



Executive Pastor Candidate Questionnaire¹

JASON READ

Personal

1. Briefly describe your conversion to being a disciple of Christ.

I was saved by God's grace in high school, primarily through the influence of two older men who cared for me and discipled me while my home was in a measure of turmoil. I grew up in a home that had a rhythm of attending church but lacked faith and belief. God used the love and presence of two men in my life, a youth pastor and a friend's father, to draw me to himself and awaken my heart to the love of my heavenly Father. The years of church attendance as a child had laid a foundation of truth from God's Word which the Lord used to help me understand and believe the gospel.

2. Describe your call to ministry and how it has been affirmed.

The Lord has called me to serve his people through vocational pastoral ministry in the local church. He has equipped through a variety of opportunities to serve the church as a volunteer, leader, deacon, staff member, and elder in the local church. The Holy Spirit has given me gifts of shepherding and administration. My calling is to use that experience and gifting to shepherd a local congregation with faithfulness to God, his Word, and his people.

¹ This is an excerpt from a longer questionnaire that we used to engage Jason at an earlier stage of the process

The youth pastor who discipled me during high school was the first to suggest that the Lord might be calling me into vocational ministry. Conversations with him led me toward international missions, beginning with a pursuit of a bachelor's degree in cross-cultural ministry. I transferred schools after the first year of that degree, believing it was not the right path for me at the time. A few years after getting married, my wife and I moved to Louisville, KY so that I could pursue an M.Div. in preparation for serving together internationally. During that time, through leading and serving in our local church, I realized the Lord was calling me to a pastoral role locally. Beginning with a desire and then through opportunities to be trained and tested, the Lord grew my love for his church and desire to serve.

This calling has been affirmed by other pastors, the people of the church, and opportunities to serve as a staff pastor. My steadfast commitment to pastoral ministry and the joy I have for it, even through seasons of trial and hardship, continue to solidify the Lord's calling on my life. These last few months have been a particularly refining time for my calling. I felt very confident in my calling prior to being laid off in April. Afterward, I wrestled with whether I wanted to be in a vocational ministry role and whether it was right for my family. Through prayer, counseling, and numerous conversations with friends, other pastors, church members, and especially my wife, I do believe that the Lord is calling me into vocational ministry.

3. Describe the spiritual life of your children?

My wife and I are blessed to have four non-believers living with us (my children are 7, 5, 3, and 8 months). We are trying to do the best we can to shepherd them toward Christ by living honestly before them with our own sin and teaching them foundational truths. My oldest child is especially curious about the nature and ways of God, and we enjoy the challenge of encouraging his questions and struggling to answer them in ways he can understand.

4. What are your regular practices regarding the spiritual disciplines (e.g., personal prayer, Bible study, family devotions, meditation, stewardship, learning, etc.)?

I mentioned earlier that over the last few years the Lord has brought me into a deeper life of communion with him through prayer. I'm learning more and more what it means to pray without ceasing, remembering that there is nowhere I can go apart from the Spirit of God. I found a daily rhythm of stopping to pray morning, noon, and evening is very

helpful for me. That rhythm includes a time of sitting in silence with the Lord and meditation on his Word. In particular, hearing from God through his Word is important for my own soul and a discipline I hope to pass along to my children.

One of our families favorite spiritual disciplines is living in community. When Deb and I first moved to Louisville, we chose to attend Sojourn because of our experience visiting a community group. Our small group and broader network of friends are necessary for our growth and encouragement in the Lord. During the last few months of job searching, our group has been the greatest source of love, prayer, generosity, and encouragement from the Lord.

Knowing that love of money can be a struggle, the discipline of tithing to our church and budgeting for generosity toward others is one of the best ways the Lord is helping me guard my heart against this sin. I love to read, so I've constantly got multiple books underway, and I love learning from people that force me to think more deeply about my own beliefs. I love the spiritual discipline of feasting with friends over a good meal!

