**40 Questions Every Pastor Search Committee Should Be Prepared to Answer**

Pastor Search Committees spend copious amounts of time in prayer, reviewing, and vetting of candidates as they seek who God is calling as their next Pastor. Often though, committees fail to realize that candidates will be interviewing them as well, and little or no time is spent collectively preparing to address the type of questions candidates may ask of the committee.

A Pastor Search Committee should expect that viable candidates will ask challenging questions and expect clear answers in response. Though not exhaustive, below is a list of questions every Pastor Search Committee should anticipate and be prepared to honestly address. Having one voice in response to the following questions will provide candidates the clarity they need and avoid sending mixed messages about the church.

**Questions a Pastor Search Committee Should Anticipate From Candidates**

1. Why do people come to your church?
2. How is your church different from other churches in the community? How does the community describe your church?
3. What are the church’s demographics? Age break downs? Attendance patterns? How diverse is the church?
4. How would you describe your church?
5. Describe the community. Is it growing, the demographics, etc. How affordable and available is housing? Will I be expected to live within the city limits? What is the most pressing need in the community?
6. What are your dreams for the church?
7. What are the biggest and most frequent critiques the membership has about the church?
8. Is the church open to change? Provide examples.
9. What would be my biggest challenge?
10. Why should I leave my church to come here?
11. Why are you interested in me as a candidate? What are you looking for in a pastor?
12. What do you see as the role of the senior pastor? What are the three most important things you want out of a pastor? What are the spoken and unspoken expectations? What are the specific expectations in the areas of office hours, staff meetings, budgeting, administration, pastoral counseling, visitation, weddings and funerals, program attendance and preaching Sunday and Wednesday nights.
13. What are your expectations of my wife and family?
14. Where is the church stuck?
15. What is the single biggest obstacle to church growth?
16. What would you hope would be different after I had been there two years?
17. What are three areas that should be emphasized and changed?
18. What are three sacred cows that shouldn’t be changed?
19. What do you think my priorities should be in my first year?
20. Tell me about the previous pastor. What were his strengths and weaknesses?
21. Describe what has transpired during the interim period.
22. What translation of the Bible do you use?
23. How would you describe the style and approach to worship? What elements are non-negotiable? Who is involved in worship planning?
24. Describe your governance and decision making structure. How does it work in practice? How receptive to changing the governance is the church?
25. What is the role of committees?
26. What are business meetings like? What is the pastor’s role?
27. What are your strongest, most effective ministries?
28. Describe your church’s denominational involvement.
29. Are there any theological hot buttons? Have there been any vexing theological questions?
30. Is there any current church conflict? What kind of conflict has the church experienced over the years? What kind of issues have caused friction in the church? How does the church view its staff?
31. Will I be free to shape the staff team according to my vision? Is there capacity to add additional staff in the short term?
32. How will I be evaluated? What is the process for giving raises?
33. How does the calling process work? What kind of time line are you on?
34. Does the church provide the pastor a sabbatical? What provisions do you make for pastor time off, outside speaking engagements, vacation, conferences and conventions?
35. How does the church expect the pastor to dress? On Sundays? In the office?
36. How does the church practice discipline?
37. What are the expectations of church membership?
38. What is the discipleship structure?
39. Describe your church’s missional engagement.
40. How open is your church to a building program and a capital campaign?