

"Old Paths" Baptist Ministries

Suggested Steps to Calling a Pastor in an Independent Baptist Church



Remember to pray without ceasing for God's wisdom and direction.

1Thessalonians 5:17
Pray without ceasing.

Also:

Job 28:28

*And unto man he said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom;
and to depart from evil is understanding.*

And:

Proverbs 3:5-6

Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.

⁶In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.

1. Decide who will be on the pulpit committee, or as some call it today the search committee. These will be the men who make the contacts and initiate the interviews. They should be leaders in the church that can be trusted to make proper decisions. They should be individuals who exhibit spiritually mature traits. They also should keep the church members completely informed as to the results if the search progress. I suggest monthly if not weekly updates. They should be completely approachable and not secretive about the process. They should keep detailed and accurate notes on their meetings and their progress.

These notes should be carefully maintained, and after the process is over, destroyed.

2. Determine if you would like an interim pastor. If so, you should decide on a specific term and whether or not the interim could ever be called as the pastor.
3. Resumes should be solicited by contacting friends or ministries outside the current church body. However, do not neglect to look within the church family for possible candidates. Qualifications for the pastorate must be based upon the spiritual guidelines found in 1 Timothy and Titus. Determine if you will establish certain qualifications outside of these basic requirements. Age, experience, family, education, health, etc. which can all be determined by the questionnaire.

1 Timothy 3:1-7

This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. ²A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; ³Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; ⁴One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; ⁵(For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?) ⁶Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. ⁷Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

Titus 1:5-9

For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee: ⁶If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly. ⁷For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; ⁸But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate; ⁹Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.

4. As resumes arrive look them over carefully and pray for wisdom. Remember the one who has the best looking credentials may not be the one that God desires for your church. Reject those that are obviously not Baptist, fundamental, separated, or that do not apply because of your church's constitution. I would suggest that a short form letter be drafted to let those men know whom you are not going to consider. It is important to keep people informed as to the committee's decisions.
5. After you decide on who you would like to contact, I suggest that you settle on one person and contact that person by phone. I believe that it is a serious mistake to try to decide between two, three or more candidates at one time. Calling a pastor is not a popularity contest. Call his references and continue to

- pray. If you believe that you should continue to investigate that person, send him your interview questions and a copy of the church's constitution and by laws, town profile, and ask him to return the questionnaire within a certain time.
6. After looking over the returned questions, talk to the church members and make a decision to have him come and spend some time with the church. I suggest as lengthy a time with the individual and his family as is prudent.
 7. Once he comes to candidate take time to get to know him as well as possible. Spend time with him and his wife and family.
 8. Decide on when you will vote if it isn't outlined in your constitution. Call the man immediately if possible to let him know the decision.

Some thoughts while you are in the process:

1. Don't get discouraged if you don't find a man right away. It may only take a few weeks, or it may take a few months. Don't get discouraged and don't stop praying.
2. Don't try to find someone just like your previous pastor. God may have a man who is very different yet has a lot of experiences and lessons that you need to have in order to grow more in the LORD.
3. Don't become skinflints and think that by waiting a while you can build up money in the bank because you aren't paying a pastor now. In that same vein, establish a reasonable love offering to pay a man who comes in to fill the pulpit while you are looking. Remember, it costs money to travel and be away from home for those who come to help you get through this time. No individual or church will ever prosper by being stingy.

Proverbs 11:24-26

There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty. ²⁵The liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself. ²⁶He that withholdeth corn, the people shall curse him: but blessing shall be upon the head of him that selleth it.

Luke 6:38

Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.

4. Establish a church profile:
 - a. Short history of the church. Include date established, # of pastors, name of most recent pastor and the reason he left.
 - b. Average attendance for the past year.
 - c. Building information including location, size, age, capacity, indebtedness, and other pertinent information
 - d. Town history, size, industry, location, etc.