

Weekend Schedule

Friday

8:00 – 8:30	Consultation team meets on-site at the church for prayer and preparation for the day.
8:30 – 10:00	Interview with the church pastor
10:00 – 5:00	Interviews with church staff and lay leaders – 30 mins every 45 mins (plus time for lunch)
5:00 – 7:00	Dinner with pastor and spouse
7:00 – 8:30	Focus group (non-leaders)

Saturday

9:00 – 10:00	Focus group (Ad Board/Council)
10:00 – 3:00	Training workshop with staff and lay leaders (lunch break) Total congregation is invited
3:00 – 6:00	Complete report and share with pastor

Sunday

?	Worship service(s) with member of consultation team preaching
After last service	Report is read to congregation and they receive a copy

Interview Guides

Overview

The interviews conducted with the pastor, staff, and key lay leaders of a church as part of the weekend consultation process are an important part of identifying the appropriate prescriptions needed for growth and health.

It is important for each member of the consultation team to be fully engaged in the interview process, even if they are not the ones asking questions, in order to gain a complete perspective of current perceptions, strengths, and opportunities.

The pastor interview is typically 1 ½ hours and the other interviews are usually 30 minutes long scheduled back-to-back every 45 minutes. (Remember to allow time for a short on-site lunch break.)

Before the Interviews

- Choose a comfortable location which will offer little or no distractions.
 - Familiarize yourself with all of the questions.
 - Determine who on the team will ask the questions. Everyone else will take complete notes and only ask questions to clarify a point.
 - Make enough copies of the interview guides for everyone to use.
 - Arrange for lunch to be brought in by the host church.
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Open the Interview

- Welcome the person, thank them for their time and make them feel comfortable.
 - Introduce yourself and each person in the room. Encourage each person to be honest – explain that these interviews are confidential
 - Briefly share with them the purpose of these interviews. (Gathering information from key church leaders in order to provide the correct prescriptions needed for church health and growth.)
 - Explain to them who will be asking questions and that everyone else will be taking notes.
 - Tell them how long the interview will last and explain that they will have some time at the end to ask questions.
 - Open with a prayer.
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Interview Guides, Continued

During the Interview

- Use the 80/20 rule: do 80% listening and only 20% talking.
 - Focus on what the person is saying and not on the next question.
 - Ask follow-up questions where needed to clarify or gain additional information.
 - Remain neutral. Try not to overreact to anything the person says.
 - Ensure note taking is consistent—not just when the person says something really good or really bad.
 - Make smooth transitions between topics. (Ex. “Thanks for sharing those positive comments about your pastor, now I have a question about church programs.”)
 - Ensure questions are open-ended (cannot be answered with one or two words—“yes”, “no”, “I guess”, etc...) to facilitate comments and provide insight.
 - Avoid having multiple people asking questions during an interview if possible. (It can feel more like an attack and makes most people very uncomfortable.)
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Close the Interview

- Ask each person if they have any questions. (If you really want questions, ask them – “What questions do you have for us?” instead of – “Do you have any questions?”)
 - Thank them for their time and honesty.
 - Have someone close in prayer at the end of each interview.
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Interview Tip

Practice.

Find someone you can go through the questions several times with who will give you appropriate, real-life type of answers. Practice the whole interview from beginning to end. Ask questions, take notes, and look for opportunities to ask follow up questions. Have the person you are working with give you feedback on how you did.

Pastor Interview Guide

MANDATORY QUESTIONS TO ASK EACH TIME

- 1) Tell us about your spiritual journey to this point.

- 2) What has been the largest church you have been a part of? Describe your experience there.

- 3) What do you personally want to get out of this weekend experience?

- 4) In your opinion, what is the best thing about this congregation?

- 5) What would you like to see changed in this congregation if possible?

- 6) How would you describe a healthy church?

- 7) Where would you like for this church to be 3-5 years from now?

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Pastor Interview Guide, Continued

OPTIONAL QUESTIONS TO ASK AS TIME ALLOWS

8) Please share with us the church's current:

- **Mission**

- **Vision**

- **Goals**

- **How are you doing on those goals?**

9) Walk us through the planning process used by your church.

10) What happens if the goals are not achieved? What is the evaluation process?

11) If a new believer came to your church, what would be the pathway for making them a disciple?

12) Describe for us your strategy for reaching the community around your church.

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Pastor Interview Guide, Continued

OPTIONAL QUESTIONS TO ASK AS TIME ALLOWS

- 13) **How does someone go about becoming a leader in this church?**

- 14) **What are some examples of intentional leadership development you have used here in this church?**

- 15) **What would you say are the most pressing opportunities here?**

- 16) **If you had the power to change one thing immediately about this church, what would it be?**

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Pastor Interview Guide, Continued

OPTIONAL QUESTIONS TO ASK AS TIME ALLOWS

- 17) **Are there any questions that we did not ask that you feel we should have?**
- 18) **What questions do you have for us?**
- 19) **How can we be in prayer for you and your ministry?**

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Leadership Interview Guide

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

POSITION: _____ CHURCH: _____

- 1) Tell us about your spiritual journey to this point.
- 2) Tell us about your current position here at church. (Ask about past church positions if applicable.)
- 3) What do you want the church to get out of this weekend? What is the mood of the congregation?
- 4) What is the best thing about this church?
- 5) Why do you think the congregation has plateaued/declined? What issues do you feel need to be addressed?
- 6) What do you see in the future for this church? (5-10 years)

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Leadership Interview Guide, Continued

- 7) What would you say is working best in your ministry area? What is not working as effective as it could?**

- 8) How much confidence do you have in the pastor?**

- 9) If you had the power, what is the one thing you would change about the church right away?**

- 10) What would you like to share with us that we have not asked?**

Ask at least one or two staff people:

1. How effective is the staff in setting and meeting goals?
 2. How is planning done around here?
 3. How are plans and goals evaluated?
 4. How often do you meet with the pastor and what are those meetings like?
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