Committee Communication

Communicate. You have most likely already heard it: “Have you found our pastor yet?” The church body has affirmed you as the team of men and women who will prayerfully seek their next senior pastor. What an enormous responsibility! And what a great honor! They are entrusting this duty to you, but if you do not keep them informed of the committee’s activity and progress, they will become restless and frustrated.

It is not recommended that someone stand before the church in the weekly worship gathering to communicate that there has been slow movement. This has a tendency to disrupt the flow of the service and to put more emphasis on the fact that you do not have a pastor, than that you are searching for one.

Rather, consider a blog or newsletter that can be updated by the committee’s recording secretary after every meeting or every few meetings (at least once or twice per month). At a minimum, you can communicate specific ways the church body can pray with and for the committee. You can let them know when you have met with a denominational leader for training, when you have developed profiles or posted the position, when you are narrowing down the field, when you are dealing with one candidate uniquely, etc. *Be very careful never to give any details at all about specific candidates. But be very intentional about keeping the church informed of the committee’s progress.*

### Communication

* Within the Committee – Ample time should be taken early in the process to build a bond of trust among the members of the Committee. Some committees have solidified relationships of trust through the development of a Pastor Search Committee Members’ Covenant. A Friday—Saturday retreat would contribute significantly, not just for training only, but also for building trust. There must be a climate in the Committee that encourages honest and forthright communication among all the members of the Committee. The chairman can do a lot to facilitate dialog among the members simply by inviting them to express their opinions and by stating and restating the value of everyone’s thoughts, ideas and opinions. It is only in a non-threatening atmosphere that a Committee can expect to maximize the Holy Spirit’s leadership.

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* To the Congregation – As often as not, committees are inclined to foster the perception that they are acting in secret. This is not healthy and should be intentionally countered. Appreciating the fact that certain information should remain within the Committee, there is, nevertheless, a strong rationale for sharing pertinent information regularly with the congregation. The value of doing this is that it keeps church members engaged and helps them to know that the Search Committee feels a responsibility to the congregation. A periodic report on Sunday morning is a courtesy to the church. The report may include announcements as simple as:

1. We have met and elected officers
2. We have received a good number of resumes to date
3. We are planning a retreat and inviting someone from outside to lead us in a period of training
4. We have met for training with Dr. Steve Holt of the Tennessee Baptist Mission Board
5. Explain the search process the Committee has adopted
6. So far, we have prayed over all the resumes we have and have come up with a short list of five
7. We are currently checking references of those persons who have made our short list

These are just samples of what a report could look like. The primary thing is to keep the membership informed. The congregation will appreciate timely reports and will be encouraged to know that progress is being made. Reporting time is an excellent time to reiterate the importance of congregational prayer for the Search Committee and the process.