FUTURE EVENT PRIORITIZATION

**Small Group Rotation with Prioritization Spending**

**Event Length:** 2-2.5 hours  
**Format:** Small groups rotate through 7 tables, allocating resources to show priorities  
**Follow-up:** Results compiled and presented the following week

**EVENT OVERVIEW**

This event helps your congregation identify what qualities, experiences, and approaches they want in their next pastor. Small groups rotate through 7 tables, each focused on a different aspect of pastoral ministry. At each table, groups discuss options and allocate 17 pennies or stickers to show their priorities.

**Why This Format Works:**

* Forces real prioritization (cannot say everything is equally important)
* Builds consensus through small group conversation
* Keeps energy high through movement and rotation
* Separates data collection from results to avoid bias
* Allows communal discernment rather than just individual votes

**When to Use This Format:**

* You want conversation and community processing
* You have 40-100 people participating
* You can recruit 7-14 facilitators (1-2 per table)
* You have space for 7 tables with movement between them

**PRE-EVENT PREPARATION**

**Room Setup**

**Table Arrangement:**

* 7 tables spread around the room with clear pathways between them
* Number each table clearly (1-7)
* Each table needs seating for 8-12 people
* Post the question and answer options prominently at each table (large poster board or flip chart)

**Materials Needed Per Table:**

* Question poster with all answer options listed
* Stack of blank score sheets (one per group rotation)
* Container of 17 pennies or stickers per group
* Pens or markers
* Timer (shared, audible to whole room)

**Central Area:**

* Welcome and instruction area where everyone can see and hear
* Timer system (phone with loud alarm, or someone announcing)
* Rotation chart showing which group goes where

**Staffing**

**Required Roles:**

* Event Coordinator (1 person) - Gives instructions, manages timing, leads debrief
* Table Facilitators (7-14 people) - One or two per table to guide discussion and collect score sheets
* Registration Helper (1-2 people) - Assigns people to groups as they arrive

**Table Facilitator Training (30 minutes before event):**

Your job is simple: facilitate, do not influence.

**Your Role:**

1. Welcome each new group to your table
2. Make sure they understand the question and options
3. Give them their score sheet and 17 pennies or stickers
4. Watch the time and give a 2-minute warning
5. Collect their completed score sheet when they rotate
6. Do NOT tell them what you think or how other groups spent their money

**Key Phrases:**

* Take a minute to read the question and all the options
* You have 17 pennies to spend across these options
* Discuss as a group how you want to allocate them
* Two minutes left at this table
* Time to rotate - please leave your score sheet here and move to Table X

**What If Someone Asks What Other Groups Did?**

* We are keeping each group's responses separate so everyone can be honest
* You will not see other groups' choices until next week when we share all the results

**What If Discussion Gets Stuck?**

* What matters most to you about this question?
* If you had to pick just one or two, which would it be?
* Does everyone in your group agree, or do you see it differently?

**What If They Finish Early?**

* Great job. You can sit quietly until the rotation bell rings
* Do NOT let them start discussing the next table's question

**Remember:** Your job is to keep the process moving, not to shape their answers.

**Group Assignments**

**As People Arrive:**

* Count off into groups of 8-12 people
* Try to mix ages, tenure, and perspectives in each group
* Give each group a number (Group 1, Group 2, etc.)
* Each group stays together for all 7 rotations

**Rotation Chart Example (7 Groups):**

**Rotation 1:** Group 1 at Table 1, Group 2 at Table 2, Group 3 at Table 3, Group 4 at Table 4, Group 5 at Table 5, Group 6 at Table 6, Group 7 at Table 7

**Rotation 2:** Group 1 at Table 2, Group 2 at Table 3, Group 3 at Table 4, Group 4 at Table 5, Group 5 at Table 6, Group 6 at Table 7, Group 7 at Table 1

**Rotation 3:** Group 1 at Table 3, Group 2 at Table 4, Group 3 at Table 5, Group 4 at Table 6, Group 5 at Table 7, Group 6 at Table 1, Group 7 at Table 2

**Rotation 4:** Group 1 at Table 4, Group 2 at Table 5, Group 3 at Table 6, Group 4 at Table 7, Group 5 at Table 1, Group 6 at Table 2, Group 7 at Table 3

**Rotation 5:** Group 1 at Table 5, Group 2 at Table 6, Group 3 at Table 7, Group 4 at Table 1, Group 5 at Table 2, Group 6 at Table 3, Group 7 at Table 4

**Rotation 6:** Group 1 at Table 6, Group 2 at Table 7, Group 3 at Table 1, Group 4 at Table 2, Group 5 at Table 3, Group 6 at Table 4, Group 7 at Table 5

**Rotation 7:** Group 1 at Table 7, Group 2 at Table 1, Group 3 at Table 2, Group 4 at Table 3, Group 5 at Table 4, Group 6 at Table 5, Group 7 at Table 6

*Note: Each group rotates to the next numbered table. After Table 7, return to Table 1.*

**EVENT SCHEDULE**

**Total Time: 2-2.5 hours**

**Welcome and Instructions (10 minutes)**

**Event Coordinator Opens:**

"Welcome. Tonight we are doing important work for our church's future. We are identifying what we need in our next pastor.

