

THE KINDS OF QUESTIONS CHURCHES WILL ASK PASTORAL CANDIDATES

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this document is to help Pastoral Search Committees think through some important questions to pursue with pastoral candidates. The assumption is that you have already secured doctrinal agreement with your church and the potential candidate. THAT IS ESSENTIAL! But some other issues are also important to consider.

The following questions are not exhaustive, nor should you attempt to ask ALL of them. But these questions are designed for you to review and determine which ones are important for you to know about your pastoral candidates. These are the types of questions you can discuss in a personal interview or video interview (because getting the pastoral candidate to answer them in writing is asking him to do a lot). Each man from the Pastoral Search Committee should pick his favorite two questions and ask the candidate. You will also note that many of these are “leading / open-ended questions” designed to help you determine if the pastoral candidate will be a good fit for your church (he may fit nicely somewhere else but maybe not for your church, and vice versa).

TESTIMONY & MINISTRY EXPERIENCE

1. Please take 5 minutes to tell us about your upbringing and your salvation experience.
2. Please give us a brief overview of your education and experience in pastoral ministry.

YOUR FAMILY

1. Please give a brief overview of your family and what you consider their spiritual position is, as it relates to your ministry. Please help us understand the strength of your home-life (marriage, children, grandchildren, your parents).
2. What do you feel your wife’s interaction and responsibilities are as it applies to your ministry and as it applies to her independent ministry in the church?
3. What is your attitude toward Home Schooling, Christian school, public school?
4. What do you feel the Bible says specifically on the discipline of children?
5. What talents do members of your family bring to your ministry (including teaching, music, etc.) that would enhance not only the church but your ministry here?

PREACHING AND TEACHING

1. Is your preaching primarily expository (verse-by-verse through books of the Bible) or do you prefer topical?
2. How do you specifically teach utilizing the Bible?
3. What technology do you utilize in your preaching (slides, video clips, props)?
4. What do you feel the distinction is between Sunday morning preaching, Sunday evening preaching, and Wednesday night preaching? What styles do you utilize in these regards?
5. Who do you look up to as your own role models in preaching?
6. What do you feel your responsibility is in teaching each of your congregation in relationship to developing their spiritual maturity?
7. What portion of each service do you feel should be dedicated for singing, praying, preaching? Please answer in minutes.

BIBLE STUDIES / SMALL GROUPS

1. How do you feel Bible studies / small groups should be developed within the church?
2. What do you feel your participation should be in small groups / Bible studies?
3. What do you feel the qualifications of a leader in your church would be for conducting a Bible study or leading a small group?

PROBLEM SOLVING & CONFLICT RESOLUTION

1. What do you feel is the Biblical approach to problem solving & conflict resolution between members, between yourself & the Elder/Deacon Board; between yourself and another member; between any of the above and a person that does not attend the church?
2. How deeply involved do you feel you would be in each of these categories?

VISITATION

1. What do you feel is the separation of duties between pastoral visitation and utilizing members for visitation?
2. What do you feel is a pastor's responsibility for visiting church visitors?

3. How many hours each week should you as a pastor visit the congregation's sick, elderly, and past church attendees who have not shown recent attendance?

COUNSELING

1. What is your position on counseling single women or women without another person in attendance at your counseling session?

2. What types of situations do you feel are beyond a normal pastor's counseling and should be recommended to a professional level?

3. What is your experience in counseling and in what areas; including youth, pre-marriage counseling, marriage counseling, etc.?

4. What do you feel is the interaction between true Biblical counseling and counseling as perceived by the world (example: modern physiology vs. Biblical Counseling)?

PHYSICAL HEALTH

1. Do you feel you have any physical or health limitations that would affect your ministry? Do you feel your participation in sports etc. could enhance your ministry?

2. Are there any physical limitations in your family; including your wife and children that might affect your ministry?

APPEARANCE

1. What do you feel should be the appropriate dress for you (individually) in regard to the various church services, and should this be different depending on which services?

2. What do you feel should be the appropriate dress or appearance for the members of this church at various services?

3. What do you feel should be the appropriate dress or appearance for church staff members at various services? For your family?

STEWARDSHIP

1. What do you feel is your responsibility in discussing the church monetary needs at morning worship services?

2. What do you feel your responsibility is in training your congregation as to what the Lord says about stewardship?

3. How do you feel about fund-raisers using church facilities?

PERSONAL FINANCES

1. What is your opinion of an interviewing church inquiring into your personal finances as a condition for your call, including a credit check on your credit standing?
2. What salary range do you need for your current financial position?

