

# PASTORAL APPLICANT QUESTIONNAIRE

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It is the one and only Spirit who distributes all these gifts. He alone decides which gift each person should have. 1 Corinthians 12:11 (NLT)

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Please complete and submit the following questionnaire to the regional and district directors. Responses from pastoral applicants will assist the Church Pastoral Search Team in prayerfully recommending a pastoral candidate to the membership.

## CORE VALUES

### Core Values Are:

- What we stand for
- What we are all about
- Who we are
- What we would “die” for

### 1. WHAT ARE YOUR BASIC CORE VALUES?

- *These 7 Core Values encapsulate who I am as Christian and pastor.*

#### Family First

- I am a husband and a father before I am a pastor and just like anyone else, my family is my primary place of ministry. If they're not happy and not getting enough of my time, everything I'm working for in ministry will lose its effectiveness and fall apart.

#### It's All About Jesus

- I have a core value of making Jesus a big deal where He isn't just a part of our lives; He's everything. Perhaps the greatest challenge the Western church is facing today is that so many people have given their “yes” to Jesus and at the same time, they have given their “yes” to many other things. When it comes to faithful obedience to Jesus, everything we do, every decision or change we make, must be centered around Jesus.

#### Love & Grace

- There is nothing that has altered the path of my life more than a deep encounter with the love and grace of God. It's something that is almost too good to be true. Learning that God is not mad at me or disappointed with

me all the time but that He likes me, changed my life and I want to help other people reframe God as well and see Him for who He really is. It is unfathomable to know that we can never do anything to earn this grace, and we can never do anything to un-earn it, even though we can willfully decide to walk away from it. How can he love us this way? How can he give us so much more than we deserve? The love and grace of God is not based on anything I have done rather it is based on what he has already done, on the cross.

### **On Earth as It Is in Heaven**

- The presence of God is non-negotiable. Cultivating the presence of God through prayer, fasting, miracles, and worship are what separate the people of God from all other people on the planet. Standing in awe of God and believing Him for the miraculous is something that has been deeply entrenched in my DNA for as long as I can remember. It is something that I value personally, and this is why I desire to see the Church passionately seek the heart of God and contend for the impossible to become normal. This is how we are to pray, believe in faith, and live our lives: “on earth as it is in heaven.”

### **Making Disciples**

- The “spirit of the age” is a powerful force seeking to form people into its image by convincing them to embrace the values and rhythms of our cultural moment. This has had a devastating effect on Christianity, especially in the west. The church must have a robust strategy for this reality that is so much more than just some classes and programs for people to take. The church must get back to establishing discipleship pathways that are compelling, relational, and organic. Counter-formation will only happen through a deep and abiding faithfulness to the way of Jesus. People need to once again see a vision of the Christian life as a signpost of the Kingdom of God and an alternative glimpse for how human beings are meant to flourish. It is through learning how to walk daily in the way of Jesus, and not in the ways of the world, that a deep and lasting spiritual formation can take place in a person’s life. 2,000 years later, **making disciples** remains the primary function and purpose of the church.

### **Church As a Family**

- Jesus redefines family. Too often the church has been guilty of using “familial” language only for the purpose of wanting to sound friendly. Truthfully, we should be using this language for theological reasons, because this is what we actually are. I have a strong conviction that church should be experienced as a family with deep relationships being formed around Jesus, who is our common bond. Christian Community is extremely vital to anyone’s spiritual success. Perhaps more than ever, the church must intentionally resist the gravitational pull of culture towards isolation, self-reliance, and the idea that we don’t need other people. Christian community is the only way to experience the true Christian life.

### **Standing On the Side of The Poor, the Vulnerable, And the Outcast**

- The church has a fundamental obligation to help those who are unable to help themselves. To merely gather faithfully every week and not work to eliminate the needs and injustices people are facing is pointless. The church is uniquely positioned to right wrongs, offer hope, and stand on the side of the vulnerable. We must be willing to do messy ministry, both locally and globally, because that is where Jesus is already at work.

