

Guidelines for churches going through Pastoral transition:

By Barry Barnet, DOM at Colorado Baptist Association, Texas (02 2019)

Principles for guiding churches forward during a leadership transitional/interim period:

1. Prayer: Prayer is the key to tuning into God's will, plan, purpose for the church, and for recognizing God's man to be the next pastor of the church. PRAY, PRAY, PRAY !!!
2. Patience- Do not get a hurry or rush, finding God's man is a process. The more thorough the process the better the result.
3. Persistence and endurance. Keep after it. It is a marathon, not a sprint.
4. Remember the 3 P's: Prayer, Patience, and Persistence.
5. Include the church in the process by reporting to them in a business meeting the progress that is being made or where the committee is at in the process, not necessarily giving out details. You are serving the church body, include them in the process for getting input and feedback which will help guide you in your work.
6. The pastoral search committee must be united and give a 100% peace of God recommendation, if there is a dissenting vote, explore it. The search committee needs to give a confident 100% recommendation to the church. All on board or no recommendation.
7. Do background checks, this is mandatory today. If a person has nothing to hide then they will not mind allowing a background check. The candidate must be open and honest about the past.
8. Do financial credit checks on serious candidates to avoid issues in the future. Better safe than sorry.

9. Prayer: The pastoral search committee and entire church should be desperately seeking God's will and direction for their next pastor.
10. Introspection and reflection: What do we need to change about ourselves and our church before calling the next pastor? What would I / we do differently?
11. Seek God's will and man, being a pastor is not a popularity contest. What are the biblical teachings, guidelines, and qualifications for being pastor?
12. Rediscover the church's identity, theology, church-polity, decision making-governing process, history, goal, purpose, vision, mission, ...etc...
13. Research, investigate, Google, Check out his Facebook account and Friends online. Check all references, and ask for more references from the candidates first ones, the more the better. Call up his previous church staff jobs and ask them for evaluations and feedback on his work ethic and professionalism.
14. Check the candidate's theological views on the Bible, marriage, homosexuality, the Baptist Faith and Message, his denominational background (SBC), and pastoral experience. What is his view on Calvinism and Predestination? Baptist distinctives such as... security of the believer... Can you lose your salvation? ... Definition of a family, and marriage? Role of women in the church?
15. Have the candidate share his testimony, share about his matrimonial status, children, work experience, pastoral calling and experience. How does he share his faith? Where is his church membership? For how long? How active is he in his local church?

16. What will be the role of his wife in the church ? in his ministry ? Is his wife a partner in the ministry ? Do they form a positive ministry team ? Will the wife be working ? Will the wife be active in the church ministry ? WMU ?
17. Is the church searching for a full-time pastor with part-time pay ? Or a Bi-vocational minister ? What will the church offer as health insurance and compensation package ? Will the church pay for mileage and cell phone for the pastor ?
18. Use your DOM and association as a resource and sounding board for asking questions and seeking guidance through the process. We are here to help and assist our Baptist churches through leadership transition periods and the process. When in doubt call me. DOM.: **Barry Barnet : 903-227-9019**
19. The pastoral search committee is usually in charge of lining up supply preachers or interims during the transition period. It is wise to go with an interim pastor for the simple reasons of providing theological, biblical, and pastoral stability, leadership, and systematic preaching, plus it is less stressful for the person responsible for finding and lining up supply preachers, which are in short supply.
20. Do NOT presume or assume anything in regard to a new pastoral candidate. ESP does not work. Define everything. Spell out your expectations for a new pastor candidate. This is to avoid miscommunication in the process and to avoid conflict issues later on.
21. Get all your ducks in line / order within the committee before looking at resumes and interviewing with candidates. Communicate precisely and clearly with one voice, not many confused ones.

Homework for the Pastoral search committee and church members:

1. Write out a realistic and complete pastoral job description, present it to church and vote on it. The job description will be a guiding performance tool, evaluation tool, and measuring tool of effectiveness for the pastor and church.
2. Write out a list of core values for the church, this is what makes us who we are, this is what we want to be known and recognized for promoting in the community.
3. Write out a list of 10 church priorities. Start from the most important priority going down to the least. Share these with committee and church and compile into one list of 10 highest priorities.
4. What is the vision of the church ? 1 year, 3 years, 5 years, ...10 years. Where do we see this church being in 10 years ? Not confining, but giving direction towards the future. Where do we want to be as a church ?
5. What is the mission of this church ? Why are we here ? Write out a mission statement. The mission of our church is to _____, _____, and _____.
6. Write out a list of the church's expectations for the next pastor.
7. Write out or discuss, "What will be the role of the pastor and what will be expected of him / his family ? "
8. Write out a description of your next pastor. His characteristics ? his personality ? His education ? His experience ? His theology ? His Baptist heritage and Baptist doctrine ?
9. What will be the pastor's compensation package ? Expenses ? mileage ? taxes ? Insurance ?
10. Where will the pastor live ? How many hours will he put into local ministry ?
11. What are your ministry expectations for the pastor ? My pastor will
12. Collect and review through gathered resumes from prospective candidates, both individually and as a group, sharing your impressions and thoughts together as a committee.
13. Keep your work confidential and private, and when ready make your report and recommendation as a committee to the church in a called and announced business meeting before all members present.

