

How to Prepare for the Interview Process

A Church Search Timeline

- Submit resume
- Initial Contact
- First Interview – phone, skype, or in person.
 - 30 min – 1 hour.
 - Will focus on broader, general questions to get to know you.
 - May offer you a few minutes to ask questions. Be prepared to follow their lead with 2-3 general questions.
- Second Interview – in person with the person or committee responsible for selecting final candidate.
 - 1-2 hours.
 - Will fill out details of your history and focus on doctrine, theology, and pastoral leadership questions.
 - Have questions prepared that mirror their own.
- Final Interview
 - Other interviews may be needed to answer final questions of the committee or candidate.
 - Questions will get increasingly specific as the discussion continues through the process.
 - Time to discuss details: compensation package, time off, etc.
 - May also meet with staff and key leadership.
- In View of a Call
 - Time to finalize details and meet the church!
 - Candidate will meet with staff, key leadership, and possibly the whole church in a greeting time or an open Q&A.
 - Will preach or be presented to the church in worship and voted on.

Do Your Research

- Cyber homework
 - Webpage, facebook page, google reviews. Be as thorough as possible.
- Look at Census Data for the community – census.gov
 - Will give an impression of the community and to what degree the church reflects the community. Might also provide insight for ministry ideas for the community if asked.
- Call Director of Missions, people in your network, area pastors, etc.
- When it gets serious:
 - Call person previously in the position. Ask them what they would have wanted to know when they were considering a call to this church.
 - Ask for a copy of the budget (all line items), monthly financial statements, yearly financial statements or balance sheets going back 5-10 years, by-laws, constitution, staff job descriptions, committee job descriptions, personnel policies, etc.
 - If possible, visit the town, drive around the community, ask about the church.

Prayerful Consideration for Interviews

- Be Honest. Don't tailor your answers to what you think they want to hear.
- Be Clear and Concise. Don't equivocate and know when to stop talking.
- Dress Appropriately. What is the culture of the church? Dress at least a step above what most people will be wearing on Sunday morning.
- Extend Grace to the Committee. They, most likely, do not have an M.Div nor are they experts in interviewing. If they ask a question you don't like or in a way you don't agree with, gently answer the question you wished you were asked, or patiently help them understand your perspective.
- Be Patient. Waiting is part of the process. Lean in to it and ask God to form you through it.
- DO NOT contact the committee or pastor unless:
 - It is to send a thank you note or email after the interview.
 - It is to withdraw from consideration.
- Know fair compensation:
 - SBC Compensation Study – compstudy.lifeway.com
 - National Association of Church Business Administration – www.nacba.net
 - Be warned, these are helpful but all skew high.
- Write down names of people in the interview, remember them, use them.
- At the end of the interview, ask them to share their timeline and process for further communication.

Other Resources

- HireABear – www.hireabear.com
 - Resource page of Baylor Career and Professional Development.
 - All the job search resource you need.
 - Access to Interview Stream – practice your interview and record it!
- BGCT Minister Connection – Dr. Joe Loughlin – Director of Church Connections
 - Online placement tool for ministry positions in Texas.
 - <http://texasbaptists.org/ministries/connections/minister-connection>
- CBF Leader Connect – Craig Janney – cjanney@cbf.net
 - Online placement tool for CBF ministry positions.