



Creating a Winsome Weekend for a Candidate

This is an important weekend for your church and for the pastoral candidate and his family who are your guests for the weekend. Your church will make an impression on the candidate so it is always best to carefully prepare for the weekend. Keep the following principles in mind when planning the weekend:

- **PREPARE YOUR PEOPLE**

Communicate as much information about the applicants as possible prior to their coming. This allows people to gain insight on their potential pastor and builds anticipation. Let them know the plans for the weekend and encourage everyone to participate. Send appropriate notice to the members concerning the vote for that weekend.

- **PREPARE YOUR FACILITY**

First impressions count. An extreme makeover is not necessary (in most cases), but having the yard mowed and the facility looking clean and smelling fresh is always nice.

- **PREPARE YOUR CANDIDATE**

After the planning for the weekend is complete, direct contact should be made with the candidate by your church's contact person. Provide your name and contact information (phone and email). Give them an explanation of the weekend plans along with the addresses and phone numbers that are appropriate (hotel, realtor, church, etc.). Help them arrange their travel plans and communicate that the church is covering their travel expenses. Rental car, gas, and meals are appropriate. Otherwise, reimbursing for mileage can also work. Follow-up the week they are coming to confirm details and to see if there are any other questions or concerns.

ARRIVAL

The candidate and family will travel to your community and arrive preferably by evening. It is good to let them check into the hotel where they will be staying. It is nice to have a small welcome gift placed in the hotel room such as a vase of fresh flowers and a bag with some bottled water and snacks. A hand-written note welcoming them to your community for the weekend is a nice added touch.

Leaders and spouses meet with the candidating family. This could be for a meal or for some finger foods and desserts. Less formal makes for a more relaxed setting. It is good to introduce yourselves and have some discussion regarding the church, community, and the candidate. While you want to spend time with your guests, try not to go too late as they have traveled and will need time to decompress and evaluate as they walk through the weekend.

COMMUNITY TOUR

Appoint a couple who is really familiar with the community to give the candidate and family a tour of the community. Point out things of interest- grocery stores, banks, city offices, schools, medical clinics, parks, etc. Always put the community in the best light, but be honest about things that need improved when asked.

HOUSING SEARCH

This is a vital need for a new family. Have someone prepare a list of homes for sale and for rent. The visiting couple may give some indication in advance of coming which they prefer, but I recommend having some of both. A nice touch would be having a realtor prepared to show them some housing options. Also, have some rentals arranged for a walk through.

MEET AND GREET

This could be an afternoon coffee time which would allow for casual conversations or an evening meal followed by a question and answer session. In most cases, Open Bible will provide a moderator to take written questions and then arrange them in a suitable order for the candidates to respond.

WORSHIP SERVICE

The church will lead the worship service with the candidate providing the message for the morning. An honorarium for the candidate is appropriate in line with what the church provides for pulpit supply

BUSINESS MEETING

Following the morning service, an Open Bible leader will be present to conduct a business meeting to vote on the candidate. This leader will bring the ballots and election tally sheet.