BUSINESS MEETINGS

1. How do you feel the church should handle business meetings and do you have a position on how often meetings should take place?
2. How do you feel about business meetings taking place on Sunday?

ADMINISTRATION & EXPERIENCE IN OVERSIGHT

1. What do you feel the separation of duties for a pastor should be between preaching and administration of the church?
2. What do you feel the Pastor's attendance should be at all committees of the church?
3. Do you feel it is the pastor's responsibility to coordinate and oversee all functions of the church?
4. Do you feel a pastor should be a voting member of the elder or deacon board?
5. What is your position regarding elder rule?
6. As pastor, who do you feel that you should report to in the church?
7. Do you feel that you should be subject to an annual review by the elders or deacon board?
8. What do you feel the difference is between an elder board and a deacon board?
9. What do you feel the difference is between a pastor and an elder board?
10. Do you feel in a church, that a pastor is the only elder biblically in the church? Please state biblical references to support your answers.
11. How important do you think the constitution is in administering the church?
12. What do you feel should be a women's role in leadership in the church? Please distinguish the separation of duties biblically between men and women in regards to ministry in the church.

13. What is the maximum number of church staff that you have been responsible for supervising?

14. What experience do you have in employee evaluations?

15. What experience do you have in terminating employees?

16. What techniques have you used in reviewing your staff on a periodic basis for their development?

WORSHIP SERVICES AND FORMATS

1. Please explain your beliefs regarding worship service and format, including distinction between Sunday morning, Sunday night, and Wednesday services.

2. In addition, please describe your beliefs on format within each service (ie. standard weekly repeated format, flexible format, etc.)

3. Please list any items you feel that are not appropriate for a particular service.

4. What do you feel about non-traditional services (ie. Saturday night, Friday night)?

5. Do you feel that services during the week need to be specifically on Wednesday night?

MUSIC

1. What do you feel about the tension between contemporary music and traditional music in a church setting, and how do you handle it?

2. What do you define as contemporary music? Where do you draw the line in “contemporary music” and “Christian music?”

3. What instruments do you feel are appropriate in a church setting and distinguish them if necessary between services?

4. What do you feel the responsibility between the music director and the pastor is in song selection and overall music coordination?

5. How do you feel about special musical services held throughout the year, and what would be your ideas on special musical services?

MISSIONARIES

1. What percentage of a church budget do you feel should be committed to missionaries?

2. How do you feel missionaries should be selected?

3. What do you feel your responsibility would be in reviewing the doctrine and the content of specific missionaries?
4. What do you think about foreign vs. U.S. missions?
5. What do you feel about supporting someone in your own congregation in their deemed missionary work?
6. How do you feel missionaries, once committed to, should be reviewed on an annual basis?

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

1. What is your position on church membership and how do you feel a person should become a member?
2. How do you define a member in a church body?
3. How is the church's membership list to be reviewed in regard to elections?
4. What do you feel the duties and responsibilities of a church member are?
5. How do you feel about surveying the specific talents of the members and how have you utilized this in your ministry to coordinate membership's abilities?

YOUTH MINISTRY

1. Please give us your specific vision for a youth ministry in a church and experiences that you have previously had.
2. Do you feel the necessity for a youth pastor?
3. What are your thoughts on reaching out to the youth of the church, especially the teenage group?
4. What experiences have you had in teaching youth on modern topics that are considered difficult topics to discuss, such as AIDS, premarital sex, homosexuality, abortion, etc.?
5. How do you feel that youth can be most effectively taught the Bible?

CONTINUING EDUCATION

1. What do you feel a pastor should do on an annual basis in the areas of training and education?

2. Please list seminars or pastoral conferences that you would recommend you should regularly attend. Do you expect the church to provide money in the budget for this?

3. Are you planning on pursuing further education? Where? When?

MARRIAGE

1. Please describe your position on divorce and what effect it has on church participation.

2. Please describe your specific beliefs on the various divorce issues.

3. How do you feel about marrying divorced couples?

COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND EVANGELISM

1. What do you feel the pastor's responsibility is in attending community events for outreach into the community?

2. How do you feel the members and the pastor should work together in coordinating community outreach?

3. What do you feel are your responsibilities in "witnessing" in the community?

4. What methods would you deploy in reaching out to the youth in the community?

5. How do you feel about interacting with other churches in the community?

6. How do you feel about interacting with churches that have doctrinal differences than our church?

