PRESBYTERY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA PCA

*Experiential Religion Questionnaire for men pursuing licensure or ordination*

## Directions

1. Type your responses into this document. Your responses should be concise and clear.
2. When completed, save, close and email this questionnaire, as an attached document, to the Chairman of the Examining Committee.
3. You will receive email notification from the Chairman when this questionnaire has been received and archived.

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

The purpose of this examination is to give us the opportunity to know about your life as a Christian man. Our committee’s intent is twofold: (1) We work on the church’s behalf to assess your readiness for the pastoral ministry, and (2) we work on your behalf to pastor you well during your presence among us. This, of course, means that you should answer the following questions as honestly as you can—remembering both the profound weight of our task and the deep freedom extended to you in the Gospel.

The content of this exam has been informed by two things: (1) the Biblical requirements for elders (as summarized in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1); and (2) deep reflection upon our own lives as pastors. The structure of this exam has been built around the various stages upon which the life of faith is actually lived—devotional, moral, relational, familial, and vocational. We realize that these distinctions are somewhat artificial—that there is a great deal of overlap and mutual influence in these categories—but we have structured the exam in this way in order to help you self-evaluate as pointedly as possible. Be assured that in all of this we, as your brothers, are bound by God’s own word to guard your reputation well—and we desire to do so.

**The Pastor and His God**

*“Devote yourselves to prayer.”*

*“An elder must not be a recent convert…”*

1. If you have not already done so in in a different document, give us a brief account of how and when you came to Christ.

2. Who would you say have been the most formative people in your spiritual life? Why and how?

3. What have been some of the most formative events in your spiritual growth?

4. Name some specific areas in which you have, over the years, seen real redemptive change in your life.

5. Describe the role that Scripture plays in your daily life. For example, do you study the Scriptures devotionally daily? What plan or strategy do you follow for reading the Scriptures? Have you established a practice of Scripture memorization?

6. Describe your prayer life.

7. What things have helped you most as you have learned to pray?

8. What other means/disciplines (if any) do you practice in your spiritual life?

9. In what areas of the spiritual life do you seem to struggle the most?

10. Are you actively involved in your church? How so?

1. How would you explain the Gospel to an unbeliever?
2. In what sense(s) does the Gospel still apply to your life today?

**The Pastor and His Character**

*He must be…temperate, self-controlled…not given to drunkenness…*

*not a lover of money… not pursuing dishonest gain…one who lives what is good…upright, holy, disciplined…*

1. Evaluate yourself with respect to each of the qualifications for the office of elder, enumerated in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. We know that all of us pastors fail at every one of these in some way or another, so feel free to be honest. Indicate which of these qualities are your strongest and which are your weakest. For your greatest areas of weakness, what does repentance typically look like for you?

1. above reproach
2. the husband of one wife

(c) temperate

(d) prudent

(e) respectable

(f) hospitable

(g) able to teach

(h) not addicted to wine

(i) [not] pugnacious… .not quick-tempered

(j) gentle

(k) uncontentious

(l) free from the love of money….not fond of sordid gain

(m) one who manages his own household well

(n) keeping his children under control with all dignity…not accused of dissipation or rebellion

(o) not a new convert

(p) [having] a good reputation with those outside the church

(q) not self-willed

(r) loving what is good

(s) holding fast the faithful word, which is in accordance with the teaching, that he may be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict

2. What are some concrete ways in which sin has affected your sexuality? In what concrete areas (thought or deed) do you see need for redemption in your sexual life, and what does the pursuit of this redemption look like for you?

3. What does greed look like in your life? In what ways do you labor against the materialistic tendencies both in your heart and in our culture?

4. How do you decide how you will spend your money? Are there any particular areas in which you struggle with issues surrounding money (i.e. tithing, slowness to give, overspending, failure to settle accounts, gambling, etc.)?

5. What does it look like for you to “eat to the glory of God” (1 Corinthians 10:31)? In what ways do you struggle to do so?

