

## **Qualifications for Leaders**

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This morning I want to give an update on our succession plan and search for Petra's next senior pastor. This transition is happening because I am feeling called to give more time to building the Hopewell Network of Churches.

This is a huge step for our church family and also for Erma and me. **For me it is like marrying off a daughter you spend years nurturing, protecting and pouring your life into.**

So, there is a lot of emotion, concern and care that we give to this search. As an elder team we have been working prayerfully and with due diligence to find the person God has called, prepared and gifted for this next season of Petra.

So, this morning is **cause for celebration** because God has answered our prayers.

This **process began in 2013** with a structured succession plan. This has been a long but fruitful journey for us.

**In partnership with Britton Consulting Group** we have done a series of assessments, profiles and interviews of several candidates as we narrowed down our choice.

- **We also formed a search committee**, comprised of the elders and a number of people from various ministries within the church, to interview the candidate.
- **The Hopewell Network Apostolic Leaders** also interviewed the candidate.
- **Erma and I** have done a series of personal interviews and discussions with the candidate concerning Petra's vision and values.
- **Through all this we have arrived at a totally 100% unified recommendation. God is so good.**

Before I share **who** we are recommending, let me share some of the things we have taken into consideration in our search. **Some of the qualifications we looked for in a leader.**

**We are not looking for perfection.** Every leader has strengths and weaknesses, failures and successes as part of their journey.

- What we look for are **patterns, potential, and for a teachable heart.**
- Are they **open to counsel and willing to change?**
- No matter who I would recommend this morning – they would have areas they need to grow in.
- That is why we have **built into the process about a year transition** so that I can help the next leader grow into this new role.

**Actually, most of these leader qualifications are things God expects all of us to be growing in. A leader must have a higher degree of accomplishment and a demonstrated lifestyle of these qualities.** But God expects these of all of us, not just leaders.

So, as I go through these qualifications let's see how you are doing and which areas you have some growing to do. The first area is Biblical qualities....

### **1. Leaders and others need to demonstrate biblical qualities.**

The first quality we looked for was a clear sense of call. The Apostle Paul puts a lot of emphasis on a person having a clear call from God and that call being confirmed by others.

It is not enough to have good leadership skills or be a nice person everyone likes. It's not a popularity contest. **The bottom-line question is not whether a person is able to do the job.** Many people could probably pastor this church.

- **The question is, who has God called?** Does the individual have a clear sense of call and do we discern that call as well?

**Romans 1:1 Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God**— who has God set apart for this role?

I think God intends all of us to live with a sense of call toward something in life. The call can change with different seasons of our life but it's great to get up in the morning and head off to work with a feeling of "**this is what I was made for – this is God's calling on my life!**" God created us to live with a sense of **destiny and purpose**.

In writing to Titus, Paul gives a list of biblical qualifications to be considered when choosing a leader. – Let's read Paul's requirements.....

**Titus 1:6-9** An elder must be blameless, faithful to his wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient. <sup>7</sup> Since an overseer manages God's household, he must be blameless—not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. <sup>8</sup> Rather, he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. <sup>9</sup> 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.

When Paul uses the word **blameless**, he does not mean **sinless perfection**. It means a person honestly faces their sins and weaknesses instead of excusing them. When they wrong someone, they make it right to the best of their ability. They are transparent and real. They are doing their best to live a holy life.

**In verse 8** - Paul describes it is as striving to live a self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined life.

Paul says followers of Jesus, and especially leaders, need to faithfully **love their wives** and give the time and energy to **train their children** well.

- A leader needs to be **hospitable** in the way he reaches out and welcomes people. He must love people.

**Paul puts character and spirituality above gifting. He does this because we teach more by our example than we do our preaching.**

After clarifying the importance of character, he then lists the importance of **sound teaching and doctrine**. A leader must reverence God's word.

It is important to me that all our leaders hold to a biblical view of the authority and inspiration of the scripture. Because beyond that you are only spewing your opinions. We want pastors who are sound biblical teachers.

In Paul's letter to Timothy he also said we need to **consider the spirituality of the spouse as well**. They need to be trustworthy, confidential and worthy of respect.

## **2. Leaders and others need to demonstrate heart qualities.**

This means we need to have a heart for people, not just a love for ministry. There is a difference. I remember a long time ago one **young aspiring leader** told me he loves to preach but he doesn't like working with people.

- Well you don't have a message until you can identify with the pain and struggles of your people.

A true leader – weeps and agonizes over the struggles of his people. Paul lived this.