One of the positives from these months of quarantine is a better rhythm of family devotion time than we've ever had. We miss days and some days have more discipline than worship, but my wife and I want to continue taking advantage of this time to establish a better habit for our family

5. Who are your favorite Christian writers, commentators, theologians, etc.? Why? What books have you read in the past year?

Sinclair Ferguson, Eugene Peterson, Dallas Willard, John Piper, John Frame, Curt Thompson, Chuck DeGroat, Marva Dawn, Gregg Allison, Augustine, etc. I could keep going for a while. I love to read and learn. Some of these I disagree with at times, but the Lord has used them to teach me and draw me to himself. In the past year, a snapshot of the books I've read includes: Praying with Paul by D.A. Carson, Rejoicing in Lament: Wrestling with Incurable Cancer and Life in Christ by Todd Billings, Christ Plays in Ten Thousand Places: A Conversation in Spiritual Theology by Eugene Peterson, Embracing the Body: Finding God in Our Flesh and Bone by Tara Owens, Delighting in the Trinity: An Introduction to the Christian Faith by Michael Reeves, The Soul of Shame: Retelling the Stories We Believe About Ourselves by Curt Thompson, Sermon on the Mount and Human Flourishing: A Theological Commentary by Jonathan Pennington.

Theology

6. How do you describe Jesus Christ and what does He mean to you?

There is one God, who eternally exists as one essence and three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Son was present at creation, and all things were made through him, the eternal Word of God (John 1.1-4). Before that act of creation and out of an overflow of his love, God planned to send his Son to redeem his chosen people through his blood, forgive them of their sins, and adopt them as sons, all to the praise of God's glorious grace (Eph 1.4-6). The Old Testament chronicles the story of God preparing the way to send the Son and is filled with promises and shadows of the coming Messiah.

Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God who, fulfilling God's eternal plan, was born of a virgin as fully God and fully man. He was sent to live the life I should have lived and die the death I deserved so that by grace and through faith in him and the one who sent him, we each can be reconciled to God.

He is the image of the invisible God (Col 1:15) and has made known to us the eternal God whom no one had ever seen (John 1:18). God has exalted him now to the highest place and given him a name above every name, that at his name every knee should bow and tongue confess him as Lord (Philippians 2.9-11).

One of my favorite verses in Scripture is 2 Corinthians 1:20, "For all the promises of God find their Yes in [Christ]. That is why it is through him that we utter our Amen to God for his glory." Every story of Scripture and every part of the story of my own life find their fulfillment, meaning, and amen in the person and work of Jesus. He is my Lord and my Redeemer. He bought me at the price of his own life, and in his grace and mercy he invites me to know him as brother and friend (John 15:15).

7. What is biblical repentance?

Biblical repentance is a willful choice to see life with God, under the loving commands and authority of God, as infinitely more good, true, and beautiful than life apart from him.

In the garden, Adam and Eve were tempted not just to eat the fruit, but to doubt the love and goodness of God's direction. They wondered how a good and loving God could possibly withhold something from them. Their fear, guilt, and shame led them to

cover their nakedness, physically hide from God, and lie to him about what happened. But that same good and loving God pursued them. He gently called them back to himself and covered their bodies with the sacrifice of an animal.

Sin for us is similar—a doubting of God’s love and good direction. In sin, whether by commission or omission, I often believe that my way will be better for me.

More than just a feeling of sorrow or an acknowledgement that something was wrong, repentance is an act of the will that affects our actions, beliefs, emotions, and desires. It often begins with an awareness of sin as the Spirit convicts me to be honest with myself and with God. All true and lasting change is founded on honestly assessing and understanding the heart behind choices and the painful impact of those choices on God, myself, and others. This allows me to have a Godly sorrow for sin. It affords me the opportunity to see what desires and actions need to change to experience the good life with God and his people.

