



## HOW TO APPROACH A PASTOR SEARCH COMMITTEE MEETING

*How To Use:* Determining God’s will regarding a potential pastorate is often difficult. “What does God want me to do?” is infinitely more important than “What do I want to do?” The following questions may shed light on whether the church is appropriate for who/what God has designed you to be. There are no perfect churches nor perfect pastors nor should one expect 100% agreement. One merely hopes that the church and the pastor are both headed in the same direction. Amos 3:3 says, “How can two walk together except they be in agreement?” ***These sample questions serve as a guide for identifying points of agreement/disagreement.*** Some questions may be pertinent for one interview while not pertinent for another interview. Be sure to select those questions which most concern you. An \* indicates further explanation is provided in the “Reasoning Behind The Questions” Word document also located at this website. May God give you peace, clarity and confidence in your decision!

PASTOR SEARCH COMMITTEE MEMBERS\*:

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PASTOR SEARCH COMMITTEE MEMBERS\*:

MY PERSONAL PURPOSE STATEMENT\*: *“My purpose is to make you eternally successful in the eyes of God through maturing/growing you in worship, ministry, fellowship, evangelism, and discipleship.”*

MINISTRY GOAL\*:

1. A CHURCH WHICH WANTS TO REMAIN RELEVANT (PROVIDE SOLUTIONS) IN AN EVER-CHANGING NON-CHRISTIAN CULTURE.
2. CHURCH WHERE THE DREAMERS CAN DREAM AND NEW IDEAS CAN BE TRIED WITHOUT FEAR.
3. CHURCH WHICH MY CHILDREN WILL WANT TO ATTEND WHEN THEY ARE AGE THIRTY.
4. CHURCH WHOSE FIELD OF MINISTRY IS IDENTIFIED AS THE WORLD RATHER THAN THE CHURCH MEMEBRSHIP.

### SAMPLE QUESTIONS TO ASK THE COMMITTEE:

LAST FIVE YEARS EVALUATION\* -

- Compare the attendance of today with the attendance of five years ago.

- Compare the offerings of today with the offerings of five years ago.
- Compare the number of baptisms today with the number of baptisms five years ago.
- Identify a program/ministry which has been added in the past five years (including Sunday School classes)\*.
- Identify a program/ministry (including Sunday School, Wednesday, or weekly classes) which has been dropped in the last five years\*.
- Identify a program/ministry you want to begin in the next five years\*.
- Based on current trends where will you be in 5 years?
- How do you measure progress as a church\*? (for example: new members, tithes, baptisms, buildings, outreach, member retention, convention recognition)
- Based on the above question, ask for five year numbers in the top three categories.
- What is the average age of the church attendees\*?
- What one word would currently describe your church\*?

#### PASTOR ISSUES –

- Is there a job description for the pastor\*?
- What are your expectations for a pastor?
- Is the Pastor expected to teach Sunday School or other classes outside the pulpit\*?
- Does the pastor moderate the business meetings\*?
- Is the pastor an ex officio member of each committee\*?
- What areas of the church require the pastor's attention\*?
- What areas of the church require none of the pastor's attention?
- Ask the pastor search committee to outline the three greatest problems I will face\*.
- Vacation policy\*:
- Do I have authority to schedule special Sunday events?

- How much spending authority does the pastor have?

#### OFFICE HOURS -

- Are office hours expected for the pastor\*? When?
- The staff's office hours are:
- How long has the secretary been here?
- What does the secretary need from me\*?
- What kind of working relationship did the secretary have with the previous pastor?
- Who hires the staff? Who fires the staff\*?
- A recent survey revealed that less than half of pastors have time to pray. It is imperative the pastor has time to pray and study. Office management cannot intrude on the pastor's basic ministry.

#### INTERNET/TECHNOLOGY\* -

- Does the church have internet access?
- Does the church have a website?
- Do the youth have a website?
- Are the websites mentioned in the bulletin?
- Is the website updated in-house by the members or outside by a hired firm?
- How does the church use current technology in its ministry? (Distribution of prayer requests, activity updates, etc.)
- Is the bulletin emailed to members? If yes, when?

#### WEDDING POLICY –

- What is the current policy on using the church facilities for a wedding\*?
- Do all members have access to the property for a wedding?
- What restrictions exist on divorced/remarried members ministering in the church\*?

## FINANCES –

- Church debt\* =
- Assets include the building and (vehicles, land elsewhere, possible cemetery)\*?
- Have the finances been recently audited\*?
- Request a church budget for personal review\*.
- When is the annual budget prepared?
- Do you require receipts for reimbursement?
- What procedures are in place to prevent theft?
- Are Christian or secular college scholarships available?
- Is there a fundraising policy\*?
- What major financial outlays are expected over the next five years (vans, roof, renovations)\*:
- Discuss the proposed salary breakdown\*:
  - Proposed package total:
  - Housing Allowance:
  - Auto allowance:
  - Book allowance:
  - Insurance premium:
  - Salary:
  - Social Security/Medicare Tax:
  - Other:
  - Other:
- Does the church pay into worker's compensation for the pastor and other employees\*?

