

## Evangelical group issues ethics code for congregations

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(RNS) Give pastors vacations.

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Be sensitive to how sounds—and traffic—can affect church neighbors.

The National Association of Evangelicals this week released a code of ethics for congregations that it hopes will help leaders make practical decisions for the health of their churches and community.

The document calls for churches to strive for unity by embracing different worship styles and reconciling “dissident factions.” It urges them to affirm the various cultural heritages of their members and neighbors, minimize barriers for disabled people, and use natural resources wisely.

It also recommends training clergy, staff, and volunteers on how to prevent child abuse and discipline members who “persist in sinful ways.”

“Deal fairly and openly with causes of scandal when they occur, within the framework of the law,” the guide says.

George O. Wood, Assemblies of God general superintendent, has endorsed the ethics code.

“Our communities will only be influenced toward Christ when they see healthy churches,” he said, “and the code of ethics sets the standard for how a healthy church functions.”

The NAE’s board of directors unanimously adopted the ethics code after a task force worked on it for a year. The code, which had been signed by at least a dozen

leadership teams when it was announced last week, is a companion to the NAE Code of Ethics for Pastors, released in 2012.

“Church leadership teams are most often composed of seasoned leaders who sacrificially volunteer their time to build up the local church,” said NAE president Leith Anderson, in a press release. “They want to do good. This resource is an opportunity for church leadership teams to discuss, adopt and live out the calling God has given them.”