Biblical repentance is thus ultimately both a singular act and a way of being in the world. Its a continual process of seeking to more fully live trusting in the loving authority of God’s direction. It is a vital role we play in the work of the Holy Spirit, who progressively moves us over time toward increasing holiness (1 Peter 1.2, 1 For 2.10-16, 2 Cor 3.18).

8. What is biblical faith?

“Faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see” (Hebrews 11:1). Biblical faith is especially marked by those two words confidence and assurance. As Christians, our confident and assured faith is based on the character and nature of God. I know that I can trust him because he is completely trustworthy and forever faithful. So whether it is my faith that Jesus has done for me what he says he has, faith that he is with me and for me, or faith that all things are working together for his eternal glory, I don’t have to know all the answers because I know the one who does.

In the same way that biblical repentance affects every part of our being (actions, beliefs, desires, etc.), biblical faith is an aligning of our whole life with the nature and desires of the God who made us and redeemed us in Jesus Christ. With Jesus, we can say to God, “All I have is yours” (John 17.10). And thus we seek out the wisdom and direction of God in all things, through his Word, in prayer, and with the community of believers, all

while earnestly believing that his ways and thoughts are higher than my own (Isaiah 55.8-9).

One of my favorite examples from Scripture of biblical faith is found in 2 Chronicles 20. A huge army had come to wage war against Jehoshaphat and the people of Judah. Jehoshaphat proclaimed a week of fasting to ask the Lord what to do. Jehoshaphat then stood among the people at the temple and declared to God, "For we have no power to face this vast army that is attacking us. We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on you." Like the example of Jehoshaphat, biblical faith looks to God in all things and confidently believes that in all things the Lord will be with us.

9. What is justification by faith?

Paul wrote in Romans 3.22-24, "But now apart from the law the righteousness of God has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus."

Justification is an act of God, by his grace and because of the perfect obedience of Christ, to count the righteousness of Christ as mine as Christ took upon himself the full penalty for my sin (2 Cor 5.21, Rom 5.19). His righteousness is imputed (counted as mine now), rather than infused into me over time (a Roman Catholic understanding of justification). God shows his love for us by justifying us by the blood of Jesus, who is the propitiation for our sins, thus making God both just and the justifier (Rom 5.8, 3.26).

This righteousness comes apart from the law, not because it contradicts the perfect law of God, but because we don't earn or obtain it by keeping the law (Rom 3.20). Instead, it comes by faith in Jesus Christ. This is in opposition to a justification that comes via works or merit of our own. While obedience to God is necessary and required, even our faith does not merit for us salvation. As Paul wrote, it comes to us freely and wholly by the grace of God. Our faith then is the instrument, rather than the grounds of salvation. Our obedience to God then comes as a result of, in response to, and as evidence of God's saving work in us.

10. Please explain your view of sanctification and how sanctification relates to justification.

As I wrote in the previous question, our justification is a singular event where the righteousness of Christ is given to me fully as Christ fully takes on the wages of my sin at the cross. I love how Dallas Willard describes sanctification. It is the “process through which people are inwardly transformed in such a way that the personality and deeds of Jesus Christ naturally flow out from them when and wherever they are.”

Sanctification is the process of experiencing more now what has already been declared fully true by justification. Whereas justification is wholly accomplished by God, sanctification is a cooperative work of God and Christians. I have been united with Christ in his death (Gal 2.20, Rom 8.10, 2 Cor 5.17-21) and resurrection, and now the Holy Spirit leads me on a process of experiencing more and more the reality of the good life with God.

I believe this process happens best in community and over the course of a time with the resources of grace and biblical truth. Growth is especially marked by increasing presence of the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5.22-23) in the life of the believer.

11. How does the Bible relate the sovereignty of God to salvation?

God’s sovereignty means that he has the right and power to do all that he decides. Again, the gospel is the declaration that the kingdom of God has come near in the person of Jesus Christ. Christians are invited into a life under the benevolent rule and reign of their Savior.

The first few chapters of Ephesians are especially instructive when it comes to understanding this in relationship to salvation. “In [Christ] we were also chosen, having been predestined to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will” (Eph 1.11). Each person is responsible for making a decision to repent and believe. In God’s wisdom, he is able to hold these two things together—election and responsibility.

This is why the church’s obedience to the great commission is so important. Because of election, we are freed from carrying the responsibility for convincing people. Because of need for a person to choose faith, believers must be sent out with the good news.

12. What does the Bible teach about the knowledge of God and the future?

As Lord, God foreknows all things and is powerful and able to ensure that his plans are fulfilled. He “declar[es] the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done” (Isa 46.10). He knows the number and substance of our days before we were created (Ps 139.16). In Acts 2.23, Peter declares that Jesus’ death happened according to the plan and foreknowledge of God even while noting the responsibility of the people. The question of God’s foreknowledge and human free will is challenging and deserves a longer treatise than a few paragraphs, but by faith I know that God can hold together even that which seems most paradoxical to man.

I’ve found God’s foreknowledge and sovereignty to be especially comforting and hopeful during this season of job loss in the midst of a worldwide pandemic. Perhaps I’ll never fully know or understand the reasons behind what happened, but I do confidently rest in the fact that nothing happens apart from God’s good knowledge and purposes.

I see this truth throughout the whole Scripture. Joseph was sold into slavery so that God might use him to rescue his people (Gen 50.20). Jesus himself was handed over to the people by God’s “deliberate plan and foreknowledge” even as it was the people who condemned and killed him (Acts 2.23).

The Heidelberg Catechism sums this up well when explaining providence. “All things come not by chance, but by his fatherly hand.” In God’s sovereignty, he has the right and power to do anything he desires. In his providential foreknowledge, he does so with a fatherly hand.

13. What does the Bible teach about the extent of man’s depravity?

The Bible teaches that sin affects every part of me—my body, my emotions, my desires, my will, etc. There is no part of a person unaffected by the stain of sin. “Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God” (Rom 8.8). However, a biblical view of depravity of man does not say that the image of God has been removed from anyone. It does not state that we are each as sinful as we possibly could be. While there is no one who is righteous, in God’s common grace, much of our sin is restrained. The law of God was given in part for this purpose (1 Tim 1.8-11).

CS Lewis spoke of a universal “ought” in every person. Scripture speaks of this in Romans 2 where Paul talks about the conscience of the Gentiles bearing witness because the law of God is written on all of our hearts.

Ultimately, this means we are unable to save ourselves and there is nothing within us that can merit salvation by God. Fallen people are ultimately left to rely wholly on the sovereign grace of God.

Additionally, and unfortunately, although the declaration of justification has occurred for the Christian, the work of sanctification is a slow and often crooked path. Paul continued to think of himself as the “chief of sinners” and the “least of all the saints” (1 Tim 1.15, Eph 3.8). But for Paul, seeing his own humble state led him to all the more clearly see the majesty of God in Christ Jesus. “Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst” (1 Tim 1.15). “Although I am less than the least of all the Lord’s people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the boundless riches of Christ” (Eph 3.8).

14. What does Christ’s atonement accomplish?

In Adam, we were each and all declared guilty. In Christ, we are reconciled to God. We are no longer enemies but beloved (Romans 5.6-11, Isaiah 53.5, 1 Peter 3.18, 2 Cor 5.21). “For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous” (Rom 5.19). He took my sin upon himself (1 Peter 2.24), received the punishment I deserved (Rom 3.25), and offered himself as a ransom to God (Mark 10.45) all so that I might be reconciled to the Father (2 Cor 5.18-19).

The doctrine of the atonement is one of the most clearly foreshadowed aspects of Christ’s work that we find in the Old Testament. After Adam and Eve sinned, God killed an animal to create a covering for them. The entire sacrificial system was set up as a means of atonement. The author of Hebrews explains this well for us when he wrote, “Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins” (Heb 9.22).

