

Search interview of a pastor *Important areas and specific questions*

Let us assume the candidate is a strong Christian who wants to pastor – still, those areas must be questioned so we can try to analyze the heart, as much as possible.

The goal in other areas is to ask open-ended questions to get to the deeper thinking of the candidate. Also to follow up with follow-up questions to pry behind the obvious.

Guidelines:

Such interviews should never be one-on-one, even on the phone. This is for the protection of the interviewer and also the church. One person's perspective or interpretation can be fairly subjective.

Somewhere the candidate's spouse should be in on a meeting, not exactly to interview her or him, but to catch something of her attitude.

Steps for the search should be adopted ahead of time – with very specific steps, including a personal look, a theological interview, a personality profile, as well as open questions about his experience and methods of pastoring. There are several different approaches.

THEOLOGY

What is your understanding of the Person of Jesus Christ?

Going through our church's statement of faith or theology, please what you understand that to mean, and indicate if you have any hesitation at all in affirming that as your firm belief.

In what sense is the Bible the Word of God?

What will you teach about the return of Jesus Christ to this earth?

Discuss the difference between primary doctrines of our church, secondary, and tertiary -- stating how they relate to the pulpit and to leadership of the church.

Some say one of the primary responsibilities of the senior pastor is to protect and help the staff and church be faithful to the doctrinal statement of faith. How do you respond to that?

Describe your stance and goals for the church on these difficult subjects: marriage, abortion, LGBTQ issues, political issues in the pulpit, divorce and remarriage, war, use of alcohol or other drugs, financial responsibility, home school vs. public school vs. Christian school, tithing.

PULPIT

What is its purpose?

What will characterize your preaching? How expositional are you? What does "preach the Word" mean to you?

Describe your responsibility for the pulpit? How many of the 52 Sundays should you preach? Who else should preach?

Describe how people describe and react to your preaching and teaching.

What will you see as your responsibility for what is taught from the other lecterns of the church?

Describe how your personality comes out in the pulpit? What your closest friends or family say you are “the same person” in an out of the pulpit?

Describe your development of a new sermon, as to goals, where you get help, and amount of time?

CHURCH STRATEGY

What is your reaction to what our church has accomplished for the cause of Christ thus far?

Describe the last 5-10 years in your previous ministry. Talk about goals and fulfillment of those hopes.

What do you think should be the 3-5 main values of the church?

What part does the building up of believers to be more mature have in your own personal strategy? How much emphasis on reaching the unchurched?

How will our church worship service and worship music relate to your previous answer.

Survey your last two ministry vocational journeys as to growth, lessons learned, exit mood, and lessons learned.

How will you relate to our fellowship of churches or denomination?

CHURCH GOVERNMENT

Assess our present system and constitution related to this?

What would be your ideal arrangement, and would you work toward that?

How would you delineate the difference between the ministry of the pastor and staff, and that of the main policy board of the church? And can you say how this changes related to the church's size?

DISCIPLESHIP

Who is in your present group, and how often do you meet?

What would you do here, and what would you ask of staff?

Are you or have you been in an accountability group or relationship?

MISSIONS

How would you direct care for local needs and global needs?

In your last ministry, what percentage of all money given went “outside the walls” of the church (for local or global missions, or to help the unchurched, or evangelize)?

YOUR PERSONAL WORK STYLE

What is a normal work week like for you? What day or days did you take off in your previous ministry?

Do you operate from a “master schedule” (an ideal normal scheduled week)?

Discuss the way you set goals for yourself. How do you hold yourself accountable?

Describe and define the hardest strategy or staff decision you have made in the last five years? How did you do about it?

How do you handle pressure situations and opposition? Describe a recent one.

What pastoral skills have you improved in, in the last five years?

How would people who reported to you describe your style of leadership and collaboration?

How would you describe your greatest strengths and weaknesses as a leader?

Discuss, related to any staff or lead volunteers, your style of sharing vision, directing their emphases, and relating as a friend?

What would you ask of staff? What should their work weeks look like? How would you have them report to you?

FAMILY AND MARRIAGE

If you were a close friend who cared, or a pastoral counselor, what advice would you give to you related to your marriage and family?

What are some present goals you have for your marriage and family?

How do you protect family time?

What is your wife’s (or husband’s) view of your ministry? Involvement in it? Habit of worship attendance? Other church involvement?

What is your financial position as a family? What are your policies related to debt? Giving to our Lord’s ministries and your local church?