

Interview Questions

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Many churches who need a new pastor aren't quite sure what kinds of questions they should be asking. They may know they want a man who can preach the Bible well and shepherd the congregation faithfully. But they are often unsure about what it takes to do those things well, or how to tell whether a candidate is the kind of man who will be faithful over the long haul. In the absence of real wisdom, worldly wisdom often fills the vacuum, and the questions begin to hover around issues of whether or not he has experience, or can manage a staff team, or cast a vision, or implement a program, or make the church bigger. But all these questions could be fairly asked of a new middle management employee at Sony. So what are some questions specific to pastoral fidelity that churches should be asking pastoral candidates? Here's a starter set. Can you think of more?

1. In 60 seconds or less, what is the gospel? In 5 minutes, how did you become a Christian?
2. Do you have a statement of faith we can look at? Perhaps a copy of the Constitution, Bylaws, and Church Covenant of your previous church? Are these documents representative of your views? Where might you differ from them?
3. How do you preach (i.e., expositionally, topically, textually, doctrinally)?
4. What are some of the most important ideas and practices that you think cultivate health in the local church?
5. How do you know a healthy church when you see one? What are the leading indicators in your mind?
6. How do you think churches grow biblically?
7. What is your theology/philosophy of ministry? What is the place of preaching in that philosophy/ theology?
8. What is your style of leadership (hands on, laid back, quick paced, CEO, facilitator)?
9. What are one or two things about you that we might not like if we knew them (theology, method, personal weakness)?
10. What is your philosophy and theology of evangelism? How do your thoughts on biblical conversion intersect with your thoughts on evangelism?
11. How would you encourage a congregation to engage in personal evangelism? What tools would you use? What program(s) would you implement? Will you depend on programs to accomplish evangelism?
12. How would you take new members into a church? What process would you use? Why?
13. What do you think is the purpose of church membership? Why?
14. How do you cultivate a sense of biblical, godly community in a local church?

15. What form of church government and leadership are you committed to? Why? Can you talk about authority relationships in the church, particularly between the pastor and other elders, elders and deacons, elders and congregation, and pastor and congregation?
16. Is practicing church discipline, or moving towards practicing it, important to you? Why or why not?
17. What is a local church supposed to be biblically? How would you seek to cultivate that identity?
18. What is the primary responsibility of the pastor? What are the next few priorities under that?
19. Tell us about your family. How does your wife feel about being married into pastoral ministry? What are your children like?
20. How long are you looking to stay with your next church? Why?
21. Do you believe in the doctrines of grace? Why or why not?
22. What are your thoughts on worship music for the Sunday morning gathering?
23. What books have been most influential in your spiritual development? In your pastoral development? Why?

Additional Questions and Prompts

Adapted from Your Next Pastor, by Richard Blackaby

- Tell us about your personal prayer life.
- What answers to prayer have you recently?
- What did you do to promote prayer in your last church?
- Tell us about a time you experienced conflict in the church and how you approached the situation.
- What do you view as the role of the pastor's wife in the church?
- What would be some of the challenges for you if you were to come to our church? (i.e., moving, etc.)
- Have you ever sought marital counseling?
- How do you think moving to our church and area might affect your children?
- Tell us about some of your friendships and relationships in your current church.
- Tell us about a mistake you've made in ministry and how you would handle the situation differently next time.
- Where do you struggle in your Christian walk?
- Why would you be willing to leave your current place of ministry?
- Do you feel you accomplished all God intended when he called you to your previous post?
- How did/will your leaving affect your previous church?
- How do you feel God has prepared you for service with us?
- How would you respond if we don't feel led to proceed with you?
- What concerns or questions do you have about our church?
- How might we make this transition easier for you?