Jesus death accomplished and secured salvation for those whom God had elected in eternity past. This does not negate the call by God on his church to take the gospel freely to all nations. As an act of obedience and in recognition that God saves, not me,

we are to freely offer the gift of God's grace to all. Neither does it mean that faith and repentance have no part in salvation. Faith is the instrument by which salvation is applied.

15. What does the Bible teach about the perseverance and preservation of believers?

Because God's plan of salvation began in eternity past, including the fact that he chose those whom he would save before the foundation of the world (Eph 1) and because of God's sovereignty, God saves fully and forever all whom he intends to. Believers are marked with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the sign, seal, and deposit of our eternal inheritance" (Ephesians 1.13-14). There are those who will confess him as Lord and even participate in the life of a church as a believer, but in the end be proven not to have been saved by grace and through faith. Therefore, believers are commanded to teach, encourage, and equip one another as we run the race of faith together (Mt 7.22-23, Heb 6.4-12, 10.19-39).

The doctrine of perseverance frees Christians from a life of fear. Has God changed his mind about me? Did I and do I still believe enough? Have I done enough works now to earn God's favor? Because salvation, from beginning to end, is wholly God's doing, I can no more lose my salvation than I could earn it in the first place.

Through the inspiration and wisdom of the Spirit, both Paul and James then take up logical next questions. If we cannot earn or lose God's favor, can we just do whatever we want? Paul writes, "What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We are those who have died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? (Rom 6.1-2). Perhaps we shouldn't sin, but clearly then our works don't matter. To the contrary, James writes, "What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? Faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. (James 2.14,17).

16. What is your position on the inerrancy of Scripture? What is your preferred translation of the Scriptures?

Because God is wholly trustworthy, I can wholly trust his word. The original manuscripts of Scripture are without error or fault in their teaching. By God's good design and for our own good, we don't have those but do instead have trustworthy and reliable translations. I primarily read from the NIV because that is the translation I grew up with

and the one used at Sojourn for preaching. However, its not the only good translation, and I have often used the ESV and a few others.

Even holding to inerrancy, Scripture is sometimes hard to understand. We must each rely on the Holy Spirit to illuminate Scripture (1 Cor 2.10-16). There are positions and views I've addressed in this document that other people who love Jesus and whom I greatly admire would disagree. I have found Dr. Mohler's teaching on theological triage to be a useful tool in those conversations. This tool helps differentiate between that which is primary and essential to the gospel versus those questions which can be wrestled with even within a body of elders. The concept of the tool helps promote unity and charity both within a church and between churches.

One of the most obvious teachings of the New Testament is a call for Christians to fight for unity in the church. Love for one another and unity within the church around the clear and priority teachings of the gospel should lead and guide our wrestling with the hard to understand parts of Scripture.

17. What is your view of preaching and teaching?

God has chosen to reveal himself to us through his world and his Word (ultimately through the Word made flesh). Preaching and teaching are essential marks of a God-glorifying and healthy church who is seeking to equip maturing disciples. Tim Keller wrote, "Expository preaching should provide the main diet of preaching for a Christian community. . . . [It] is the best method for displaying and conveying your conviction that the whole Bible is true. This approach testifies that you believe every part of the Bible to be God's Word, not just particular themes and not just the parts you feel comfortable agreeing with."

Preaching and teaching are not just ministries of filling people with more knowledge, but ultimately the work of the Holy Spirit to reveal the greatness of God as his Word cuts to the heart leading toward reminders of gospel truth and implications.

God has chosen to reveal himself in a fundamental way through the Bible. He sustains us until the end, primarily through the truth of his word. Moses, David, Jesus, and the Apostles all taught. The only skill called for among elders is that they be able to teach. Paul's closing call to his protegee, Timothy, were to preach the word, in season and out,

with complete patience and careful instruction (2 Tim 4.1-5). The people of God are fundamentally a people who learn through the preaching and teaching of God's Word.

