

12 C's for Pastor Search Committees

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1 Samuel 16:1- 13 describes how God used the prophet Samuel to anoint David to be the future king of Israel. While pastor search committees are looking for a pastor and not a king, there are interesting parallels in what Samuel experienced and the experiences of many pastor search committees (PSC's). Here are twelve:

1. **CONFIDENCE.** God told Samuel, "I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided for Myself a king among his sons." Samuel could proceed with confidence, knowing that God had already provided for the people's need for a king. In the same way, your PSC can proceed knowing that God has already chosen who He wants to be your next pastor.

2. **CONSECRATION.** Samuel told Jesse, "Consecrate yourselves, and come with me to the sacrifice." To consecrate oneself means to "set apart or dedicate to the service of God." During the pastor search time, PSC members should rededicate themselves to the Lord. You can only hear God's voice clearly in the pastor search process if you are in good relationship with Him.

3. **CALL ON THE LORD.** In this passage, the Lord and Samuel had open lines of communication. In the same way, during the pastor search process it is important that your church pray, pray, pray! Engage in what someone has called "extra-ordinary prayer": take how you normally pray, and add extra prayer to it. God promises: "Then you will call upon Me and come and pray to Me, and I will hear you." (Jeremiah 29:12)

4. **COORDINATION.** Your work will proceed more efficiently if you assign roles to different members of the PSC. Decide who will do what, and how you will proceed. A bare minimum of roles are chairperson (who coordinates the work of the committee), secretary (keeps notes and records of all PSC meetings and communications) and prayer leader (leads the PSC in prayer for each other and helps determine how the PSC will lead the church in prayer for the search process.)

5. **CONFIDENTIALITY.** When Samuel arrived at Bethlehem, he did not share with the town elders information they didn't need to know—that he was coming to anoint a new king for Israel. In

the same way, during the pastor search process, it is important to keep your deliberations among the members of the PSC in confidence. Nothing will destroy the church's faith in your pastor search committee—or sink the pastor search process quicker—than a leaky PSC.

6. **COMMUNICATION.** The flip side of confidentiality is communication. The people of your church want to know what is happening in the pastor search process—and you can be sure that an information vacuum will be filled with assumptions and guesses, many (or most) of them wrong. So, make an effort to keep your congregation regularly informed of your progress.

7. **CONCENTRATE.** As Jesse's sons were presented to Samuel, he considered each of them individually, one at a time. In the same way, your pastor search committee should deal with only one pastoral candidate at a time.

8. **CORRECTION.** When Samuel saw Jesse's oldest son Eliab, he was certain that this was God's choice for king—but God showed him that he was mistaken. By so doing, Samuel learned a valuable lesson. In the pastor search process, it is not uncommon for the Lord to reveal that you need to change assumptions or direction. If that is the Lord's leading, follow Him.

9. **CHECK THEM OUT.** God told Samuel, "For the Lord sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart." You want to do due diligence in examining the candidate's background and reputation before presenting him to the church. So, always check references, and have criminal and credit checks done as well.

10. **COMMON HEARTS.** When you come to the end of the search process and recommend a candidate as pastor of your church, it is important to your church that the pastor search committee be unanimous in its recommendation.

11. **CONSIDERATION.** When it was clear that the sons presented to Samuel were not the Lord's choice, Samuel told Jesse, "Neither has the Lord chosen this one." Be considerate of candidates that your PSC have decided not to pursue, and let them know in a kind way by either letter or email.

12. **CELEBRATE.** Samuel anointed David "in the presence of his brothers." Finding God's man for your church is cause for celebration! Celebrate God's faithfulness and goodness, and make sure your new pastor and his family feel welcomed into his new church family.

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