### **2. COULD YOU LEAD AND MINISTER TO A CHURCH IF ITS CORE VALUES ARE DIFFERENT THAN YOURS? IF SO, HOW?**

- Rarely do core values exactly align between a pastoral candidate and a church. The key is to find where they do align and where they don't, to determine if there can be a future together. The main question I would have is whether a church is willing to be led in ways they haven't been led previously. This would allow some flexibility in my mind. I would say however, there are certainly some non-negotiables that would make it not possible to lead a church that had different values than I do. Specifically, it would not be possible to lead a church that doesn't embrace the basic core values of making disciples, having a hunger for God's presence, a passion for reaching the lost, and a deep love for their neighbor.

### **3. RECOGNIZING THAT YOU ARE NOT YET THE PASTOR OF THE CHURCH AND THERE IS STILL MUCH TO LEARN ABOUT IT, WHAT GOALS DO YOU BELIEVE THE *CHURCH* SHOULD HAVE?**

- Goals that can't be measured are only desires. This is often the difference between good intentions and good outcomes. I personally believe this church should have clear and measurable goals around their discipleship strategy, growth plan, leadership development, and reputation in the community. There needs to be timelines given that they are willing to hold themselves accountable to. Some specific goals I would recommend:
  - **Website/Social Media:** This is an area that needs immediate attention. The number one way a guest initially visits your church is through your online presence. It wouldn't take much to turn this weakness into a strength.
  - **Excellence in What You Can Control:** When it comes to growth and going to the next level as a church, there are some things about this desire that only God can do. However, we are responsible to do our part and to do it well. The church cannot afford to mishandle the Gospel message we have been given and must possess a high value for creativity, thinking outside of the box, leveraging media, modernizing the worship experience, and trying new things in order to maximize its kingdom impact.
  - **Meet a Community Need:** There should be something obvious that the church is known for in its community. Whether it's a food distribution ministry, single parent resources, taking on issues related to homelessness, addiction/recovery ministry, there needs to be something the church embraces that enables it to consistently

cross paths with people who are far from God.

**4. WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE WOULD BE YOUR *PERSONAL* MINISTRY GOALS FOR THIS CHURCH?**

**Short-Term Ministry Goals:**

- I would initially go slow, ask lots of questions, and learn the culture.
- I would make sure Sunday messages are top notch.
- I would take the first 90 days to intentionally get to know people, the history of the church, the way things are done etc.
- I would identify who the key leaders and influencers are and spend lots of time with them. I would want to make plenty of time to hear their heart and have them hear mine.
- I would work with the leadership team to put a date on the calendar where I would need to be ready to cast a strong vision to the church. Ideally this would be 3-6 months from start date.

**Long-Term Ministry Goals:**

- I would look to build a quality ministry team that works well together and who enjoy friendship with each another.
- I would look to make evangelism and outreach a foundational part of the DNA of this church.
- I would look to create a robust discipleship strategy around multiplication (disciples making disciples) that forms people in the way of Jesus.
- I would use my experience with technology and production to evaluate web, video, and graphics as well as other technology within the church and worship experience. Making improvements where necessary and where funds allow.

**5. WHAT IS IT ABOUT THIS CHURCH THAT CAUSES YOU TO BELIEVE THAT YOUR VALUES MAY BE ALIGNED?**

- Even though I am still exploring the answer to this question for myself, from what I have heard, researched, and experienced through watching some services online, there seems to be clear values of doing church as a family, reaching the lost, and making disciples. There seems to be a passion for Jesus and a hunger for his presence. It also appears to me that this church is ready to enter a new season of exciting growth and ministry.

## **LEADERSHIP QUESTIONS**

**6. ARE YOU A TAKE-CHARGE LEADER? A LEADER WHO DELEGATES? DESCRIBE YOUR LEADERSHIP STYLE.**

- My leadership style is definitely a blend of both. I am a strong leader who knows what I want. I'm detail oriented, a strong problem solver, and a quick

study of new things. In my younger years, I struggled with perfectionism which caused me some problems. I ended up taking on too much and didn't understand the value to building a team around me and delegating where I needed to. Over the last ten years, I have learned the importance of building a team, raising up leaders, delegating responsibilities, to the point that I really hate doing ministry alone.

- I know I am at my best when I am on a team. I am not a "one-man show." Working as a team is so much better than doing ministry alone. It also removes the pressure to be the smartest person in the room and allows everyone to maximize their strengths and develop their weaknesses. A big focus for me as a leader is getting the right team together so the ministry of the church can thrive.

