

Appendix 13

Important Questions to Ask a Prospective Pastor

Instructions: Each member of the committee should have a copy of these questions. Carefully choose from the following list the questions that your committee feels are pertinent to your church. Check the questions that you would like to ask. Add your own. The list is not intended to be exhaustive, or to be used in its entirety, or in a particular order, although it could be. Take notes during the interview and rate the candidate on a scale of 1 to 10 for each category. Once the interview is over, transfer your scores to the Interview Summary on the last page.

Name of Candidate: _____ **Date:** _____

Ministry Experience:

What have you learned in the congregation you now serve that will make you a better pastor?

Describe a ministry experience with the congregation you now serve that captures your greatest strengths.

Describe a grievance you have had with any of the churches you have served. How was it resolved?

Have you had a positive or negative experience with a church building program?

Describe your weaknesses and your strengths.

Education:

*What skills do you bring to this position that you believe will serve you and the church well?
How did you obtain these skills? How do you apply these skills to your work?*

Do you have plans regarding future education? What role do you believe the church should play in your continuing education?

Philosophy of Ministry:

Describe the mission of your present congregation. In what ways have your ministry influenced this mission?

Describe your personal vision for ministry. Is there any particular congregation presently reflecting this vision for ministry?

What attracts you to this church? How long would you like to stay at this church?

Describe your leadership style. To what extent are you self-directed in your ministry responsibilities?

Give an example of how you have relied on someone else to give you direction.

Churches desire a pastor who has personal integrity. What does this mean to you?

How do you respond to criticism?

Theological and Ethical:

Describe a personal experience that has significantly shaped your own theology.

To what degree if any do you differ with the historical doctrinal positions of this church?

Describe several ethical principles that guide your work.

Do you identify yourself with any particular religious political group?

Do you consider yourself a Southern Baptist? Why or why not?

Congregational Life:

What changes may be in store for our congregation if you become our pastor?

What church structure do you view as best in helping a congregation to achieve its mission?

What planning model do you use in guiding the mission of a church? (How do you set goals, prioritize plans, define and evaluate success?)

Describe your operational strategy during the first 6 months with this congregation. (What would be your most important priorities?)

How have you approached the issues of finance and stewardship with your present congregation?

How do you conduct business meetings?

Worship Leader:

Describe a typical worship service for which you plan to lead. Do you use an order of service?

Describe the style of music you prefer and share its role in the service.

What special services do you like to conduct throughout the year?

How do you balance worship so it addresses the needs of different age groups?

Preaching:

Describe your routine process of preparing sermons.

How do you select sermon topics?

How much time do you devote each week to sermon preparation? How does that compare to time spent counseling or administration?

How long do you typically preach?

How do you feel about other ministers preaching at our church?

Are there any topics you feel uncomfortable preaching about, such as finances or current moral issues?

Pastoral Care and Counseling:

What role does pastoral care and counseling have in your present position? Give us an example of a typical week of pastoral care activities.

What duties are more important than pastoral care? What duties are less important?

Do you consider yourself a counselor? What type of counseling do you perform?

More recently, sexual misconduct within the church has become a more visible issue. What safe guards have you initiated to protect yourself and the church from such misconduct?

If a middle-aged man asked you to counsel him about divorce at his home, would you? What if it was a woman?

How do you equip church members to provide care to other congregational members?

How do you view your role in visiting members and church guests (visitors)?

Do you have any restrictions on the performance of marriages? Describe your approach to pre-marital counseling.

Do you feel that a pastor should have an unlisted phone number? Why or why not?

Christian Education:

Do you encourage participation in state and associational training?

Describe your present model of education for the church.

What successful approach have you found to adult education? (preschool, children, youth)

What is your role in Christian education?

What Bible study curriculum do you currently use for the different age groups within your church? How do you determine which to use?

What educational programs, other than Sunday School, do you emphasize?

Missions and Evangelism:

What role does evangelism play in your current church? (Worship, activities, etc.) Do you view some activities or services being more focused on evangelism than others? Which ones?

What types of outreach programs do you feel are important and relevant to this congregation?

How do you view the responsibility of world missions in your current church?

How do you now allocate financial resources to the local association, state and national mission endeavors?

Some people believe a church can become too big. Others feel that every church should become as large as possible. What's your view?

Administration:

Do you have a job description now? What parts of it do you feel confident about performing, and with what parts of it do you feel uncomfortable?

What is the primary role of the deacon body? What responsibilities, priorities or boundaries should the deacon body have in defining our church ministry?

What accountability should exist between the deacon body and the pastoral staff members?

How would you describe your working relationship with your present deacon body? Have you ever experienced conflict with a deacon body, how was it resolved?

What training and orientation have you provided for deacon bodies in the past?

Staff Relationships:

Describe how your management or leadership style affects your relationship with other church staff members?

What accountability would be expected among staff members?

How comfortable are you in providing direction to staff members?

Who should be included in staff meetings?

What type of conflicts have you experienced with other staff members, and how was it resolved?

How do you feel about a church member being employed as the church secretary, janitor, etc.?

Have you ever had to terminate a church staff member? If so, how did you handle it?

How would you respond to other staff members who in your opinion are doing a poor job?

Financial Issues:

What are your salary expectations?

On what basis would you expect future raises?

How many weeks of vacation do you presently receive?

Do you have a retirement plan?

What insurance plans do you have?

Community Relations:

What responsibility do you feel the church has to respond to the social problems affecting our community?

What organizations are you currently involved with outside the church?

Have you worked with ecumenical activities within your community?

Family Life:

Tell us about your family.

How does your family feel about the possibility of this job change?

What things would you like the church to do to provide support to your family?

If you were to move here, what type of housing would you be looking for?

If you were to die or become disabled, how would your family be provided for?

Personal:

Why are you a pastor?

What motivates you as a pastor?

What spiritual disciplines guide your life?

How do you cope with stress?

Have you been previously married?

When you face a personal problem, whom do you turn to for support and counsel?

Have you had any health problems in the past few years? How about now?

Do you take regular vacations?

Have you ever been charged and/or convicted of a crime?

Have you ever had financial difficulties? Will you give permission for a credit check?

Do you have outstanding debts with which you are struggling?

Do you have any severe problems with your children or teenagers?

Do you have any outside business involvements? If so, how involved are you?

Questions about our church:

How familiar are you with the history of our church? Do you have any questions about our past?

How familiar are you with the current life of our church? Do you have any questions?

What do you see that you like about our church?

What questions do you have about this position that have not been answered?

Are there any concerns about which we have not asked, which might be of a sensitive nature for you or our church?

PASTORAL CANDIDATE
Interview Summary

Date: _____

Name of Candidate: _____

Assessment Rating Scale: 1 = lowest rating; 10 = highest rating.

Category	Rating 1 to 10
1. Ministry Experience	
2. Education	
3. Philosophy of Ministry	
4. Theological & Ethical	
5. Congregational Life	
6. Worship Leader	
7. Preaching	
8. Pastoral Care & Counseling	
9. Christian Education	
10. Missions & Evangelism	
11. Administration	
12. Staff Relationships	
13. Financial Issues	
14. Community Relations	
15. Financial Issues:	
16. Family Life	
17. Personal	
18. Questions About our Church	
TOTAL	

INTERVIEW IMPRESSION:

- ___ Excellent Candidate
- ___ Good Candidate
- ___ Possible Candidate
- ___ Poor Candidate