**25 Questions Every Pastor Search Committee Should Ask**

Your Pastor Search Committee has spent countless hours praying, seeking and researching candidates and the time has come to begin the actual interview process. Though there is no silver bullet list of questions that will guarantee discernment of God’s chosen servant, being prepared is the first step in selecting the right questions to ask. Below are some “best practices” interview questions that can form the foundation of your interview process.

**Pastor Search Committee Questions**

* 1. **Why are you interested in this position?** This is an open-ended question that leaves room for you to interpret motivation. A follow up question is to ask what excites them most about this opportunity.
  2. **How would you describe your God-given hard wiring and how it contributes to your strengths and weaknesses?** This question helps determine their understanding of underlying gifts, strengths, and personality traits.
  3. **How would your friends and spouse describe you?** **How have they affirmed you? What** **blind spots have they identified?** Here you are looking for alignment with how the candidate perceives himself and how others perceive him.
  4. **What are your two greatest weaknesses?** Instead of asking about one, for which they’ve likely already rehearsed an answer, this will allow you to see how self-aware the candidate is, and if they are able to demonstrate an opportunity for growth in their weaknesses.
  5. **How do you cope with stress?** How a candidate handles stress is vital to their success. Denial is the worst. Watch out for interviewees who say stress is not an issue.
  6. **What goals do you have?** This question will help you determine if the candidate plans ahead. If they don’t have a direct answer (at least one) chances are making plans is a difficult task. Also ask about previous plans they have set and accomplished (or not) and why for additional insight.
  7. **Is your work environment important to you?** Pastors typically have a preference for what kind of work environment helps them be productive. Some prefer professional and quiet environments while others like more open, flexible spaces. A follow up question is to probe further about office and clerical needs.
  8. **How do you handle conflict?** Conflict is another issue that is certain to come up in the pastorate. Ask for an example of how a candidate has handled conflict in the past or present a hypothetical and relevant scenario.
  9. **How do you stay organized?** A follow up question is to ask the candidate to describe a typical week. These open-ended questions will show you how they organize their day, week, month, etc. and how they prioritize their time. Although that system may vary, organized people always have a system.
  10. **When has your ministry been most impactful and successful?** This gives a candidate the freedom to brag a little without feeling out of place while you can measure what the person considers “impactful and successful” and determine if it fits well in your context. Follow up questions can ask about accomplishments and failures in ministry and ministries that have specifically targeted and reached the lost and unchurched.
  11. **How do you develop staff and lay leadership?** This open-ended question will demonstrate the interviewee’s ideas on delegation and building team members and volunteers.
  12. **What would you hope to accomplish in your first year on the job?** This answer will provide a sense of how fast they might move in implementing change. A follow up question can ask about changes they foresee wanting to make.
  13. W**hat in ministry are you most passionate about?** This question will reveal the ministry area they will talk about, preach about, pray about and participate in the most.
  14. **How do you use technology and social media personally and in your current church?** This is too vital an area now and in the future to not understand a candidate’s philosophy and methodologies.
  15. **Share with us your current church’s mission and vision?** Listen and discern if you think the candidate’s current church’s mission and vision will fit in your context.
  16. **Besides the Bible and Jesus Christ, what books and people have most influenced you in life and ministry?** **What blogs do you follow?** These questions will provide insights into how well read the candidate is as well as their theology, philosophy and methodology leanings.
  17. **If you were to start a church plant, what values and methodologies would you incorporate?** This question will provide insights into where he the candidate might take your church in the future.
  18. **How do you manage the time tensions between work, family, life and spiritual and physical health?** This question will identify where they struggle the most in balancing these critical areas.
  19. **How would you approach evaluating our current staff?** This question broaches the subject of church staff and follow up questions can identify the candidate’s position on keeping or terminating current staff, as well as potential additional hires they would consider.
  20. **What parts of the pastorate are most energizing and most depleting for you?** This question is another way to gain insights into strengths, weaknesses, passions and how they allocate time.
  21. **Ask the spouse, what is the hardest and most honest leadership critique you have ever given your husband?** This question can help expose a leadership weakness, or strength, that the candidate has not shared.
  22. **What changes are you seeing in church ministry and polity and how have you adapted yourself and your church to meet those changes?** The church world is changing rapidly. Here you want to listen to whether they understand those changes, can adapt and bring new ideas to the table. A follow up question is to ask about the governance structures of the various church’s the candidate has served.
  23. **What problems have you experienced in previous churches and how did you address those?** Problems will arise in the church. This question helps you understand the nature of the problems the candidate has dealt with, how they were addressed, and if there is a pattern you should be aware of.
  24. **What are your personnel spiritual disciplines? How do you hold yourself accountable?** These questions give insight into how they maintain their spiritual walk and integrity outside of sermon preparation. A good follow up question is, “what has God been teaching you lately?”
  25. **What do you see is the function of worship and how do you see that function best achieved?** This question opens the door for discussion around worship style, worship planning and orders of service. Similar questions can be posed around other core church function such as discipleship, evangelism and missions.