**7. ON A SCALE OF 1-5, WITH ONE REPRESENTING THE HIGHEST LEVEL, AT WHAT LEVEL (BREADTH AND PACE) ARE YOU A LEADER OF CHANGE? EXPLAIN.**

- I am either a 3 or 4 as a change agent depending on the situation and the team around me. If God is calling for change, I am not afraid of leading the charge. However, I recognize as a pastor that I am not just a leader of an organization, I am a shepherd as well. In that role, I am called to lead and guide and love all the people God has placed under my care, the early adapters desiring change and the late adapters who are more stuck in the way things have always been done. Because of this, I understand the importance of keeping unity in the midst of change, meaning sometimes change needs to happen slower than I would like in order to lead everyone well.

**8. ARE YOU PROJECT-ORIENTED OR PEOPLE-ORIENTED? EXPLAIN OR DESCRIBE.**

- Most people who know me would say that I am a strong leader who knows how to get things done. While I believe that is true, you should know that pastoring people is what makes me come alive; It's what I love to do. This passion enables me to be highly relational and approachable. For as driven as I can be at times, I love nothing more than to help people who are hurting and broken, find freedom and experience the life Jesus bled and died for them to have. There is still, after all these years, nothing more rewarding for me than to see Jesus transform someone's life!

**9. HOW DO YOU RESPOND TO CONFLICT OR CRITICISM? SHARE ABOUT A CONFLICT THAT YOU WERE ABLE TO RESOLVE.**

- I try to respond to conflict and criticism with as much humility as possible, and it's not always easy to do that. Usually, it's the disrespectful way in which people talk to me or handles themselves that creates an open door for offense, not the issue itself. I realize I have things about myself I am likely blind to and so every time I have had to deal with conflict and personal criticism, I ask the Lord to show me if there is any truth in it that I need to pay attention to. A lot of times when there is conflict and criticism there is at least some truth to what is being shared. The challenge is to sift

through the way the issue was communicated and dealing with it at its root and trying not taking it personal.

- In 2019, I had an Elder on our church board who began changing his previously held conservative views on LGBTQ issues, to a more progressive and affirming stance. He was also one of my best friends. This issue created a huge conflict at the highest level of leadership in our church and it created a huge conflict with a Christian brother I loved very much. His goal was for our church to change our beliefs around this issue and wanted the board to move the church in that direction. This conflict caused me to read and study more about the LGBTQ agenda than ever before. I couldn't just know what I believed, I needed to know why. I took a deep dive into the scriptures and other support material to further understand why I couldn't affirm the LGBTQ lifestyle personally or lead a church that did either. My approach was to love my friend personally but to protect the church powerfully. We met many times to discuss our differences. I tried to get him to understand where he was in error and win him back as a friend and church leader. Eventually it became clear this was not possible, and it seemed we were headed for an explosive problem within the church. In a last-ditch effort to keep this from happening, I met with him again and was able to convince him to resign quietly and leave the leadership team in a way that would create zero drama for our church. This was an incredibly stressful time, but the Lord grew me so much in that experience and enabled us to protect the church.

**10. TO WHOM ARE YOU PRESENTLY ACCOUNTABLE? HOW DOES THAT FUNCTION? IF YOU WERE TO BECOME PASTOR OF THIS CHURCH TO WHOM WOULD YOU HAVE LINES OF ACCOUNTABILITY?**

- First and foremost, I am accountable to Jesus as the head of the church and the leader of my life.
- Currently, I am the pastor of a non-denominational church in the Des Moines, IA area. Because of the church not having an outside governing body, my accountability structure is predominantly made up of the Board of Directors and Elders. We also have a couple of outside Overseers who are able to step in and provide accountability to me as the pastor if the Elders were to engage them for any reason.
- If I were the pastor of this church, I would be accountable to Jesus, Open Bible Churches, Regional Executive Director Josh Grimes, Open Bible East Regional Board, and the Board of Elders of First Church of the Open Bible.
- For day to day leadership and decision making, I would work closely with the local board of the church to determine what type of accountability was needed for my role and then would submit to the agreed upon expectations.

