

3. Appointing a pastor

All should be aware that appointing a pastor is sometimes a long and involved process, which puts the loyalty of members to the test. Grace, patience, and prayer are essential if unity is to be maintained. The assistance of respected leaders from outside your church is often of great value. Each church will have their own customs and practices but the following five stages are usually discernable. Agreeing the process in advance, will help avoid many potential hazards. Regular verbal and written communication with all involved in the process is essential.

THE GOAL

A Pastor is called to equip the saints for the work of ministry (Ephesians 4: 12). A Pastor's priorities will include preaching, teaching, praying, caring, envisioning, leading and reaching local people. Agreeing a procedure, in advance, will greatly help the process.

Prayer: As the church approaches this procedure people should pray at all stages - for leaders, the prospective pastor, and their present church, the arrangements, discussions and for God's clear guidance asking that through this process God will be greatly glorified.

THE PROCEDURE

Stage 1 - Discussion

- Clarify through the teaching of Scripture, the role and character requirements of a pastor.
- Prepare a Church profile and basic statement concerning the desires and expectations in inviting a pastor. Develop information regarding salary and any housing.
- Those involved in the church are invited to share their thinking, views and comments with church leaders. Resolve who will be leading the search process.

3. Appointing a pastor

- Develop a preliminary list of potential pastors. Use existing relationships and church connections to develop this list. Rural Ministries are available to assist Partner Churches.
- Preliminary discussions with several potential Pastors may take place. Some could be invited to visit and preach without any expectations on either side.

Stage 2 – Discovery

- Confidentiality is vital as some contacts will be exploratory and other fellowships should not be unsettled. No detailed information will therefore be available at this point.
- More detailed consideration should take place with only one person involved. A structured interview should be arranged. A list of possible questions is available from Rural Ministries.
- This stage will include extended periods of prayer.

Stage 3 – Discerning

- An individual under active consideration will be introduced to the church.
- A written profile should ideally be made available prior to the visit and a reminder of the ongoing procedure.
- Preaching opportunities arranged and informal opportunities to get to know the person.
- At this stage, members have a vital responsibility to discern God's will. Feedback to leaders is vital at this stage.

Stage 4 - Deciding

- Should all indications be positive, a proposition to invite a pastor will be considered by church members. For this to be carried, a favourable vote of at least **XX%** (specify the required vote and any other relevant information.)
- Stages 3 and 4 should last not longer than three months. Prolonged indecision is unhelpful for everyone.
- Should a proposition not be passed, or the potential pastor declines the invitation, the process will return to stage 2.

Stage 5 – Detail

- A letter of agreement between the church and pastor will be prepared. This should include terms and conditions, role, description etc. Suggestions of items to include are available from Rural Ministries.

Insert date the process is agreed in your church:
