

## When the Word Leads Your Pastoral Search (by Chris Brauns):

Prayer is essential at every stage of your pastoral search, from choosing a pastoral search committee to praying for your next pastor. Be sure you do more than just talk about praying. What your local church really needs to do is organize prayer and actually put it into practice. At the end of the pastoral search process, you are going to want assurance that you sought and received God's provision, not your own solutions. The assurance will come in part from knowing that God answered your prayers for those things! It's not a matter of whether you agree that prayer is important. It's a given that prayer is essential. Therefore, your assurance of a right choice is going to hinge on how that prayer infiltrated the search process.

### Pray for the Search Committee

- *Pray for patience.* Pray that the group would wait for God's timing.
- *Pray that your search committee will have the mind of Christ and agree.* Much of the process is subjective. Personal opinions and preferences are involved. Difference can divide. Ask that they would heed Paul's advice for unity, having the humble attitude of Jesus (Phil 2: 1-12, especially verse 5).
- *Pray for wisdom to choose the right person.* Pray that the pastoral search committee will renew their minds in the Bible so that they can have Word-centered wisdom.
- *Pray for discipline for your search committee and other church leaders.* The search process will require a great deal of follow-through on the parts of individuals. It will also require that they not digress from the agenda or retrace decisions they have already made. Pray for unity and agreement between your elders and the pastoral search committee.
- *Pray for protection.* Pray for the protection of the committee members and their families.

### Pray for Your Next Associate Pastor

- *Pray that God would increase his passion for discipleship and for preaching the Word of God.*
- *Pray that God would give him a love for your church and the strength to leave his current position (if the candidate senses that is God's direction).*
- *Pray that your next pastor would begin new relationships at your church in the right way, even during the search process.*
- *Pray that God would prepare your future pastor to shepherd your flock more effectively through the trials and blessing he has faced or currently faces.*
- *Pray for your next pastor's family.* Of course, he may be single or married. He may have children or not. God knows all that. Pray that God, who knows each detail about each member of your pastor's household, would give the member of his family strength as they consider leaving their current setting and going to a different church, or beginning pastoral ministry for the first time.

### Pray for the People in Your Church

- *Pray for patience.* The search process can go on longer than expected. It is hard for people doing the work of search. It is also difficult for those in the congregation who must wait without knowing exactly what is going on. Pray that your people would trust the leadership and uphold you during the whole process.
  - *Pray that your people would learn to place a high priority on biblical preaching.* It is easy to gravitate toward personality, programs, a particular "ideal" age, etc. Pray that, above all, the congregation would call a pastor who will proclaim the Word without apology.
  - *Pray that your people would not react to a previous pastor.* Some churches struggle with wanting a pastor who is like their old one (they had a good experience). Other churches want someone who is just the opposite.
  - *Pray for a loving and welcoming response* to the next pastor and an excitement for what God is doing.
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## Other Specifics to Pray For

For the committee to be:

- *Passionately Word Centered*: that the search would be centered on the gospel.
- *Humble and Teachable*: reading outside resources, taking advantage of denominational leaders' insight and other help available.
- *Discerning*: as wise as serpents and as innocent as doves (Matt 10:16).
- *Diligent*: not letting business to be a justification for lack of follow through.
- *Persevering*: prepared for difficulties, determined to work through them Biblically and Prayerfully.

For the Associate Pastor that we call:

- Will lead with Exemplary Character
- Will feed the flock the Word of God
- Will desire to know our Church and Community
- Will sacrificially Love our Church
- Will Guard our flock from dangers
- Will point our flock toward a Bible Positive Vision
- Will care for the lambs who stray

