

Pastoral Search Committee

The pastoral search committee of any church has a very important task to perform. They need to be able to accurately assess the church and its needs, and discern a potential pastor's suitability for their church. In other words, they need to have a good "feel" for the church, and be able to "size up" a candidate fairly accurately through written materials, interview, checking our **references, etc,**

This is a task that requires a commitment of time and a commitment to prayer. It is more important to do the task well, than to do it quickly.

Composition: The make-up of a search committee can vary, depending on the size of the church, but in general, 5 members is about the average. They should be representative of the church body. Some members should be included by virtue of their elected position in the church, some should be appointed by the church as members-at-large. The gender and age of the committee members should also be kept in mind.

Responsibilities: Again, while these may vary from church to church, let me just mention four basic responsibilities to start with. As the pastoral search process continues, other tasks will need to be undertaken. But for starters, let's begin with these first four:

Identifying and perhaps even prioritizing the pastoral needs of the church (i.e., what are the main areas in which the new pastor needs to be able to serve the church)

- pulpit ministry
- administration
- pastoral care
- Christian education
- ministry to youth
- ministry to seniors
- evangelism/outreach
- community involvement
- etc .

Compile a profile of church and community (i.e., what does our church look like, and in what kind of a community is it located?)

- demographics of the church membership by age, gender, marital status, ethnicity, etc.
- the type of public services and ministries
- what style of worship service is preferred by the church (e.g., contemporary, traditional, blended, etc.?)
- what style of pastoral leadership is preferred (e.g., prophet, bishop, coach, assistant coach, playing coach, teammate, junior partner, etc.)?
- what style of preaching is preferred by the church (e.g., expository, topical, personal emphasis, etc.)?
- attendance record of worship service for past year or two
- membership additions/subtractions over the past few years
- baptisms
- organizational structure of the church (Le., how is it governed?)
- relationship of pastor to church boards
- budget or financial picture of the church
- church's philosophy of missions
- identify the major strengths of the church
- identify the major weaknesses of the church

are there major issues facing the church?
church affiliations (e.g., NAB Conf, ABA, etc.)
cooperation with other churches, denominations, community support,
etc.
demographics of the community (Le., who are the potential people
that can be reached?)
what is the general mind set of the people in the community? (e.g.,
rural/urbanminded, low/high income, stable/transitory, open/closed to
change, etc.)

Compile a profile of the candidate

how suitable is he in light of the church's pastoral needs (the first item
above)
what kind of experience has he had?
what is his track record?
what is his preaching style?
what are his spiritual gifts and natural abilities?
what are his educational qualifications?
what strengths and weaknesses do his references point out?
make-up of his family
how supportive is his family to a potential move to your church?

Determine the salary package for the pastor (Le., clearly identify all
the elements that

make up the compensation package)
base salary
housing allowance (parsonage/own home)
car allowance (for traveling expenses incurred on church business)
vacation
conference expenses
health insurance coverage
books and/or continuing education
denominational pension contributions