**11. WHAT DO YOU EXPECT FROM CHURCH LEADERSHIP?**

- I expect church leadership to be some of our closest friends.
- I expect church leadership to work as a team. This removes the pressure to be the smartest person in the room and allows everyone to maximize their strengths and develop their weaknesses.

- I expect church leadership to love and support my family well understanding the demands of ministry are felt by every member of my family.
- I expect church leadership to promote unity and give zero tolerance to divisiveness.
- I expect church leadership to lead by example in attendance, serving, giving, and character.
- I expect church leadership to empower the senior pastor to lead, while working with them to implement the vision they believe God has given them.
- I expect church leadership to be growing personally and spiritually as well as in their own leadership skills.

## **12. WHAT ARE YOUR LEADERSHIP STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES?**

### **Strengths:**

- I am a proven leader, team builder, and problem solver. I have excellent people skills and am very experienced and polished as a teacher/preacher.
- I am results oriented, detail oriented, and experienced with managing crisis.
- I am also highly creative, possessing web development, video production, and graphic design skills.

### **Weaknesses:**

- I have struggled at times with focusing my attention on the things that aren't most important. There are a lot of things that need my attention, knowing what needs it the most hasn't always been the easiest to determine.
- Delegation is something that still needs improvement. I tend to take on more than I should and need to use the team around me better.
- Long-term planning is something that I enjoy but have struggled with at times when the day-to-day issues have occupied so much attention.

## **13. WHEN YOU MEET A NEW VISITOR AT CHURCH, WHAT IS YOUR MAIN GOAL?**

- Every guest should feel like we expected them to be there. They should enjoy a welcoming and friendly environment. Every question they have related to the worship experience, children's ministry, restrooms, and information about the church should be easy to find answers for.
- The church should be clean and prepared for guests.
- Beyond this, I want every guest to feel the church is a place where they can belong. I want them to experience the power and presence of God, the love of a church family, and a standard of excellence in how we do things that they can see themselves a part of the church.
- Every guest should leave knowing what their next step is with the church should they be interested.

**14. IF YOU HAVE SERVED AS A SENIOR PASTOR, WHAT DO YOU CONSIDER YOUR GREATEST CONTRIBUTION IN YOUR CURRENT (OR PREVIOUS) CHURCH? WHAT WILL LAST AFTER YOU LEAVE?**

- I took over leadership at my current church when it was in major crisis. They were in a freefall due to some failures of the previous pastor and the budget was significantly under water. My goal was to bring the church to a place of stability and accountability as quickly as possible because the leadership were unable to effectively dream about the future while they were in survival mode. For the first year, I loved the people and led slowly. I worked with the board to rewrite the bylaws in a way that protected the church and its future in a better way. As soon as I saw signs of healing, I cast vision around reaching our community and loving our neighbor. We began partnering with some organizations who could open doors for us to meet practical needs of people in our community. Excitement in the church and growth began to take off. We started a food distribution ministry called, City Reach, that eventually was formed into its own non-profit and has fed over 150k people over the last 5+ years. Stabilizing the church, helping them dream again, and getting them to no longer look inward at their issues but instead look outward at the needs of people around them, is something I am very proud of and that I believe will last long after I leave this church.

## **GENERAL QUESTIONS**

**15. WHAT DOCTRINES AND THEMES ARE PRIMARY IN YOUR TEACHING AND PREACHING?**

- The grace of God, and free gift of salvation through Jesus as something we cannot earn.
- Freedom, healing, chains being broken, and people being restored to their true identity is a major part of my teaching focus.
- A clear Gospel focus. Remembering the life we have been given through the sacrificial death of Jesus is central to why Christians gather.

**16. IS YOUR PULPIT MINISTRY INSPIRATIONAL PREACHING? EXPOSITORY TEACHING? PLEASE DESCRIBE.**

- My pulpit ministry is primarily Inspirational and topical. My main values around pulpit ministry are to:
  - Excite faith
  - Lead people towards a response
  - Always use scripture
  - Love people well (shepherding)
- I have at times taken a book in the Bible and taught through it verse by verse but that is not as common.
- Primarily I am trying to discern from the Lord what the people need to hear and develop a teaching series around what I sense from Him.