Here is how this works:

**1. You have been assigned to a small group. Stay with that group all night.**

**2. Your group will rotate through 7 tables. At each table, there is a question about pastoral ministry with several answer options.**

**3. At each table, your group gets 17 pennies (or stickers) to spend across the answer options. You decide together how to allocate them.**

* You can put all 17 on one option if that is most important
* You can spread them evenly
* You can do any combination that adds up to 17
* This forces you to prioritize, not just say everything matters equally

**4. You have 8 minutes at each table:**

* Read the question and options (1-2 minutes)
* Discuss what matters most (4-5 minutes)
* Decide how to spend your pennies (1-2 minutes)
* Record your decisions on the score sheet

**5. When the bell rings, your group rotates to the next table number. If you are at Table 7, you go to Table 1.**

**6. Important: Each group's score sheet stays private. You will not see what other groups chose. This keeps everyone honest.**

**7. After all rotations, we will come back together to talk about what you learned and experienced. The Transition Team will compile all the data this week and share results soon.**

Questions before we start?"

[Answer any clarifying questions]

"Find your group number and go to your first table. You will have 8 minutes. Timer starts now."

**Table Rotations (56-64 minutes)**

**7 rotations at 8 minutes each equals 56 minutes**

*Add transition time for movement equals approximately 60-64 minutes total*

**Timing:**

* Ring bell or announce when 6 minutes have passed (2 minutes remaining)
* Ring bell again at 8 minutes (Time to rotate)
* Give 30-60 seconds for groups to move to next table
* Start timer again when groups are seated

**During Rotations:**

* Event coordinator monitors the room
* Helps any confused groups find their next table
* Ensures facilitators are collecting score sheets
* Reminds people they can use the bathroom between rotations as needed (groups continue without them)

**Large Group Debrief (30-40 minutes)**

**Bring everyone back to the central area. Keep groups sitting together if possible.**

**Event Coordinator:**

"Thank you for engaging in this process. Before we close, I want to hear what you learned and experienced tonight. These questions are not about the data you recorded. They are about what you discovered through the conversations.

I am going to ask several questions. When you want to share, just speak up. You do not need to raise your hand, but please speak loud enough for everyone to hear."

**Debrief Questions:**

**1. What did you learn about our church tonight that you did not know before?** (5-7 minutes)

* Let 4-6 people respond
* Listen for themes about church identity, values, or needs

**2. What surprised you?** (5-7 minutes)

* Where did your group agree easily?
* Where did you have different opinions?
* What answer options were harder to choose between?

**3. What got you excited as you thought about our next pastor?** (5-7 minutes)

* What possibilities opened up?
* What hopes did you hear expressed?

**4. What concerns or challenges came up in your discussions?** (5-7 minutes)

* What will be difficult for our next pastor?
* What do we need to be realistic about?
* Were there tensions between what different people want?

**5. If your group could tell the Pastor Search Committee one thing based on tonight, what would it be?** (5-7 minutes)

* Let several groups share their main takeaway

**Event Coordinator Summary:**

"Here is what I heard tonight: [Summarize 3-4 main themes from the debrief]

The Transition Team will spend this week carefully compiling all your score sheets from the 7 tables. We will create visual summaries showing where our congregation has strong consensus and where we have diversity of opinion. Both are valuable information.

We will share those results [state when and where: next Sunday, at a church meal, via email, etc.].

This data will go directly into our Church Profile that the Pastor Search Committee will use. Your voices matter. Your priorities matter. Thank you for your thoughtful engagement tonight."

**Closing Prayer (5 minutes)**

**Event Coordinator or Pastor:**

"Father, thank You for this church and the people in this room who love it. Thank You for bringing us through this interim season and for the work You are doing in us.

We have talked tonight about the kind of pastor we need. But we know that You already know who that person is. You are preparing them even now. You are preparing us to receive them.

Give our Transition Team wisdom as they compile this information. Give our Pastor Search Committee discernment as they seek the person You have called. Give us patience and unity as we wait.

We trust You completely with our future. In Jesus' name, Amen."

**Dismiss**

**THE 7 TABLE QUESTIONS**

**Table 1: Pastoral Qualities**

**Question Poster:**

**PASTORAL QUALITIES**

All of these qualities are important, but which ones matter most for our next pastor?