**My dear children, for whom I am again in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you, Galatians 4:19**

Before I gave my blessing to the young men who asked to marry my daughters, I needed to be convinced they truly loved my daughters above themselves.

**My number one qualifier in my successor is I want to know that he loves the people of Petra more than the position. He is called to serve the people, not have the people serve him.**

- He must be willing to sacrifice for the sake of the people. Lay down his life. He must not be in it to make a name for himself. He must be a servant leader not just a great visionary or preacher.

His heart must be in **passionate pursuit of God** and his kingdom.

A man of **prayer and worship**.

A heart to **see revival** come to our nation.

A man who is **a grace filled leader**. Gentle and kind.

I understand that the next leader has a lot to learn so I look for someone who is **teachable**. One who is humble enough to ask questions and to ask for my help.

- Someone who shows honor and welcomes my wisdom.

Someone who is **trustworthy** with the trust we are giving him.

I am not looking for someone with a great big vision. Vision will come as a result of connecting to the hearts of the people and to the heart of God.

### **3. Leaders and others need to demonstrate value qualities.**

We looked for a leader with common values. A similar DNA. A respect for our history. **Someone who will honor the past with a vision for the future.**

Someone who can **build on the foundation that is laid**. Not come in and try to lay a new foundation of values.

**Methods and how we do ministry will always change but values should not change.** I expect the next pastor to do some things differently but hold to the tested values of our church in this community.

Someone who values our “**Barn for the Harvest**” vision of reaching the lost. A vision to stay engaged in the community and honoring of the other churches.

Someone who **keeps evangelism and missions the number one priority** of the church. Someone committed to local and global missions.

**Mark 16:15 And then he told them, “Go into all the world and preach the Good News to everyone. (NLT)**

This is our God given mandate, The reason for our existence.

We looked for someone who will honor **our unique DNA of embracing the ministry of the Holy Spirit in a way that is respectful and engaging of new people attending our services**. Able to blend a seeker and spirit filled approach.

- This has been a key to Petra's success in reaching our community.

We looked for someone who is a **team player** with a commitment to work with the guidance of our elder team.

One who. **honors the generations** – young and old.

One who takes time to **greet and listen to those on the social fringe** among us.

\*\* Remember this is not just leader qualifications. Consider how you can grow in all these areas. **A leader can be all of these things but if the people in the congregation are not also demonstrating these same qualities the church will go nowhere.** It takes everyone to make a church successful. **Petra is where it is today not just because of Erma and me. It is because of all of us together loving and caring for the broken.** It is because of the sacrifice of all of us together. So, we can't put the success or failure of a church all on the leader.

Another important value has been Petra’s role as the **flagship of the Hopewell Network**. The next Senior Pastor needs to be totally committed to Petra as the apostolic center of the network.

#### **4. Leaders and others need to demonstrate gift qualities.**

A Senior Leader needs a strong leadership gift. This is one of the spiritual gifts listed in **Romans 12:6-8**.

**We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; <sup>8</sup>if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.**

We looked for a **proven track record** of gifted leadership.

We looked for someone with a **strong preaching and teaching gift**.

Someone **Spirit-filled** and able to move in the gifts of the Spirit.

Someone who is **visionary** and **able to build and lead a strong team**.

## **ANNOUNCEMENT**

After considering all these qualifications and much prayer and discussion the elders enthusiastically recommend **Pastor Brian Coles** for the Senior Pastor position.

**Erma and I are very grateful** that God send Brian and Tracy and their family to us three years ago. We feel confident in passing the baton on to Brian to lead this great team into the next great season ahead for Petra.

**This means we need to find another Student Ministries Pastor.** I know this is a effects many of the youth and parents. But Pastor Brian will continue to serve in Student Ministries until his replacement is found.

**For the next three weeks we invite you to send your responses of affirmation or concerns to me or Pastor Ken.** I know you have not been privileged to see all the assessments or be part of the interviews but If you are aware of any **biblical reason** Pastor Brian Coles should not serve in this role please let us know.

After we have had time to consider your responses the elders will make a final decision which will be shared on **Sunday August 18<sup>th</sup>**.

If he is approved, he would begin serving in September as **Senior Associate Pastor**. During the next year I would **mentor and train** him for his new role.

**The final date for the completion of the succession is not yet determined.** The plan would be to slowly hand over more and more responsibility to him once he is released from his present role in youth ministry.

**Putting all this into perspective, it is not about any one person.** It is about building the kingdom of God together. It is about each one of us doing our part. It is about us being the church under the leadership of King Jesus.

We want to see His kingdom come in even greater measure among us in the days and years ahead.