18. What are your views regarding the church's Lord's Day gathering? What is its purpose, what does it include, etc.?

The regular gathering of the people of God is vital for our spiritual health and encouragement. From the earliest days of the church, the people gathered to worship, feast, pray, celebrate, teach, and more. This is a practice we shouldn't give up, but rather encourage all the more (Heb 10.25).

The Sunday gathering is meant for the worship of God and the edification of his people. This includes a liturgy of preaching of the Word, worshipping God through singing, prayer, the regular practice of the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper, and opportunities for the people of God to demonstrate love for and peace toward one another.

Gatherings should be sensitive to the variety of spiritual states present without being exclusively focused on any one. This means we should neither build a service around non-Christians nor forget that non-Christians are present. Sunday gatherings should be less of an escape from the world and more of a preparation for life with God, on mission, in the world.

Leadership, Gospel Advance, & Church Life

19. The oversight of God's flock at HBC includes the ministry of the Word, prayer and administration. Which aspect of the ministry appeals to you the most?

I believe God has called me to lead and serve through the ministries of administration and prayer. As previously mentioned, the Lord has been growing my heart for pray over this last season, and so I'd love the opportunity to grow in prayer as a church family. The Lord has given me administrative gifting that I believe can and should be used to build the health and unity of a local church.

I've had many opportunities to teach during my previous work and church experience. Additionally, I've had a few opportunities to preach while at Sojourn East. I don't believe

that God has currently or even soon called me to be the regular preacher of a church; however, I would love the continued opportunity to grow as a preacher.

20. How are you currently discipling people as shepherd and overseer of their souls?

One of the great joys of my time as pastor has been discipling and shepherding God's people. I've had opportunities to meet with people wrestling with their faith, new believers eager to learn foundational truths, baptism candidates, new members, believers suffering under the weight of sin, and many people feeling the burden of living with fallen bodies. My role has primarily been to open the truths of God's Word with each of those people, to listen well, pray with and for them, and help them see hope in the person and work of Christ. My wife and I have greatly enjoyed many opportunities to lead pre-marital counseling together as a way of discipling young couples.

21. What activities characterize your evangelistic interest? What is your approach to personal evangelism? To the church's corporate evangelism?

My first evangelistic efforts are with my four children. My children are aged 7 and under, and each is in need of knowing and following Jesus. I believe this is my first calling as an evangelist. Second, our focus as a family is on building relationships with the neighbors who live on our street. We pray for them, build genuine friendships with them, and seek opportunities to share and discuss spiritual questions within the context of that friendship. We've purposely chosen to send our kids to public rather than Christian schools in part for the sake of building relationships with non-Christians.

All Christians are called to be witnesses to the work of God and proclaimers of the gospel. As a corporate church, I believe the church can focus on equipping and encouraging personal evangelism, providing opportunities for the church and its community to intersect, and seek opportunities to show the love of Christ by working for the good of the city and its people.

22. What is global missions? Put another way, what is the goal and work of global missions?

As John Piper so thoughtfully put it, "Missions exists because worship doesn't." Global missions exists because a gospel witness does not yet everywhere exist. Since God holds together both divine election and personal responsibility, the church must send people out (Rom 10.9-15). The church is the best place to train, send, and support missionaries.

Each of those areas (train, send, support) deserve the attention and time of the church in order to send healthy missionaries who help plant healthy, indigenous churches.

23. How would you describe healthy pastoral ministry?

Healthy pastors are men committed first to the Word and prayer. Before anything else, before any measure of success or fruitfulness, pastors should be known as men of the Word and prayer.

Second healthy pastors are faithful: to who God has called them to be, where he has called them to be, and what God has called them to do. This includes a humble, honest assessment of my own life, doctrine, gifting, and calling. This allows me to be the pastor God wants me to be rather than wishing I was the pastor God called someone else to be. A healthy pastor is committed to knowing and growing with the people God has given to him.

