



PREPARING TO SEEK A MINISTER

Our overall concern is that, before beginning the search for a minister, the church should prayerfully take the time to look at its situation, and its reasons for seeking a minister, so that there is clarity of understanding between all church members, the denomination and, eventually, the prospective minister. Our recommendations are made on this basis.

(If the ministry is to be shared between churches certain practical details (Sections D2 and 5 below) will need to be worked at together (eg time allocated to each church for preaching and other duties, manse and stipend).

NOTES

These statements should be:

1. Prepared over a period of time (don't rush at it but work it through gradually and thoroughly).
2. Prepared from a broad spectrum of church opinion (eg the leaders, the youth, and men and women of the congregation known for their Christian maturity and discernment).
3. Represent the united opinion of the church members (be honest with one another!)
4. Be realistic and reasonable (guard against unreasonable expectations).
5. Don't omit to identify the difficulties as well as the opportunities (and, at the same time, have faith and be prepared to work together to bring your plans to fruition).

It is felt that some churches might not find it easy to engage in all these preliminary matters. We suggest that the denomination/trustee or guardian contact is asked to help by providing guidelines, direction or just a sounding board.

THE LOCAL CHURCH NEEDS TO EXAMINE AND PREPARE A STATEMENT IN REGARD TO:

SECTION A: THE CHURCH

1. Details

Name of local church.....

Address.....

Telephone and church email address / web site.....

Its setting (rural, country, town, suburban, inner city etc)

2. A brief history

3. Some facts and figures about your church

Membership numbers:	Regular non-member attendees
Under 25.....
25-44.....
45-65.....
over 65.....
children and youth.....

Membership changes in last five years:

Additions	on profession.....
	by transfer.....
Losses	by death.....
	by transfer.....
	by removal from roll.....

Number of members residing

	within one mile of church
	within one to two miles of church
	over three miles from church

Wider contacts (please give an indication of the number with some links to the church)

Approximate attendance at Sunday services, am..... pm.....

Special services (eg family, youth, parade etc).....

Other Church based activities:

Type of Meeting/Activity	Average Attendance
Families
.....
Children
.....
Youth.....
.....
Adults
.....
Men.....
.....
Women.....
.....
Senior Citizens
.....

Missionaries/missions supported at home or overseas. Does your church have a policy on mission giving?

4. Leadership

What style or format of leadership does the church have, eg does the minister do most things, or is there a shared leadership involving an Assistant or Youth Pastor, Elders and Deacons, or others?

5. Ethos

How would you describe the main characteristics of your church or its ethos at present? You may find it helpful here to consider its core spiritual values and the church fellowship, in relationship with each other, the local community and wider world.

6. Premises

What sort of premises does the church have and how are they used.

SECTION B: YOUR LOCAL COMMUNITY

1. A people-profile of those who live in the neighbourhood in which the church seeks to function.

Numbers, age-groups, (growing/static/declining) etc

Social composition

Local industry or employment

Any recent marked changes

Societies and clubs

List of other churches around

What relationships exist with them?

2) The church's involvement in the community

Outreach activities (please list as far as possible regular contacts, as well as special events or young people's work such as Crusaders or schools work)

Making church premises available for non church uses

Making friends and engaging in local secular pursuits (are individuals in your church involved in this way?)

What does the local community think of your church?

What opportunities exist for more involvement?

Does your church have a strategy for this? Yes / No (please see next section)

SECTION C: THE CHURCH'S VISION

Does your church have a vision statement? If so, please include it here or attach separately.

Describe the church's priorities and how you would wish to see the church develop in:

a) short term

b) medium term

c) long term

How do you aim to achieve and manage this process? (You may find it helpful here to review the church's strengths and weaknesses, and its resources). What changes or additional resources would assist you to achieve your goal?

Briefly, what do you consider makes an effective and vibrant church?

SECTION D: APPOINTING A MINISTER

1. A clear definition of the role(s) which the minister is expected to fulfil.

What is essential?

What is desirable?

What should be the minister's prime aims?

What should be the minister's long-term aim?

How should the church leaders and members help the minister to fulfil these aims?

2. Giftings

(How would you rate the personal qualities which you require of the Minister (5 being the top rating).)

	5	4	3	2	1
Ability to reach the unchurched					
Good Communicator					
Leader					
Motivator					
Organisation and Administration					
Pastor					
Preacher					
Teacher					
Visionary					
Worship Leader					

Any others (please give details eg. work geared to age groups, gender etc.)

3. How would you describe the type of person you are looking for?)

4. What role, if any, would the minister's spouse be expected to fulfil?

5. Shared appointment

Is the minister expected to work mainly within the existing fellowship or with other churches or, indeed, exercise a wider ministry? If so, please give details of the suggested arrangements in terms of time and task allocation and how you would, in general terms, see this working out. Please note any special financial arrangements or implications under 6 below.

6. An assessment of the financial and other resources which are available for the up-keep of the ministry.

Full/part time.....

Stipend.....

Housing.....

Expenses.....

Holidays/time off.....

Other.....

Special financial arrangements in the case of a shared appointment (state how far they have been agreed with the other party)

Name of person responsible for drawing this information together:.....

On behalf of.....

Date.....

The sources used are:

"Churches' Handbook" published by the Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches will be found to be an invaluable resource on this and many other related matters (£8.00 from your usual supplier; ISBN: 0-95382502-7).

The joint paper prepared by Geoffrey Lee and others in 2002

A Dovetail application form

Some URC documentation