



A Church Extension Planning Guide

The Administrative Space

It is ironic that the space used most frequently in many church buildings is the least adequate in size. A corollary is that the rooms that should be most easily identifiable are often hidden, unmarked or not easily accessible—the offices and administrative space.

Administrative space cannot be an afterthought in planning for new or remodeled buildings. It is essential that congregations have adequate office space, easily accessible by the physically disabled. This is true for other space that we will classify as administrative in function, i.e.

- Minister(s) Office(s)
- Church Office and Work Room
- Other Staff Offices, including Music Director, Education Office and Supply Room
- Custodial Work and Supply Area
- Conference/Meeting Room
- Library
- General Storage Room

Location

Administrative offices in every church need to be near the primary entrance, which in turn is directly accessible from the principal parking area. In this way the offices can be easily located while providing view and control of all who enter the building.

New buildings being planned should have the offices entered from the narthex, which would be the central traffic way to all portions of the building. In older buildings, planned before parking lots were acquired, there may be a secondary entrance

that was not designed as the primary entrance but is used most frequently because of its proximity to the parking area. If this is the most accessible and often used entrance, the office should be located nearby and clearly marked.

The General Office

The first and most visible office should be the general church office—the work place for the administrative staff. With a congregation of less than 200 members, one room that could include office equipment will probably provide sufficient space. For larger congregations, a workroom for duplicating and other office machines (including computers) and supplies should be provided. In congregations where volunteers regularly assist in mailings, the workroom should be large enough for several volunteers to work around a table. A sink with water service is desirable for the workroom.

This office should have some type of reception or waiting area that could be separated by a counter from the administrative staff's work space. This office should also have a clear view of the entrance so that all visitors can be identified. In many city churches where doors are locked for security reasons, this location becomes doubly important.

The general office and administrative staff act as a buffer to the minister's office and other professional employees. The general office should be adjacent to the minister and other staff offices for easy accessibility to them by the administrative staff.

For large congregations, with more

than one support staff person, the general office should be planned with sufficient space to accommodate the required number of persons.

The Minister's Office

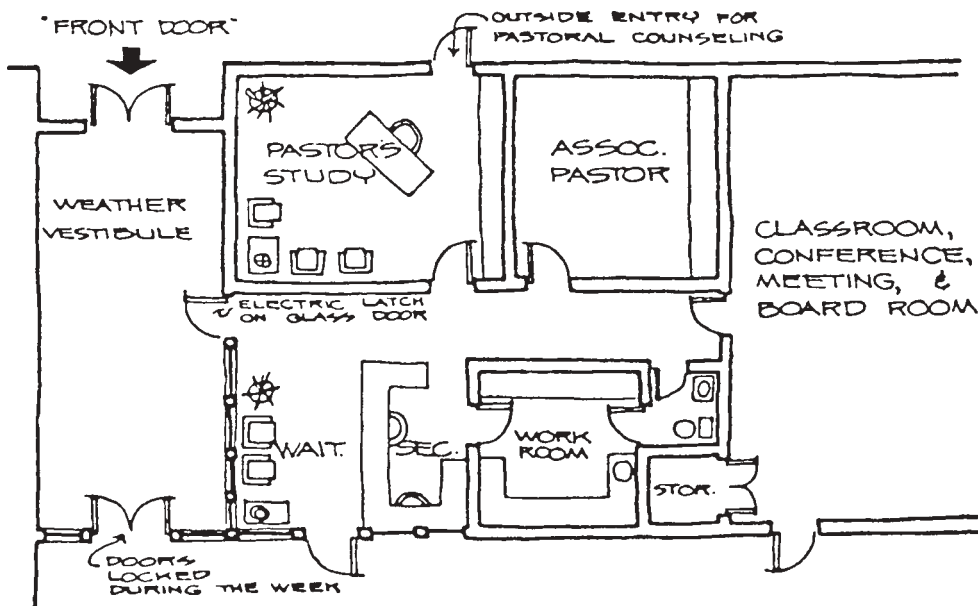
While a few churches may offer the minister a hideaway room for his or her private study, most churches do not. The minister does need space for several functions—study and sermon preparation, phone and personal counseling, program administration and small group conferences.

For the sake of study and confidentiality, the room should be constructed to assure complete privacy for conversation and protection from interruptions by visitors.

The room should be furnished with comfortable seating. For small group meetings and counseling, a seating area is desirable in which the minister is not placed behind an imposing executive's desk. Where space allows, a conference table may be provided. In some instances, the minister's office might be adjacent to a separate conference room where family counseling or small group meetings may be held, thereby not requiring a conference area in the minister's study or office. This would allow more freedom and privacy for the minister's study area.

It is also recommended that the minister's office have a secondary door that may be used for private entry and exit to allow counselees an exit other than through the reception area.

How large should the minister's office be, in terms of square feet?



Although the size and function of the church staff may change the configuration and space required, this sketch incorporates many features of a workable administrative area. This plan would allow the church that needs security at the entrance to have control of those entering. The restroom is optional if facilities are located nearby.

This depends on whether a conference area is included in this office or is in an adjoining room. Without conference seating, 150-200 square feet would be the minimum; more if possible. There should be a generous allowance for book shelf space. A closet for clergy vestments should also be included.

Other Offices

Congregations that average from 200-300 in worship attendance will often have a second clergy staff member. Congregations with more than 300 in worship attendance will likely have additional clergy and support staff related to the size and program requirements.

The associate minister(s) or other professional staff should not become second class citizens with small, inadequate offices, but should be given the same quality of working space provided for the senior minister.

The planning committee should develop projected needs for additional staff offices as a part of the administrative complex. What about space for part-time staff persons? The answer is simple. Office space is needed if they are expected to function in the building. The part-time director of music, or bookkeeper, should have space for his or her operational center.

Many congregations will use the

general office as the operations center for the church school administrator. Large congregations will provide an education office that can also serve as a resource material center.

Library and Conference Room

In many instances a church library is planned in the administrative area. This could be anything from shelves in the reception area to a separate room in the principal traffic area. It also might be a section of the narthex. The library may double as a conference room, but it is essential that it be accessible and visible for everyone who enters the building for maximum usage. In very large congregations a single purpose library, not used for other purposes, may be required.

As suggested in the Church Extension planning guide "The Fellowship Space," a church should have at least one comfortable lounge or conference room for every 200 participating members. It should be near the administrative space. Boards, committees, and other groups will use these rooms regularly.

Storage and Custodial Space

The custodian, whether part or full time, must have space for supplies, equipment, and a work area. In large buildings, mop closets and running

water should be dispersed throughout the building areas.

A general storage room in the administrative area can be a significant help in providing a place for office, educational, audiovisual, and general supplies. This should be able to be secured.

Good planning and building design would include an area for storage of lawn equipment.

Heating, Cooling and Plumbing

It is assumed that church designers today would plan for separate heating and cooling units, or zoning, for the administrative space that will be used daily.

As earlier stated, a sink and a water supply should be included in the administrative staff's work area. Restroom facilities convenient to the administrative space should be planned.

Restrooms should be provided on every level or in every major unit of the church facility. Restrooms, as well as water fountains, should be designed to be used by the physically challenged. A portable cot should be available and accessible for use in emergencies.

Planning Guide

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Additional Planning Guides addressing a variety of facility planning issues are available from:

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