**17. HOW DOES THE HOLY SPIRIT USUALLY MINISTER THROUGH YOU?**

- The Holy Spirit predominately ministers through me via spirit-led teaching and preaching, prayer for healing and freedom, and discernment in the form of pastoral counseling and decision making.

**18. IF MARRIED, WHAT IS YOUR SPOUSE'S ROLE IN FAMILY AND MINISTRY?**

- My wife Lindsey has been a great partner in ministry over the last 20 years. She is a Godly woman who hears from the Lord, she loves people and has a calling for ministry. Specifically, Lindsey is passionate about women's ministry and has led many ladies Bible studies and conferences. She currently serves our church in these areas as well as volunteering in both children's and youth ministries. However, her main ministry is to our family and that is her top priority.

**19. WITH WHAT TYPE OF PEOPLE DO YOU HAVE THE MOST DIFFICULTY?**

- People who are rude and only see things their way are difficult for me to deal with at times. I can also struggle with negative personalities and those with a victim mentality.
- Additionally, people who are quick to point out everything that is wrong with an idea or a plan, but have no alternative ideas are difficult for me as well.

**20. WHAT ARE YOUR MOST PRODUCTIVE PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS OR STRENGTHS?**

**Personal Characteristics:**

- I'm **passionate**. I am a very passionate person. It comes through in everything I do.
- I'm an **avid reader**. I love to read and have many favorite books.
- I **love sports**. Sports have been a part of my life since as long as I can remember. I follow both college and pro Basketball and Football closely.
- I'm **compassionate**. I try to see myself in other people's shoes. I'm slow to judge and am willing to help anyone.
- I'm **loyal**. I'm a very loyal person, sometime even to fault.
- I'm a **good friend**. I show up for my friends. I keep in touch with them and will do anything to help.

**Personal Strengths:**

- I'm a **leader**. No matter the environment or context, leadership is something that naturally flows out of me.
- I **love people**. I have great people skills and enjoy pouring myself into others. Raising them up and helping become who their supposed to be is something I do well.
- I'm a **problem solver**. I love a good challenge and being forced to learn something new. I have been this way throughout my career.
- I'm a **strong communicator**. Whether it's through public speaking, writing, or creative media, I know how to communicate in effective ways.

- I'm **detail oriented**. I see the things that make the plan work. While I love a good vision, implementation is something I do well.

**21. WHAT WOULD YOU DO DIFFERENTLY IF YOU WERE BEGINNING YOUR MINISTRY ALL OVER AGAIN IN YOUR CURRENT (OR PREVIOUS) CHURCH?**

- I would focus less time trying to build a team of all-stars and instead find the ones who are hungry and loyal. I learned this the hard way by wasting too much time trying to lead people who were talented but also arrogant and uninterested in being led. Instead, I would focus my time and energy looking for the ones who are less obvious but are full of potential. The way Samuel selected David to be king and the way Jesus selected his disciples are examples of how I want to raise up and develop leaders.
- I would also have much less fear of not being able to please everyone. I've learned how impossible it is to make everyone happy. My job as a leader is not to win a popularity contest, but to hear from the Lord and make a decision. In the past, I cared too much about what people thought about me, and it paralyzed me at times.

**22. WHO ARE YOUR HEROES OR MENTORS? DISCUSS THEIR IMPACT.**

- My dad is a hero of mine. He has faithfully served Jesus in ministry as a pastor and missionary for over 40 years. The example he has set is something I aspire to myself.
- My Uncle Ric was both my mentor and hero. He showed me what following Jesus and believing for the impossible looks like. He shaped my theology and ministry in ways that have forever stuck. Tragically he passed away in 2018 at the age of 49. His death was a significant moment in my life.
- Dallas Willard, Eugene Peterson, N.T. Wright, and C.S. Lewis are heroes of mine in the areas of theology and discipleship.
- John Wimber, Bill Johnson, Randy Clark are heroes in the area of the supernatural
- Jon Tyson, John Mark Comer, Rich Villodas and Pete Scazzero are heroes in the areas of pastoral ministry, and spiritual formation.

**23. WHAT DO YOU DO FOR FUN ON YOUR DAYS OFF?**

- I love to get lunch with my wife, smoke meat all day for dinner, do a project around our house, play some video games, and read a book on my days off.

*Thank you!*