Healthy pastors embrace their God-given limitations. They are honest with themselves, God, and others about their sin. They lead humbly, seeing themselves as under-shepherds and Jesus as Chief Shepherd. They seek community rather than isolation. They don't ignore their ministry to their family in order to serve the church.

Healthy pastors serve as examples to the flock (1 Peter 5.3). They are growing in both emotional and spiritual maturity. They are growing in the fruit of the Spirit. They labor with their time and energy as a joyful sacrifice for the glory of God and the good of the people.

24. How would you describe a healthy church?

A healthy church is one growing in both blood-bought unity and biblical purity. The unity of the church purchased by Christ at the cross seems to be one of the most regular teachings of Paul's letters. A healthy church is thus growing in its display of love for one another by which our Savior said we would be known. A healthy church is constantly seeking to grow in purity, examining itself its life and doctrine in light of the Scripture to more faithfully and fully follow the Word of God.

It seeks to be a place of honesty, grace, and truth where people can come to know God and be known by him within the context of a loving, encouraging, and equipping

community. This begins with elders who are committed individually and corporately to these things.

25. What are the biblical roles and responsibilities of elders and deacons? And how do they relate?

Elders are called by God to be men exercising spiritual oversight of a local congregation through the ministry of the Word and prayer (Acts 6.4, 1 Tim 3.2, Heb 13.17). Deacons serve in practical ministries, freeing the elders to focus on their ministry of Word and prayer (Acts 6.1-4). This doesn't mean deacons never lead; rather, they don't have the authoritative teaching and disciplining responsibilities of elders.

Elders and deacons are called to work together for the growth and good of a local church. Just as the local church is one body with many members, none being more or less vital than the others, so too the deacons and elders of a body complement one another with their own calling and strength for the good of the church.

Administration, Operations, & Leadership

26. Describe your leadership style along with any relevant passages of Scripture.

I love the admonition of Peter to be "eager to serve, not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock" (1 Peter 5.2-3). I want to lead as a man who can with honesty and integrity say, "Follow me as I follow Christ" (1 Cor 11.1) as I watch my life and doctrine closely (1 Tim 1.14).

Just as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve (Mt 20.28), I am called not to be served as a pastor but to serve others. The role of pastor is one of humble service and care for the good and growth of others. I desire to be the kind of pastor who is available to people, listens well with empathy and understanding, and offers to walk alongside others rather than push them away.

I strive to be a leader who can get things done with speed and make decisions through prayer and thoughtful collaboration. A large part of an Executive Pastor's role is to equip the saints for the work of the ministry (Eph 4.12), so I want to do everything I can to help others succeed in using their gifts and experience to serve the kingdom. I am a leader

who seeks the good and growth of others, genuinely cares about people, and has the ability to think about both the whole and the parts of a system and plan.

27. Describe how you have developed staff members under your supervision.

I've sought to develop staff members under my care in the same way I want to be developed by those who lead me. I want to know about my staff's calling, interests, experiences, passions, strengths and struggles so that I can see them grow spiritually, emotionally, and professionally. I see my staff as people made in God's image, not as resources to be used up. I want to equip and encourage them to thrive in the role they are in while also helping them grow in preparation of future roles or opportunities. I want them likewise to be looking out for the person they can be developing, whether a staff member under their care or a volunteer or deacon they can invite into serving alongside them. I believe staff members should have clear job descriptions and development plans. They should be empowered with both the freedom to lead and a clear understanding of what success looks like in their role.

28. Describe your biblical philosophy (focus on a few key points) concerning church finances.

First, God doesn't need a church budget to accomplish his mission (Ps 115.3, Eph 1.11). The mission of the church has thrived in times of feast or famine, cultural honor or persecution, with buildings and without. A church budget with the finances to run various ministries and accomplish goals is a gift of grace from God.

Everything belongs to God and we are merely stewards of what he has given us (Mt 25, Ps 50.10). The money belongs first to God, so direction on spending should first and foremost come from him as we align the budget with his mission and his priorities.

A church's budget should align with what it values because a budget will reveal what it truly values. (Matthew 6.21).

A church budget should focus on people over programs. By this I mean that that mission of the church is evangelism and discipleship. While programs can certainly be helpful

and often necessary for the mission, investing in equipping and empower the people of God rather than keeping certain programs from dying should take priority.

Because the members of the church are the ones being asked to give joyfully, sacrificially, and worshipfully, church finances should be handled in such a way that honors the sacrifice of people and offers transparency in decisions. Transparency builds unity and trust, which will encourage generosity.

Debt is permissible but reduction or elimination of debt allows a church to take advantage of strategic opportunities.

29. Describe your biblical philosophy (focus on a few key points) concerning church facilities.

Buildings and facilities are instruments the people of God use to fulfill the church's mission. Therefore, they should be used to their fullest. Abraham Kuyper once said, "there is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is Sovereign over all, does not cry: 'Mine!'" Taking our cue from him, every square inch and hour of the building should be used to the glory of God.

Creativity, beauty, and excellence in the design and use of facilities reflects the character of God. In nature we see the wonder and creativity of a God who loves beauty. The same is true while reading through descriptions of Eden, the Temple, or the New Heavens and Earth. Function is certainly an important part of stewardship, but excellence and beauty in our spaces proclaim to all the majesty of God.

A church can and should use its building to create sacred space for people and facilitate their spiritual formation. Our lives tend to swing from the mundane to the over-scheduled without much in between. Sacred spaces set apart for worship, prayer, study, gathering, etc. help us slow down our bodies and still our frenetic hearts long enough to be once again captured by the beauty of the God who loves us.

30. What church administration resources have you found helpful for fulfilling your ministry?

First, I've benefited from watching and learning from others while being trained by men with decades of Executive Pastor experience. I have benefited from the work XPastor, Church Law & Tax Group, ECFA, and NACBA. Outside of Christian resources, I have benefited from the writing of Peter Drucker, SHRM, the Flippen Group, and countless number of leadership books and articles.

31. Describe your level of interest and experience in strategic planning and implementation of mission strategies for a local church.

I love strategic planning and alignment. I've spent a lot of time as a church staff member, deacon, or volunteer feeling alone and isolated in my ministry. Leaders and volunteers thrive when they feel cared for, appreciated, and members of something bigger than themselves. Moreover, people are committed to what they help create, so collaborative strategic planning inspires ownership and encourages excellence. Ministry alignment allows a church to focus its time, finances, people, etc. on its mission to the specific place where God has them. In my previous role as Pastor of HR, in collaboration with the Executive Pastor, I developed a document for guiding strategic ministry planning conversations that allowed staff and elders to work backward from vision, mission, and values through goals, outcomes, measures, assumptions, and down to needed resources.

32. Describe your level of interest and experience in internal/external communications including social media.

In my role overseeing HR, a great deal of my work was managing internal communications for a staff of 70+ across five locations. I have experienced developing and creating content for websites, blogs, and training videos used by staff, volunteers, and members. Externally, I have significant experience in graphic design using Adobe InDesign and Illustrator for content creation. I was also a member of the implementation team for the church's current website that houses both external, member portal, and internal staff pages. People are busy and church staff will always be thinking about the

life of the church more than members and attenders are, so clear, consistent, and compelling communication is necessary.

33. What areas of church administration are you still working to grow in and develop?

I'd like to grow in my understanding of accounting practices. I'd love to have a fuller understanding of the principles and best practices in order to provide better stewardship, accountability, staff support, and transparency with church finances.

Additionally, I'd like to continue studying how to best learn from the business world while remembering that we're a church. I've grown tremendously from my secular resources and through my own non-church work experiences. However, I have also seen times when the distinct characteristics of a church begin to take a back seat to best practices from the for-profit world. I believe we can and should learn from others while retaining the beauty and mission of the church.