
UGBC Pastoral Questionnaire

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Thank you for showing interest in the office of Senior Pastor at Union Grove Baptist Church. This questionnaire is a way for us to get to know you, your ministry and preaching philosophies, and other meaningful information. Please answer each question as openly and completely as possible. Feel free to attach a separate page if the space given is not adequate.

Call to Ministry and Personal Context Questions

1. Connections: are there any individuals or groups whom you know that we (UGBC) also know?

My background includes long standing ministry work with many Baptist and Bible churches, specifically through itinerant preaching with the organization I started five years ago, Prophecy Focus Ministries. I am also part of the Independent Fundamental Churches of America (IFCA International), the Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry, International, the Pre-Trib Research Center, where I have contributed articles and preached at their conferences. I have been a frequent speaker on the Word for Life broadcast on VCY and an occasional guest on In Focus on TV 30.

My schooling includes Moody Bible Institute, Hyles-Anderson Baptist College, Trinity Seminary in Newburg, Indiana, Northland International University which formerly was called Northland Baptist Bible College in Dunbar, WI., and I will receive an earned PhD from Louisiana Baptist University and Theological Seminary in May 2020.

Out of my vast background in education, ministry and public service I am confident that there are many people at UGBC that are familiar with many of the same people I know.

2. What do you like to do for fun? Are you a sports fan? Do you like music? If so, what types of music do you enjoy? What are your favorite books and movies? What do you and your family do for fun?

“Fun” is a very subjective concept and has a very wide range of potential answers that to some would be categorized as boring, or even as work. My “fun” is spending 1 hour to 90 minutes a day in the gym and on the streets working out. I usually listen to Christian news updates and music during those times.

I am a moderate sports fan and enjoy professional football, as does my entire family. My wife is the avid football fan with my son.

The most pleasurable time of the year for our immediate and extended family is the warmer months in our Wisconsin climate. We have a nice backyard with a built-in pool and have people over on a regular basis. We do host get togethers for mainly Christian families multiple times during the nice weather. We do kindly advise those who choose to come that reasonably modest swim wear is required, and they must be aware of where their children are for their protection.

Our family enjoys opening up our home to all who wish to come several times a year. The fellowship and food make for building great relationships! This is an integral part of our ministry to love people. This takes place anytime during the year.

Our family also enjoys taking trips to wholesome places that provide entertainment that does not compromise our Christian values. We enjoy the beautiful outdoors including the woods, mountains and animal life.

My most enjoyable and extensive use of my time is studying God's Word, writing articles and books, and teaching and preaching. I have an extensive library and spend multiple hours most days, performing what I term these "fun" activities.

3. Tell us about your decision to enter vocational Christian ministry.

My decision to enter the ministry was in a strict sense not my decision to make, it would better be stated that I responded to God's non-audible but very direct call on my life. The scenario took place when I was approximately 17 years old. I was in my parent's home contemplating my future. God impressed on me that my life should be spent serving Him and serving others through the ministry. I told my parents, who were both Godly people that I believed God was calling me into the ministry. They were both thrilled and the preparation began for ministry. The preparation included serving in my local church, preaching at Pacific Garden Mission in Chicago, sharing my faith in various venues, going on short term mission trips, and attending multiple different Christian Universities and Seminaries.

4. Tell us about the community church and/or ministry where you currently serve. What have you learned about your current context that helps you shepherd your particular flock?

I have been involved in church planting which including being the senior pastor of the plant. In addition, I served as an associate pastor of a church for twenty-years after I turned the church plant over to a new pastor. The duties I performed covered every possible area of ministry. I am currently a member of Brookside Baptist Church where I served as a teacher of adults for several years before I began to extensively travel with Friends of Israel and Prophecy Focus Ministries.

5. Briefly, summarize for us the gospel and why it is the greatest news ever heard.

The gospel, as you have heard me share at UGBC for the past several weeks, is indeed the greatest news ever given to mankind. Though the gospel should not be the dominant theme of every message in the church, which is usually comprised of over 90% believers, it is to me a message that should be shared in summary during most messages. I highly encourage the church family to work diligently to bring visitors to church. It is very disappointing to the church family when the Pastor fails to at least give the basic Gospel when their visitor is present.