**Allocate your 17 pennies across these 7 qualities:**

* **Biblical Knowledge and Teaching** - Strong understanding of Scripture and ability to teach effectively
* **Great Commission Leadership** - Passion for evangelism, missions, and making disciples
* **Great Commandment Leadership** - Models and teaches loving God wholeheartedly and neighbors sacrificially
* **Leadership Development** - Ability to identify, equip, and empower others for ministry
* **Pastoral Care** - Compassion and skill in counseling, visitation, and caring for needs
* **Administrative Abilities** - Organizational skills and effective church administration
* **Theological Soundness** - Commitment to Baptist doctrine and biblical orthodoxy

**Table 2: Growth Areas**

**Question Poster:**

**GROWTH AREAS**

Where should our next pastor lead us to grow as we fulfill the Great Commission and Great Commandment?

**Allocate your 17 pennies across these 7 growth areas:**

* **Reach younger generations** that our church currently does not have represented
* **Reach ethnic groups** that reflect community demographics we currently do not have represented
* **Emphasize care to those in our community who are impoverished**
* **Emphasize ministries** that help our church minister to those who may not share our language
* **Emphasize reaching the neighborhood** (or county) where our church resides
* **Prioritize strengthening** our church's financial resources and budget
* **Create missions opportunities** for our membership to serve the Lord

**Table 3: Mission and Ministries**

**Question Poster:**

**MISSION AND MINISTRIES**

What ministry areas should our next pastor prioritize?

**Allocate your 17 pennies across these 10 ministry areas:**

* **Church planting and revitalization**
* **Mission partnerships** (locally and globally)
* **Connecting our church** to preferred ministry partners, associations, and conventions
* **Cross-cultural outreach and relations**
* **Care for the vulnerable and impoverished**
* **Host community events** and funerals for community people (members or not)
* **Ministry to people** who are limited English proficient and seeking citizenship
* **Ministry to children**
* **Ministry to youth**
* **Other ministry area** (write in on score sheet if you spend pennies here)

**Table 4: Current Ministries to Preserve**

**Question Poster:**

**CURRENT MINISTRIES TO PRESERVE**

New pastors often bring new directions. What current ministries should be preserved with great care before making changes?

**Allocate your 17 pennies across these 9 ministry areas:**

* **Music and Worship**
* **Sunday School and Discipleship groups**
* **Sunday Schedule** (service times and format)
* **Wednesday Nights**
* **WMU** (Woman's Missionary Union)
* **Children's Ministry**
* **Youth Ministry**
* **Maintaining pastors and deacons** as offices of the church
* **Congregational decision-making** and function

**Table 5: Pastoral Experience Areas**

**Question Poster:**

**PASTORAL EXPERIENCE AREAS**

What ministry experience is most important for our next pastor to have?

**Allocate your 17 pennies across these 5 experience areas:**

* **Discipleship programs** - Leading small groups, Bible studies, spiritual formation
* **Missions (local and global)** - Short-term trips, partnerships, mission strategy
* **Community outreach and service** - Serving the community, building relationships outside the church
* **Intergenerational ministry** - Connecting different age groups, family ministry
* **Evangelism training for members** - Equipping people to share their faith

**Table 6: Education and Experience Requirements**

**Question Poster:**

**EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE REQUIREMENTS**

What minimum qualifications should our next pastor have?

**Allocate your 17 pennies across these 7 options:**

**Education Level:**

* **College degree**
* **Attending seminary** (currently enrolled)
* **Finished seminary** with Master's degree
* **Doctoral work** (completed or in progress)

**Years of Pastoral Experience:**

* **0-5 years** of experience
* **6-10 years** of experience
* **10+ years** of experience

*Note: Your group must decide how to balance education against experience.*

**Table 7: Leading Change**

**Question Poster:**

**LEADING CHANGE**

How should our next pastor approach change in our church?

**Allocate your 17 pennies across these 4 approaches:**

* **Significant changes quickly** to address urgent needs
* **Moderate changes at a steady pace**
* **Gradual, incremental changes** with plenty of explanation
* **Maintain traditions** with minimal changes

**SCORE SHEET TEMPLATE**

**Create one score sheet per group per table (you will need 7 times the number of groups)**

**FUTURE FOCUS EVENT - SCORE SHEET**

Table Number: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Group Number: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Question: [Write the table question here]

**ALLOCATION:**

Record how your group spent the 17 pennies:

Option 1: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_\_ pennies

Option 2: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_\_ pennies

Option 3: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_\_ pennies

Option 4: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_\_ pennies

Option 5: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_\_ pennies

Option 6: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_\_ pennies

Option 7: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_\_ pennies

[Add more lines if table has more than 7 options]

**TOTAL = 17 pennies**

**Optional Notes:**

[Space for facilitator to note key discussion themes]

