**Mississippi Baptist Convention Board**

**Pastor/Leadership Development Department**

**Minister’s Questions to Ask Minister Search Committees**

A minister’s meeting with a Minister Search Committee is a crucial and important time for both the minister and the church in seeking to discern God’s will about a possible call to serve at the church. To assist both groups in this process, ministers need to be prepared to ask thoughtful and important questions of the search committee, just as the committee will ask questions of the ministerial candidate. The following list provides a broad range of possible questions a minister may want to ask of a search committee. We are not implying that the minister should ask every one of these questions, but this list can be used by the minister and his family to prepare prayerfully to ask the questions that are most pertinent to the minister, his family, and the ministry context of the church in their discussions and meetings about a potential call to the church.

**Community Questions:**

* What are the local schools, public and private?
* What is the quality of the local schools?
* Where do most of the students and children in the church go to school?
* What community and sports programs and activities does the area have?
* What is the economy like in the community? What are the major industries?
* Where do people in the community go to buy groceries and shop?
* How many people live in the community? What are the demographics of the community?
* Is there economic growth in the community now? What is the projection for economic growth in the future?
* Where do people in the community go for healthcare, i.e., doctors, hospitals?
* What is the crime rate and crime situation in the community?
* What is the church’s reputation in the community?
* How does the church feel about a pastor/minister being involved in community activities and opportunities?
* Is the church open and committed to ministering to needs and opportunities in the local and surrounding community as a part of advancing the cause of Christ?

**Church Questions:**

* What are the active ministry organizations in the church? How strong or weak are these ministries?
* What is the age make-up of the church?
* What are the current numbers of people involved in the ministries of the church, i.e., Sunday School, discipleship, youth, children, music ministry, etc.?
* What is the leadership structure of the church based on the church constitution? Are there leadership issues or threats from individuals or groups in the church?
* What leadership group works to set the future church ministry plans and church ministry calendar?
* What is the church decision-making process?
* What is the ministry role of the deacons in the church? How do the deacons function and organize for ministry? Are they a healthy, active ministry group?
* How committed is the church to the authority of the Bible in our lives and the ministry of the church?
* Have there been any theological or denominational issues or controversies in the church’s recent history? Were these issues resolved?
* How would you describe your church theologically?
* What is the structure and involvement of the church in Sunday School/small group ministry?
* How strong are the prayer efforts and prayer ministry of the church?
* How committed are the church members in being faithful tithers and giving to special offerings?
* What is the current financial condition of the church? How much debt does the church currently have? Is the church currently making their yearly budget?
* Who guides and leads the financial decisions and management of the church?
* What ministries does the church do to preserve and strengthen marriages and family relationships?
* How committed is the church in pursuing spiritual growth and maturity? What are the key discipleship ministries of the church?
* How committed is the church in serving with their spiritual gifts and opportunities in the church’s ministry and community?
* How committed is the church to missions and fulfilling the Great Commission in its local, state, national, and international context? Does the church support missions through prayer, giving, and personally going on mission? If not, is the church open to greater involvement in and commitment to missions?
* How active and committed are the church’s committees/teams?
* Does the church have a strong Church Constitution and Bylaws? Does the church faithfully conduct its ministry and business by these standards?
* How committed is the church to evangelism, outreach, and missions in its community? Is the church committed to reach and welcome anyone, no matter of their ethnicity, race, socio-economic background, or past personal history? Does the church have an organized program of evangelism and outreach? With organized, updated outreach lists?
* What is the condition or needs of the current church facilities and grounds? Is there a need for a major building or renovation effort? Is the church currently involved in a facility renovation or building effort?
* What is the potential for growth for the church in ministries, missions, and numbers?
* What are the key benevolent or social ministries in the church? Are these done with the focus of sharing Christ with people, seeking to lead them to faith?
* What are the active ministries in the church for children and students?
* Does the church provide discipleship classes or programs for new Christians and/or church members?
* Does the church have strong, effective lay leadership? Potential strong leaders?
* Is the church supportive of Southern Baptist mission efforts, and the local association, the Mississippi Baptist Convention, and the Southern Baptist Convention?
* What are the active music/worship ministries of the church?
* How would you describe the church’s current worship style? Does the church have a need for change in worship style? Is the church open to a change in worship style?
* Have there been any major controversies/arguments/problems in the church over the past 20 years? What was the issue and the fallout?
* What are the other churches—Southern Baptist and other denominations—in the area, and what is the relationship the church has with these other churches?
* What are the ministry strengths of the church?
* What are the ministry weaknesses of the church?
* What are the ministry opportunities for the church in its future?
* What are the greatest threats to the church and its ministry, from within the church and outside the church?

**Ministry Questions:**

* What are the 3 most important areas of ministry that this church expects from a pastor/minister?
* What is the church’s preferred leadership style of a minister?
* What are the hopes and expectations of the church for a new minister in the first year of ministry at the church?
* Would the church be supportive if a minister wanted to pursue further seminary education or ministerial training?
* What has the tenure of the last three pastors/ministers been like at the church? Were there successes or problems? Would it be all right if I spoke with these ministers as part of seeking God’s will in our discussions?
* What is the current make-up of your church staff? Are there any anticipated changes in the personnel or structure of your church staff?
* Can I have a discussion meeting with the church staff as part of this process?
* What are your expectations of a pastor/minister in the areas of: Evangelism? Discipleship? Ministry? Worship? Administration? Counseling? Leadership?
* What is the church’s expectations about a minister’s involvement and service with the committees/teams of the church?
* What is the church’s expectation of a minister’s wife? Of their children and family?
* What do you think are the most important spiritual and personal characteristics in an effective minister?
* What daily and weekly ministry schedule do you expect from a minister?
* How does the church measure success in ministry?
* What are the church’s expectations of a preacher’s preaching ministry?
* What are the church’s expectations of a minister in using computers, technology, social media, etc.?
* How does the church feel about, and what are its expectations of, a minister’s use of social media?

**Minister Personnel Questions**

* Can I have a copy of the job description for the ministry position? Is the job description truly accurate of the daily expectations by the church of the minister?
* What is the compensation package for the ministry position?
* What benefits are part of the compensation package?
* As far as housing, are we expected to live in a parsonage, or do we purchase our own home and receive a housing allowance as part of our compensation package? How much is the housing allowance?
* Will the church pay for the moving expenses for our family?
* What are the basic personnel policies and structure for ministers?
* How many weeks off does a minister receive for vacation and revival/conference participation?
* When and how will my performance as a minister be evaluated? How will this evaluation influence any future pay increases?
* How and when are pay raises considered and possibly given?
* Is the church supportive of the minister preaching and speaking at other events, such as revivals, conferences, church events, community events, etc.?

For more information or discussion, please contact:

**Dr. John Pace**, Director

Pastor/Leadership Development Department

Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

P.O. Box 530

Jackson, MS 39201

Office: 601-292-3308 Cell: 601-559-9352

jpace@mbcb.org