

Many times our expectations of others are not clear and this often leads to confusion and frustration. It happens in marriages and other relationships, including that of the pastor and church. Expectations that a church has for its pastor sometimes go beyond what are stated in a job description. Most often these expectations are not in writing. It is simply assumed that the pastor “knows” about them. This is not always the case. Thus when the pastor fails to meet an expectation, tension arises and can develop into an issue.

Consider the following list of examples of expectations. Maybe your church might have others. In any case, your Search Committee should be prepared to discuss with a candidate any expectations placed by your church on its pastor.

The Pastor and Administration:

- Is the pastor expected to attend every meeting of the church? How often?
- Is the pastor expected to act as moderator or as a resource person at meetings?
- Is the pastor expected to produce the church bulletin each week?

The Pastor and Teaching:

- Is the pastor expected to teach a Sunday School class?
- What is expected of the pastor in youth ministry?
- What are the expectations on the pastor’s own continued education?

The Pastor and Social Issues:

- How much time is the pastor expected to be involved in issues in the community?
- Are there certain issues on which your church has taken an active stand?
- Are there certain issues which your church has chosen to avoid?

The Pastor and Evangelism:

- Does the church expect evangelistic crusades? If so, how often?
- Is the pastor expected to do the church’s evangelism?
- Is the pastor expected to give “altar calls”? If so, how often?

The Pastor and Preaching:

- Do decisions about the pulpit ministry belong to the pastor, deacons, or church?
- Does the pastor have opportunity on occasion to preach elsewhere? How often?
- Who is expected to arrange for pulpit supply?
- What is the expected length of a pastor’s sermons?
- Is there a preferred translation to be used from the pulpit?

The Pastor and Leadership:

- Is input into leadership from the pastor only or are the deacons and church included?
- How much is the pastor permitted to delegate to others?
- Is the pastor expected to create and implement any vision for the church?

The Pastor and Counseling:

- Is the pastor expected to do pre-marriage counseling?
- Is it permissible to refer certain counseling situations to professional counselors?
- Can the pastor delegate baptism and membership classes to others?
- Are there expectations concerning for whom a pastor can perform marriages?

The Pastor and Worship:

- Is the pastor expected to lead all aspects of a worship service?
- Who chooses the hymns and order of service?
- Is there room for flexibility and creativity in planning a worship service?

The Pastor and Visitation:

- How much time is the pastor expected to contribute to visitation in a normal week?
- How much visitation is expected to be done by lay-people?

The Pastor and Community Involvement:

- Is the church's emphasis on ministry in the community or ministry in the church?
- How much involvement is the pastor permitted or expected in community life?

The Pastor and Denomination Involvement:

- How much time is the pastor permitted or expected in denominational work?

The Pastor and Dress Code:

- Are there dress code expectations for the pastor in his public life, in the pulpit?

The Pastor and Family:

- Are there evenings when a pastor can say "no" to spend time with the family?
- Are there expectations on the pastor's children beyond those on other members?
- Are there expectations on the pastor's spouse concerning work outside the home?
- Is the pastor expected to make the parsonage available to church activities?

The Pastor and Work Time:

- What are the expectations on the pastor's time during the week between Christmas and New Years?
- What are the expectations concerning the pastor's vacation? How Much? When?
- How many days off is the pastor expected to have each week?
- How many hours is the pastor expected to work each week?