## OUTREACH MINISTRY:

- Does the church have an evangelism/outreach director\*?
- Is any visitation or soul-winning training done\*?
- How many go on door-to-door visitation?

- When is visitation?
- Is the visitation process organized?
- When was the last organized visitation done?
- Who is targeted on visitation?
- Is a database used to record visits and results?
- Does the visitation focus on the unsaved?
- How effective is the visitation process?
- Who on the pastor search committee visits\*?
- What are the hindrances to a visitation program?
- Can an evangelism program be done or is everyone already too busy?
- How much money is budgeted for Outreach\*?
- Does the church have any block parties?
- Does the church have free clothing giveaways?
- Does the church provide free health screenings?
- Does the church have any kind of bus/van outreach?

**SENIOR ADULT MINISTRY** – The fastest growing age group in America is people living to be more than 100 years of age. This number will exceed one *million* by the year 2050.

***Review the demographics study with the committee as to the changing nature of its own zip code.***

- Is there a Senior Adult Director\*?
- Describe your senior adult ministry\*.
- What do the senior adults do (such as a senior adult retreat)?
- Does this ministry have an outreach component or is it strictly for the church members\*?

### CHILDREN'S MINISTRY –

- Is there a Children's Director\*?
- Is there a Children's Church on Sunday morning\*? If yes, how is it done?
- What other classes or programs exist for children?
- Is the nursery staffed?
- Are the nursery facilities appropriate for my own children\*?
- Does the church do a criminal background check on children's workers\*?
- Is there an Annual Children's Day with special events such as inflatable games?
- What kind of annual camp do the children attend?
- Who directs Vacation Bible School\*?

### YOUTH MINISTRY –

- Is there a Youth Director\*?
- Outline the monthly youth calendar\*.
- Describe any special quarterly/annual activities.
- How are the youth involved in the main worship services\*?
- Do the youth work in Vacation Bible School\*?
- In what other ministries do the youth participate\*?
- Are the youth involved in mission work?
- Are the youth trained in winning souls?

### WORSHIP INFORMATION -

- Does the church have a Worship Director or does it think in terms of simply a Music Director\*?
- How does the church use technology in its worship service\*?
- What type of music does the church expect/enjoy? Check the age of the hymnal\*.

- Does the music department present any special programs\*?
- What kind of musical instruments are allowed in the service\*?
- Is the special music screened prior to use by a staff member?
- How many people participate in the music program?
- Are people taught how to pray and what to pray for?
- Do people pray evangelistically or is it more directed to physical needs?

#### CONSTITUTION\* –

- Has anything changed recently which is not included in my copy?
- Is anything in the constitution which you do not observe and need to update?
- Discuss any policy differences the candidate has with the constitution.

#### YOUNG ADULTS –

- What ministry/activity do you currently have that appeals to the 20 – 45 age group\*?
- Have you surveyed this group for their needs?
- How does this group work in the church ministry?

#### ASSIMILATION INFORMATION -

- Do you have an Assimilation Director\*?
- Do you have many visitors?
- How are visitors identified?
- Is there a First Impression Team or Visitor Center established for visitors?
- How do you obtain information from the visitors as to their address/telephone/spiritual needs\*?
- Is a letter mailed to the visitors?
- Any additional follow up contact\*?

- Is there a list of ministries available?
- How do you assimilate new members\*?
- Are your people being educated about their spiritual gift(s) then interviewed regarding their ministry?

#### MID-WEEK SERVICE \*-

- Length and time of the service:
- Goal of the service? Prayer time or Bible study? What do you really like?
- What is expected of the pastor in this service?
- What other groups meet at the same time?

#### MISSION/PURPOSE STATEMENT -

- Can anyone recite the church's Mission/Purpose Statement\*?
- Who developed the Mission/Purpose statement?
- When was it developed?
- Why was it developed?
- What do you intend to do with it?
- Is there also a vision statement listing specific goals?

#### DISCIPLESHIP –

- Is there a Discipleship Director\*?
- What translations do the committee members use in their personal Bible Study\*?
- Is there a recommended translation for use in the church services or classes\*?
- What types of curriculum does the church use?
- What is the doctrinal persuasion of the church and can I agree with it\*?
- Identify the church's view on controversial doctrinal issues such as Calvinism, Arminianism, the Charismatic Movement, Prosperity Gospel, translations, etc.



- What special classes exist for discipling new converts in the fundamentals of the Christian faith? Who teaches those classes?
- Does the church also have a new members' class?
- What type of specialized discipleship studies has the church done in the last three years\*?
- When was the last time a Sunday School class became so big that it had to be split?
- Do you routinely create new Sunday School classes or other small groups?
- Do your Sunday School classes have the freedom to choose their own curriculum?
- List the small study groups which currently exist along with their times/emphasis.