**POST-EVENT TASKS**

**Same Day (Event Coordinator and Facilitators)**

Tasks to complete:

* Collect all score sheets from all tables
* Organize score sheets by table number
* Count total number of groups that completed each table
* Thank all facilitators
* Note any pastoral care needs that surfaced during debrief

**Within One Week (Transition Team)**

**Data Compilation:**

For each of the 7 tables:

1. Create a spreadsheet with all answer options
2. Enter each group's penny allocation
3. Calculate totals across all groups
4. Calculate percentages
5. Create visual charts (bar graphs work well)

**Analysis Questions:**

* Where do we see strong consensus (most pennies concentrated)?
* Where is opinion divided (pennies spread fairly evenly)?
* What surprises appear in the data?
* How do the 7 tables connect to each other?
* What does this tell us about the pastor we need?

**Results Presentation:**

Plan to share results at [choose format]:

* Church-wide meeting
* Sunday morning announcement with handout
* Email with PDF of charts
* Posted on church website
* Combination of above

**Results should include:**

* Visual charts for each table
* Narrative summary of key findings
* Areas of consensus
* Areas of diversity
* Transition Team's observations
* Next steps in the pastoral search process

**Church Profile Integration**

Use this data to complete the Future Focus section of your Church Profile:

**Include:**

1. Summary of pastoral qualities ranked highest
2. Growth areas the congregation prioritizes
3. Mission and ministry emphases
4. Current ministries to preserve
5. Desired pastoral experience
6. Education and experience expectations
7. Change leadership preferences
8. Key insights from debrief discussion
9. Areas of strong consensus
10. Areas where congregation has diverse views

**The Pastor Search Committee will use this profile to:**

* Write the pastoral job description
* Screen candidates
* Prepare interview questions
* Help candidates understand your church's expectations

**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

**What if we have fewer than 40 people show up?**

You can still do this event with 3-4 groups. The data will be less comprehensive, but the conversations are still valuable.

**What if we have more than 100 people?**

Consider running two sessions (afternoon and evening) to keep groups at manageable sizes. Or combine this data with the survey tool to capture input from those who cannot attend.

**Can we add or change the table questions?**

Yes, but be careful. These questions align with the standard Pastor Profile Questionnaire. If you change them significantly, make sure your changes still produce data the Pastor Search Committee can use.

**What if a group runs out of time and does not finish a table?**

The facilitator should ask them to make their best quick decision and record it. Incomplete data from one group will not ruin the overall results.

**Should we provide childcare?**

Yes, if possible. This helps parents participate fully.

**Can people who cannot attend still give input?**

Yes. Provide the survey tool (Option 2) for those who miss the event. Combine survey results with event results in your final compilation.

**What if someone gets upset during the debrief?**

Acknowledge their feelings, thank them for their honesty, and offer to talk with them privately after the event. Do not let one person's strong emotions derail the whole debrief.

**How do we prevent one vocal person from dominating their small group?**

Train facilitators to watch for this and gently redirect: "Let's hear from others in your group" or "Does everyone agree with this allocation?"

**What if groups want to see the data immediately?**

Explain that careful compilation takes time and prevents errors. Promise a specific date when results will be shared (within one week).

**TIPS FOR SUCCESS**

**Before the Event:**

* Train facilitators well so they understand their role
* Test your timer system to make sure it is loud enough
* Print extra score sheets in case you need them
* Arrange tables so rotation paths are clear
* Post large signs with table numbers

**During the Event:**

* Keep the energy positive and forward-looking
* Do not let the event run long (people lose focus after 2.5 hours)
* Watch for people who seem confused and help them
* Thank facilitators publicly during the closing

**After the Event:**

* Compile data carefully and double-check your math
* Present results clearly with good visuals
* Acknowledge both consensus and diversity in the findings
* Connect the data to next steps in the pastoral search

**Remember:** This event is not about getting right answers. It is about discerning together what God is calling your church toward and what kind of leader you need for that journey. The conversations matter as much as the data.

**APPENDIX: ALTERNATE FORMATS**

**Smaller Churches (Under 40 People)**

If you have a small group, consider:

* Doing all 7 tables in one large group discussion
* Spend 10-15 minutes per question
* Use a large poster board to track the group's allocation for each question
* This creates more unified conversation but takes longer (2-3 hours)

**Very Large Churches (Over 150 People)**

If you have a very large group, consider:

* Running two identical sessions (afternoon and evening)
* Limiting registration to keep groups manageable
* Using both this event AND the survey tool to capture all input

**Hybrid Approach**

Combine this event with the survey:

* Hold the rotation event for those who can attend in person
* Provide the survey for those who cannot attend
* Weight both data sources equally in your final compilation
* Acknowledge in your results presentation that you used both methods