Guidelines and Reflections:

- After a pastoral vacancy, most congregations will choose a new pastor with the opposite characteristics / personality of the previous pastor, for good or bad.
- The interim period between pastors is an important time for the church. It is a needed time for processing and evaluation. It is a needed time for healing and recovery.
- The interim period is a time of growth for the church. Why ? Because the church members assume the responsibilities of the pastor, which is actually positive and encourages growth and understanding of the pastor's role and work in the church. They can no longer lean on the pastor and the load shifts on to the members of the church.
- Churches grow during the interim period because the members are the ones inviting people into the church, the outreach ministry shifts to the congregation which is healthy, and outsiders like this.
- During the leadership transition time the church polity is recovered and decision making responsibility for the church falls back on the congregation (church membership democracy).
- The leadership transition period is a time of rebooting, equipping, and refocusing upon the vision, mission, denominational identity, theology of the believer, and purpose of this local church. Why are we here as a church ? What is our purpose ?
- The interim period is a time for moving forward, working through conflict and emotions with a view to the future and

moving forward positively with a new pastor. It is a time for new beginnings and a reboot for the church.

- The transitional leadership period is a time to return to the basics of sound biblical theology and healthy Baptist church doctrine.
 - The interim period is a time for the church to have a spiritual checkup. A healthy church is like a triangle with a wide base of congregational support and participation pointing upward in healthy worship and service to Jesus Christ as the head of the church. An unhealthy church has the structure of an inverted triangle pointing downward towards the pastor and relying solely upon him as the only support point of the church, with an unfocused upward base, which is unbalanced and tends to fall due to its instability of a broad leadership base.
 - **Research and call all references** on resumes and ask each reference to give you 3 more persons to call as references on your pastoral candidate.
 - **Do background checks** on serious candidates: police, sheriff, online, google, and credit checks. A lot are free, some may charge a fee, but it is well worth it to avoid scandals and serious problems in the future for the church. Before recommending a candidate, you better have done your research on him. Mandatory in Texas. Keep them on file.
 - **Do credit and financial checks** on serious candidates.
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Online Pastoral Search Resources:

- **Colorado Baptist Associational resources:**

Go to the Website under the resources tab:

www.coloradoba.org

Go to resource tab on the website and then under the resource tab go to pastoral search committee resources, along with the interim and supply preacher list.

- **SBTC Church:** Southern Baptist Convention of Texas resource for pastorless churches:

Go to Sbtexas.com ; then go to > Next Step Resume service; then go to >

resume.sbtexas.com/request/

You will need to fill out the form and describe your pastoral search criteria. The church can also submit a pastoral search ad on the "The Texan", their Baptist paper.

- **BGCT Church:** Go online to texasbaptists.org ; then go to > texasbaptists.org/minister-connection ; at minister connection tab go to > Post an open church position.

The pastorless church will then need to fill out the search information and criteria application form. You may need to open a new user account with an email.

- **Houston Baptist University:**

Career and Calling Department
Houston Baptist University
7502 Fondren Road
Houston, Tx. 77074
Gen. Telf. : 281-649-3269

Career and Calling Department contact person : Aaron Swarts
Email: aswarts@hbu.edu
Telf.: 281-649-3418
Office telf.: 281-649-3169
Email: careerandcalling@hbu.edu

- **Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary**

Office of Church Ministry
PO Box 22000
Fort Worth, TX 76122-0120
Phone: 817.923.1921 ext. 6330
cmr@swbts.edu

Webpage: <https://swbts.edu/offices/office-church-ministry/>

- **Hispanic Work Ministry at BGCT Texas Baptist**

Contact : Director Rolando Rodriguez
Cell : 972-951-3153
Work: 214-887-5425
Email: rolando.rodriguez@texasbaptists.org

- BGCT Church: Go online to texasbaptists.org ; then go to > texasbaptists.org/minister-connection ; at minister connection tab go to > Post an open church position.

The pastor-less church will then need to fill out the search information and criteria application form. You may need to open a new user account with an email.

- **Baptist University of the Americas**
7838 Barlite Blvd.
San Antonio, Tx. 78224-1364
Telephone : 210-924-4338
1-800-721-1396

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