6. Describe your convictions and practices regarding the use of alcohol in your life.

7. Do you use tobacco? If so, please describe your convictions and practices regarding its use in your life?

8. Is there any substance—prescribed or otherwise—by which you, in all honesty, regard yourself as ensnared? Explain.

9. Is there any practice or habit by which you, in all honesty, regard yourself as ensnared? Explain.

10. What do you understand your greatest sin struggle to be? How does this manifest itself in your life and work?

11. Has pornography or other intentional viewing of sexually explicit materials been a struggle for you in the past? Is it at present? Please explain. How do you wisely flee this temptation and pursue righteousness in this area of your life?

**The Pastor and Others**

…above reproach…respectable, hospitable…not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome…have a good reputation with outsiders…blameless…not overbearing, not quick-tempered…

1. Do you think of yourself as a good friend to others? Why or why not?

2. Are you a person who regularly seeks out relationships of intimacy, support, accountability, and encouragement with others? What does that look like in your life?

3. Describe your closest friendships.

4. How would your friends describe you?

5. What do your friendships with women look like?

6. What do your relationships with people of other races look like?

7. How do you relate to people who are poor or needy?

8. How would a non-believer describe you?

9. How do you generally handle conflict in relationships?

10. Are there any unreconciled relationships in your life? If so, why?

11. Have you ever been accused or convicted of a crime? If so, explain.

12. What is your greatest relational strength?

13. What is your greatest relational struggle?

**The Pastor and the Family**

*The husband of but one wife…must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect…a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being disobedient…”*

1. Are you currently married? \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No If yes, how long? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_

How did you meet your wife? How long were you engaged?

2. Have you ever been divorced? If so, explain.

3. Do you have children? If so, tell us a bit about each of them.

4. As far as you can discern, describe your children’s faith.

5. If you’re married, please describe what it looks like for you to lead your family spiritually.

6. What does repentance look like in your home?

7. What do forgiveness and grace look like in your home?

8. What do conflict and conflict resolution look like in your home?

9. To what extent do you talk with your wife about your struggles with sin—particularly any sexual struggles you may have?

10. Who do you and your wife talk to about areas of struggle and growth in your marriage?

11. What are some specific ways in which you seek to nurture your children in their faith?

12. Describe how you discipline your children.

13. In what ways do you need to grow as a husband?

14. In what ways do you need to grow as a father?

15. In what ways do you practice hospitality in your home?

16. How do you create and protect your private family time?

17. How would you describe your relationship with your parents? How does this relationship affect your understanding and practice of ministry?

18. If married, please have your wife provide a brief written statement of her assessment regarding your call, your qualifications under the standards of 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1, and her willingness to go with you into the ministry. Ask her to pay particular attention to the following questions: *Do you feel that your husband is called to the ministry? How, as far as you can tell will (or does) being in ministry affect your marriage and family? What are some areas in which you hope to see your husband grow as he cares for you, your children, and the congregants under his care?*

**The Pastor and the Church**

*…able to teach…he must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.”*

1. Why do you want to be a pastor?

2. What sort of things have other people said to encourage you in this path?

3. What, in your opinion, are the central features of the pastoral vocation?

4. What areas of pastoral ministry are most closely aligned with who you are and with your gifts?

5. What areas of pastoral ministry will likely be the most difficult for you?

6. Who are your pastoral models/exemplars?

7. What are the marks of a good teacher/preacher?

8. How would you assess yourself as a teacher?

9. How would you assess yourself as a leader (a mobilizer of others)?

10. How do you protect against the tendency to “just do ministry” as opposed to “raising up people in the congregation to do ministry” (Eph 4)? In other words, describe your discipleship and leadership development philosophy.

11. How would you assess yourself as an evangelist? Describe some practical ways you try to cultivate friendships with unbelievers where you live, work, or play. Describe one recent example of a conversation you had with an unbeliever and how you wove the Gospel into the conversation.

12. Describe the role reading, thinking, and studying play in your life.

13. How do you relate to those who disagree with you theologically?

14. How do you handle criticism and disapproval? Please provide a specific recent example.

15. Do you ever struggle with depression or severe discouragement? What does this look like in your life? How do you tend to your soul in those moments?

16. In what ways do you struggle with overworking or with laziness?

17. What does Sabbath observance look like for you?

18. What kinds of things make you anxious about being a pastor?

19. How do you understand the role of your brothers in the presbytery in your life and ministry?

20. Below provide the name, address, and phone number of 3 references (one non-church) from your community whom we may contact: