

Summary of Focus Group Results

The Designated Pastor Nominating Committee created a focus group process in order to gather the concerns and aspirations of the congregation in looking for our next pastor. We created nine focus groups, based on various demographics within our congregation, with the hope that focus group members would feel more comfortable and be more honest in their responses in the context of sharing with peers.

The nine groups were Africans, African-Americans, Caribbeans, Men, Parents of Minor Children, Seniors, Young Adults, Youth, and White and Others. Participation was encouraged but not mandated; participants self-selected which group they wanted to join. Forty percent of the congregation took part in the focus group process.

We asked all groups the same four basic questions. We also included additional questions for the parents of minor children. Below are the questions and a summary of the most frequent responses. More detailed information is available separately.

Question 1: What are the most important qualities of a Pastor?

Nearly all groups stated that their top desire was for a pastor who believes in the Bible and in the authority of Scripture rather than being heavily influenced by society and who correctly teaches Scripture. The second most common response was that a pastor must be Christ-like, that is, prayerful, humble, God-fearing, honest, transparent, approachable, having a servant's heart. Another very common response was that the pastor of Crossroads must be able to work effectively with multiple cultures and generations, embracing all cultures and acknowledging with humility the need to learn more.

Question 2: How important is pastoral availability to minister to individual members in their time of need? In what way(s) should a pastor be available?

Here we saw more diverse responses, particularly across generations. People generally want the pastor to be available in emergency situations, such as an unexpected death. However, most older participants ranked pastor availability as extremely or very important, whereas younger members acknowledged the importance of the pastor maintaining an appropriate work/life balance and stated they were more likely to reach out to elders, ministry leaders, or peers in times of need. There was, however, broad agreement that the pastor should build relationships with all members.

Question 3: How do you feel about change and are you open to change?
What changes, if any, would you like to see with a new pastor?

The bulk of participants described themselves as open to change, with the caveats that change should not contradict Biblical principles and that it should be positive and lead to progress. Participants stated that changes should be clearly communicated and explained to the congregation. Several focus groups want to see a greater emphasis on discipleship on the part of the incoming pastor.

Question 4: In what ways would you like the appointed pastor to engage with the community?

Crossroads is already active in community outreach, and participants definitely want to see the incoming pastor support outreach, including by working with ministry leaders, attending outreach events, and serving as a catalyst for the best ways to serve our community. Focus groups also want the pastor to visit and collaborate with other churches in the area. In addition, some groups mentioned the possibility of the pastor mentoring youth and young leaders in the community.

Parent group, additional question 1: In what ways would you like to see the incoming pastor engage with our children and youth?

Parents were enthusiastic about the pastor building appropriate relationships with their children, including by regularly stopping by Sunday school classes and youth group meetings. They would love to see a children's moment during the regular worship service, with the pastor directly engaged with the children. They would also like the pastor to encourage the active and regular involvement of our youth in worship and in service to the church and the community.

Parent group, additional question 2: How do you want the incoming pastor to support you as parents?

The parent focus group participants are hoping that the next pastor will be someone with a family who can model good parenting. In general, they would like the pastor to "just be there" for parents and to develop relationships with both parents and children.