



Points to Ponder in Pastoral Transition

Pastoral Transition in a church is an emotional experience. You have to deal with the emotions of friends you must release, and the thought of the unknown in terms of change and 'new leaders' arriving can be unsettling.

As each transitional experience differs from church to church, the following points are provided as guidelines to offer support and encouragement. Your district coach is available as needed to 'coach' you through this experience at your request and as needed.

Points to Ponder

1. Bathe the entire experience in prayer. Finding a new pastor isn't like changing a tire, it's more like an organ transplant. It will have dramatic and long lasting impact on your life and those of your friends and family.
2. See this time of transition as an 'adoption' experience. You will choose and decide on a new pastor, and your new pastor/family will also have to make the decision to 'choose' you as their new church as well.
3. Create a Search Committee comprised of elders and representatives from the congregation who are spiritually mature. The search committee usually will have 4-6 members. (This would reflect your current Leadership Team – but can be added to)
4. Decide how often your committee will meet. As this transitional experience will take on a 'life' of its own, it is important that once you start you maintain a certain amount of momentum that is accomplished by your search committee meeting regularly. Ensure committee members are committed to this level of meeting so that all members are present when important decisions leading to recommendations need to be made.
5. Create a pastor and church profile. This is a description that potential applicants will read that describes what you are looking for in the 'person' and the 'place' of service. In the church profile also include a description of the community in which your church is found. (Samples of profiles are available upon request from the district office) Part of the process that needs to be completed before you create your pastoral profile is a 'revisiting' of your church mission and vision. This will allow you to understand God's will in projecting the specific 'type' of person God can use most effectively in this next chapter in the development of your church family.
6. Advertise your profiles. These can be done both at the district office and online at a number of different websites. Churchstaffing.com is one what seems to attract a lot of interest. You should list a time frame within which you will receive resumes.

7. Develop a protocol for handling the resumes you receive. The idea is to create a short list that you will then interview (in person or initially by telephone), invite to an on-site visit, and then 'candidate' at the church for a weekend. While it is normal to track 2-3 serious candidates, it is suggested that you only 'candidate' one at a time after you have prioritized them, again after bathing the experience in prayer.
8. Keep your congregation informed of the work of your committee by verbal announcements on a biweekly basis at worship or by email. Understand it is really difficult for a church family to seriously consider a new pastor when the current pastor/family is still part of your fellowship. It will almost feel like a betrayal. Understand it is part of the process, and a reflection on not only how much you appreciate your current pastor, but exposes the 'love quotient' of your church family.
9. Ensure your current pastor/family receives a warm send off – with an agreed upon practical love response to help them cover costs during their own time of transition.

Other Areas for Discussion:
