

Selecting a Search Committee

Here are some guidelines to follow when selecting your search committee:

1. The committee size that is most helpful is between five and nine persons. Too small a group is not representative and too large is not functional.
2. Some churches have the moderator serve as an ex-officio member. If the moderator will be a member of the committee, this should be made clear at the time of the committee's selection.
3. The committee should be broadly representative of varying ages including, if possible, a teenager.
4. Men and women should be as close to equal in numbers as possible.
5. Seek a balance between members who have belonged to the church for some time, those who have recently joined, those representing boards or committees, as well as those with no current leadership responsibility.
6. Seek persons who will see the importance of serving and will give the time necessary. Those who are away extended periods of time may not be able to give the continuous amount of time necessary and frequently slow the committee's work.
7. This is not the place for inactive persons or non-members. Seek those who actively participate in the life of the church, and find other ways of bringing inactives back to participation.
8. Persons employed by the church could pose a conflict of interest concern.
9. Select flexible people those who can listen and discuss objectively. Avoid opinionated persons who must have it their way or those who have an axe to grind or a pre-determined agenda.
10. No more than one person per family or household should be selected.
11. Persons serving must be highly respected by the congregation and able to treat search committee proceedings with absolute confidentiality.
12. Seek people who are comfortable acknowledging and addressing the conflicts and problems of the past in an open, honest, and objective manner.

One method of selecting members of a search committee is for individuals in leadership positions to each write down seven or so names that he/she feels meets the qualifications. These suggestions are then tabulated and evaluated. It is also appropriate to solicit suggestions from the congregation. It is probably not advisable to ask for volunteers. It can be difficult to decline the specific request of an individual to serve on the committee, even when there is general consensus that the person's gifts are not best suited to such work.