#### GENERAL QUESTIONS:

- Is there any kind of homebound or nursing home ministry?
- What distinguishes this church from other churches in this area\*?
- Do you show videos/sermons/films in the auditorium? If yes, how often and when?
- Does the church host a radio or television program and, if so, how does this affect the pastor's work load?
- Does the church provide any leadership Training/Manuals\*?
- Does the church have a dress code or a "Just As I Am" policy?
- Define the culture of the church\*.
  - Is the church primarily a blue collar (factory workers) or white collar (office workers) church? Upper or lower income?
  - Is the church style of worship, education, etc. similar to yours?
  - Will the people be comfortable with your education, background, and training?
- Is the church user friendly?
  - Are the directions (to the rest room, nursery, auditorium) clear?
  - Do the ushers assist visitors and especially young mothers?
  - Can a visitor understand the church bulletin?
- Is the building suitable for wheelchairs and other ADA people?

- If you as a committee member could change anything in this church, what would it be?
- What is the church's policy on divorced/remarried preachers/evangelists?

#### WOMEN'S MINISTRY –

- Is there a Women's Ministry Director?
- What women's ministries exist\*?
- How well are those ministries attended?
- How are those ministries funded?
- Do the women have an outreach program into the community?
- Do the women conduct an annual service for the church\*?
- Do the women serve on any church committees or church council?

#### WORLD MISSIONS -

- How does the church conduct its world missions program\*?
- How is the world mission program funded?
- List any other mission outreaches including members travelling to the mission field.
- Does the pastor ever travel to a mission field and, if so, how is his trip funded?
- Does the church help other churches conduct a Vacation Bible School?

#### RACE RELATIONS \*-

- How many "other race" members exist?
- How would you respond to other races joining this church?

#### ORDINANCES\* -

- Baptisms are done in which service?
- What is the mode of baptism?
- Who meets with new converts to discuss baptism?

- Does this church recognize the baptism of other denominations as biblical baptism?
- What ingredients are used in the Lord's Supper/Communion? (grape juice or wine; leavened bread or unleavened bread).
- Who prepares the Supper?
- When is the Supper observed?
- When observing the ordinances, is the entire service built around that ordinance?
- Are there any peculiarities in how this church views the two ordinances?

#### FELLOWSHIP –

- Is there a Fellowship/Assimilation Director?
- How often are fellowships scheduled?
- What are the most popular fellowships?
- How well do new members and visitors fit into the church fellowships?

#### SPECIAL SERVICES:

- Review the church calendar for the last twelve months as to their annual events\*.
- Who is in charge of the yearly church calendar?
- How do you publicize your activities and who does it?
- How much advertising is currently being done?
- What newspaper do all of you read?

#### COMMUNITY IMAGE –

- Discuss the image of the church in the eyes of the community.
- Does that image need to be improved?
- How can it be improved?
- Does any neighborhood church provide a community paper?

**REVIVALS –**

- Describe a typical revival meeting.
- How often do you have a meeting?
- How long are the meetings?
- Is there a theme to the meetings?
- How are the evangelists paid? Does this create a financial problem?

**DEACONS –**

- List the active deacons' names. Are any deacons on the Search Committee\*?
- How many regularly attend among this number of deacons?
- Are any of the deacons divorced/remarried\*?
- How often do the deacons meet?
- Is the pastor included in the deacons' meeting?
- Does all of the church business pass through the deacons\*?
- Are the deacons active in recruiting adult members?
- What are the ages of the deacons\*?

**FREE TIME EVALUATION:**

- Ask each pulpit committee member how many more hours they can give to a church ministry.

**TESTIMONY/PRAISE REPORT POLICY:**

- Does the church allow members to share a personal testimony, praise report, or prayer request\*?
- Does the church have a policy regarding women speaking in the services?

**CHURCH BUSINESS:**

- Is this church ruled by congregational vote, church council, pastor only, deacons only, or a combination of the above\*?
- How often does the church meet to transact business?

- If not answered previously, who moderates the business meeting?
- Who keeps permanent copies of the minutes and financial reports?
- Is there a planning meeting/church council?
  - a. How often do they meet?
  - b. What do they discuss?
  - c. Who (including female) is included?
  - d. Is participation based upon role or personality?

### **CONCLUSION DOCUMENTATION:**

Based upon everything you have learned, it is time to conclude this matter and act upon what you have learned. There are four stages to reaching your final conclusion. These are outlined below. A wise man once said, *“If you can’t write it down, you haven’t thought it all the way through.”*

**STAGE 1 - CHURCH POSITIVES:** List the positives associated with accepting this pastorate. Write as many as you wish. Perhaps include your spouse in this effort.

**STAGE 2 - CHURCH NEGATIVES:** List the negatives associated with accepting this pastorate. Write as many as you wish. Perhaps include your spouse in this effort.

**STAGE 3 - CONCLUSION:** Write a clear explanation of why your decision is the correct decision. This is only a temporary conclusion! Next, lay aside all of this paperwork for three days. Give your mind time to digest what you have written.

**STAGE 4**— On day four review what you have written in Stages 1, 2, and 3. The Lord may have given you new food for thought in the preceding three days. You may now be wiser! You may also see some issues with a fresh perspective. Ask yourself, “Is my temporary conclusion in Stage 3 still valid? Or does it need to be rewritten...rethought...taken back to the drawing board?” By now you hopefully have an answer that has been prayed through, studied through, and agonized through. *May God give you the wisdom to reach His conclusion for His ministry through you!*