

Making a Second Visit With A Viable Candidate

Since you were evidently greatly impressed with him the first time you heard him preach, this second visit should be more lengthy and thorough. The committee should phone in advance, talk to the prospective pastor only, and make plans to hear him a second time. By all means, hear him in his own pulpit if he is presently pastor of a church. (It may be that you heard him the first time in another church building when he was on vacation, in a revival meeting, or, by your committee's arrangement, in another pulpit.) But by all means visit and hear him in his own church pulpit--on his own turf. Make sure the entire committee is at this meeting if at all possible.

Perhaps you may want to take him out for a meal and a time of fellowship and discussion prior to the Sunday worship hour. Be sure to include his wife if he is married. This is "a must" for your committee. However, if the prospect's church is in a very small town or rural area, where everybody knows everybody, it may be wise not to take him and his wife out to a meal to avoid the risk of his members drawing the conclusion that "he must want to leave." You do not want to jeopardize his present ministry. The same would be true if the pastor has small children where the wife would naturally be more concerned about feeding her children than she would in conversing with your committee.

In either of these cases, it might be prudent to arrange with the prospect in advance to meet in the pastor's home around two o'clock for a relaxed time of conversation and discussion. Or advance arrangements could be made for a baby-sitter, and your committee could take the couple to a nearby city or town for a fellowship meal where you could have more privacy.

What should you discuss with the prospect? Somewhere in your conversation you should ask many questions of this candidate to get to know him personally and professionally. (See Appendix 13: Important Questions to Ask a Prospective Pastor)

Give him an opportunity to ask questions about your church. He may want to know about:

The unity of your church

Why the last pastor left

If there is freedom in your church pulpit (freedom to preach as God leads)

The church staff--if you have one

Support of missions

The church's concept of the work of the pastor

The growth potential

Your outreach and witnessing program

The church plant

The strongest program of your church

The weakest program of your church

The greatest thing your church has done in the last five years.

(See "Questions the Search Committee Should Be Prepared to Answer".)

Be open with him. Never try to hide the facts and condition of your church. And be kind to him. Do not interrogate him!

Finally, talk about "money matters" and other benefits (see Appendix 4: Compensation Worksheet for Personnel Costs). God-called men are not in the ministry for money, but it does take money to meet financial responsibilities, and "the laborer is worthy of his hire." Since he already has a copy of the church budget which you mailed to him in the packet of materials, now would be a good time to discuss what the church has agreed to offer a pastor in the way of

salary, housing, utilities, protection benefits (such as retirement and insurance) and service ministries (such as car expenses, convention expenses, books, and continuing education).

Talk about the amount of vacation offered, number of revivals and teaching or conference opportunities permitted, moving expenses paid by the church, what the church would provide in additional staff personnel, and any other matters of mutual concern. After talking with the pastor, increases may need to be made in some areas. **It would be wise for the committee to give the prospective pastor a written copy of these matters, even if on a tentative basis.** Later, if the committee should recommend calling him as their pastor, **a firm, written agreement** should be made between the prospective pastor and the church. This will avoid any misunderstandings at a later time.

Have a conversation at this time about what the church expects of a pastor (see Appendix 3: Sample: Pastor's Job Description). Use the results from the Church Questionnaire. There should be an honest and free conversation about a working schedule, office procedures, and other mutual concerns about pastor-church relations you have not already discussed.

Give him an opportunity to talk with you about some expectations he would have for the committee and the church. These expectations should be conveyed to the congregation **before** the church votes to call him as pastor.

By this time your committee should have some "signals" from the prospective pastor about his interest in your church. If he does not show any real positive feelings about your church, ask him to make it a matter of genuine prayer. Commit yourselves to do the same and tell him you will contact him later.

Should the candidate agree to continue the process, it is strongly suggested that you consider conducting appropriate background checks. (See Appendix 14: Authorization For Release of Records) The candidate should complete this notarized form and send it back to you before you conduct any investigations. Experience has shown us that you cannot do too many background checks. We would suggest at least the following checks: Credit, Criminal (national and state), Sexual Offender, Identity Verification, and Education Verification. Others are available according to your needs. Check out the www.CPIS.org website for background check agencies under the "Resources" tab or contact the CPIS office toll free at 1-800-443-5065 for assistance with names of agencies.

Stay in contact with this candidate until he agrees to come in view of a call or he decides that it is not God's will for him to come to your church. If at any time your committee does not feel that you should proceed with this candidate, let him know immediately explaining why you are not going to consider him any longer as a candidate and proceed to the next viable candidate.