relations Committee (or its equivalent) about the pastor's potential divorce to ensure the church is aware and to counsel the church on how to deal with the situation appropriately.

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