

Candidating Process Workshop

By Dr. Doug Talley

1. Develop a good resume. If you have job or ministry experience, talk about what you accomplished rather than job activities. While ministry involves activities, they aren't ends in themselves. Goal is to get the mission accomplished.
 - Purpose of resume is to get your foot in the door for a conversation.

2. Know yourself. Read chapter in *Next Steps* on "*Knowing Yourself*" by Dr. Greg Wiens. Book edited by David Markel.
 - The younger you are and the less experience you have enter ministry, the more difficult it is to know yourself.
 - Have a handle on what you do well and what you don't do so well, including strengths and weaknesses. Don't try to be someone you aren't. No one does everything well.
 - If you fail to understand yourself, you are far more likely to misread God's guidance.
 - Romans 12:3 *"Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you."*
 - Humility means to have an accurate understanding of yourself

3. Determine what kind of ministry(s) you are interested in or will consider.
 - Specialty ministry like children, youth, small groups, etc...
 - Associate pastor
 - Lead pastor
 - The wider your interest, the more marketable you are. But make sure really interested or the ministry will quickly become a job.
 - If lead pastor, reflect a bit on what church size you are best equipped to serve.
 - Small church – Like cats. Usually say want to grow but aren't usually willing to do the things required to grow.
 - Larger church – Do you have the ministry experience necessary to get serious consideration? Associate in a larger church is a great way to learn.

4. Get a good handle on the Search Team and Board's expectations.
 - Are they the same? Often different expectations.
 - If associate position, compare lead pastor's expectations with Board and key leaders. (Robin)
 - Inward or outward – i.e. serve us or reach others?

- Chaplaincy or lead church/ministry to accomplish a mission?
 - Lead the church or ministry or carry out assignments from Board?
 - Do ministry or lead others to do ministry?
 - Traditional or innovative?
5. Involve your spouse in the entire process. Listen to your spouse. Get feedback.
 - When visiting a church and overnight lodging is offered, I prefer hotel to someone's home. Gives you more of a chance to talk, and you need to talk.
 - Don't be so overeager that one of you gets defensive or downplays issues.
 6. Determine the states/regions in which you are interested in serving.
 - Be aware that the US has a range of cultures and certain cultures tend to be predominant in certain states/regions. God calling you to the ministry doesn't mean you can effectively minister anywhere and in any culture. Example: Midwest or southeast pastors don't typically do well in northeast, northwest or southwest. And vice versa.
 - Rural, urban or suburban?
 - Multi-cultural or mono-cultural?
 - Professional or blue collar?
 - Demographics
 - What people groups do you best relate to and not relate to?
 - Churches demo and communities around church (target)
 7. Contact Church of God Ministries and any state organizations you are interested in serving in and be added to their list of pastors looking for positions but don't depend on national or state to get your name out to churches.
 - Be aware that rarely will this result in anything.
 - Send resume to state pastor(s). If nothing else, gives person first exposure to your name.
 8. Contact people you know in ministry (pastors, peers, state pastor, etc...) and let them know you are looking and for what kind of ministry position(s).
 - People are the best form of contact. I tell churches to contact pastors they know, tell them what you are looking for, and ask them for names.
 9. If there is a church you are interested in, have a colleague send your resume with a cover letter giving a recommendation. If you send it, it is not as likely to be considered.
 10. If a church contacts you and you have any potential interest, they'll probably want you to visit to talk. Do it and don't feel obligated.
 - Protocol is for the church to cover the expense, including lodging and meals.

- Don't feel like you are wasting their money unless you have already decided you will go. Dating doesn't mean you want to get married.
- Don't feel obligated to continue if you don't feel like it is a good match and God is calling you.
- Ask for overview of their process. Some churches have a phone call with search team and then want person to candidating. Like having one date and getting married. Ideal is multiple contacts and a couple of them in person. Will want absolute minimum of one in person visit & several phone calls before deciding to candidate.
- First visit – usually just meet with Search Team. Many churches want to select a candidate after one visit. You have to decide how comfortable you are with this. If not comfortable, say you'd like another on-site visit to talk more with Search Team and to meet & talk with Board.
- Second visit – Search Team and Board. Don't underestimate the value of social time in the visit. You may learn more in just visiting with people in social setting than in interviews.
- It is OK to ask where they are in the process and what their time table is for narrowing the search to one candidate.
- Sometimes this gets a little weird. If it does, figure out why. Are they inexperienced and uncoached, are they uncoachable, is this a strange/unhealthy situation?
- Remember – THEY are candidating, too, not just you.

11. Get to know the church culture as well as you can during the candidating process.

- Culture is a group's shared attitudes, values, goals and practices.
- Evaluate how it fits with your own culture and how comfortable you are in working with it.
- Church culture changes slowly and can be very resistant to change. If there is misalignment between the church's culture and the pastor's culture, great stress will result.
- Review *Church Culture for Candidate* document

12. Candidating Weekend Expectations

- Typically pretty sure you are going to accept if offered but haven't necessarily made final decision. Make sure dated enough to be pretty sure.
- Anywhere from a week to a weekend
- Usually meet with Board, various teams or committees in the church, groups in the church, etc... Ask questions and interact.
- Remember that the church is putting its best foot forward. It won't get any better than this.
- Don't ignore your gut. God can speak through it. Blink by Malcolm Gladwell

13. Candidating and Financials

- Preferably have financial package discussed and on paper before or at least early in candidating weekend. If you bring it up too early, might spook the church. If you wait too long, pressure to accept offer but may not be able to afford it. OK to ask after couple of conversations and a visit – “when will you give me some idea what the pay package is?”
- Make sure you know the package breakdown and are not just given an amount. Know what is included in that breakdown.
- Churches are often notoriously uninformed when it comes to developing pastor pay packages. Often throw out total package amount which can sound pretty good until you realize that includes health insurance, pension, SS, mileage reimbursement, conferences, business expenses, etc...
- The only time you have any power to negotiate is BEFORE you say “I do.” If the package seems inadequate, ask if you can talk about it. Express your concern about it and inquire if there is any room to negotiate. Have in mind some figures in case they say there is room. This is awkward but don’t let awkwardness keep you from taking care of your family. It will be more awkward later.
- Establish vacation time. Recommend minimum of 3 weeks including 3 weekends. In ministry you have to get out of town to be on vacation. If the church says it has a policy, ask if there is room to talk about it.
- Might ask if any provision for a down payment loan to purchase a house.
- Get EVERYTHING in writing.
 - Review *Calling Agreement* document

14. Don’t be overeager. Be patient but diligent.

15. Pray, pray, pray