The Gospel in summary regards the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 15:3-4). The necessary aspects of sharing the Gospel include:

1. All are sinners (Rom. 3:10, 23).
2. All deserve eternal separation from God because of their sin (Rom. 5:12; 6:23; Rev. 21:8).
3. Jesus Christ paid the complete price for our sin in His death, burial and resurrection (John 3:16; Rom. 5:8)
4. A person must not only understand and accept the above facts, but must humble themselves, acknowledge their sin, and receive by faith God's free gift of salvation through trusting in Jesus Christ for complete payment and forgiveness of sin (Eph. 2:8-9; Rom. 10:13).

6. How has your education prepared you to preach on a weekly basis?

My resume attests that I have an extensive Bible and theological education. Knowledge and Biblical expertise have many times been ignored and minimized by those who seek "experiential" services. God mandates the Pastor must, "Preach the word! Be ready in season *and* out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching (2 Tim. 4:2). The Bible is not "simple." The Gospel is simple enough that a child can understand the good news. However, there are 12 major doctrines in Scripture, and they take serious study to understand. Therefore, extensive study is necessary, but there is also more to preaching than intellectual knowledge. God uses the preaching and teaching of His Word to change lives.

Preaching must not only teach the Word accurately, but also be presented in a manner that touches the heart of the sinner and every Christian. The Holy Spirit uses God's Word, properly presented, to move the unsaved to saving faith. God uses His Word to convict Christians living in sin to repent. God's Word properly taught helps husbands and wives have a godly marriage and raise godly children. The list of things that God accomplishes through the preaching and teaching of His Word is very extensive. Therefore, education provides for theological and doctrinal excellence, which must be presented in a manner that is designed to change lives.

7. Are you ordained? If so, where and under what denomination?

I was ordained at the First Baptist Church of Hammond Indiana, which is an independent fundamental Baptist church.

8. Tell us about a difficult time in your life and how God used that time to better equip you for pastoral ministry.

The most difficult time I have faced in my life was many years ago when I was starting a church in Greenfield, Wisconsin. I was fresh out of Bible college, and per the way I was taught in college, had no financial support. Valori and I moved to Milwaukee and I began going door to door to hundreds of homes. We had approximately 80 people in fairly short order. We were meeting Sunday's at a bank, and things were going extremely well. However, the ACLU attacked me and the church, and that started a long process of a few years of litigation, and our eventual positive outcome.

The lessons learned included that God's people will be attacked when they are sold out for the Lord. Persecution is nothing new to Christians, and we suffered individually, and as a church during this time of false attacks. God prepared us for the rest of our lives by going through an extreme time of testing both spiritually, emotionally and financially. Once God gave us the victory, we were more dependent on God, and more vigilant in areas that would protect God's people.

9. When your work wears you down, in what ways do you seek renewal for ministry?

God has given me the very unique ability over the years to be bi-vocational virtually my entire adult life. When you love your "work" it is not "work" but a constant source of enjoyment. I loved my work in ministry and in the secular world, and what to some would be very long hours of "work" was almost always a source of pleasure.

However, there are things that I do on a regular basis to find renewal. First, I workout at least five days a week, and most weeks seven days. I attempt most days to get a good night's sleep. I spend time with my wife every day, and we talk and strategize together about every subject imaginable. We take vacations and spend time with friends and family, which is a great time of renewal. I cook breakfast five-six days a week for my wife and son, and we sit down and eat together. These simple things provide a balanced life that prevents burnout, which many people experience who work far less hours than I usually do.

10. Have you read our church's doctrinal statement? Would you say it aligns with your own doctrine? If you were to change anything about our church's statement of faith, what would it be?

I have read the doctrinal statement and have no issues with UGBC's position.

11. How have you shown to the people you lead that you love and care for them? Would you say that communicating your love is a strong point for you?

By definition, a true pastor, a shepherd, must love the sheep of the flock. I very strongly believe that a top priority of the pastor is to literally show his love for those who have chosen to attend the church. Since you already have seen me at UGBC for several weeks,

I trust you have seen that I stay in the foyer from 10-15 minutes before the service until after the service is getting started. I want to greet the people and express how happy I am to see them. I walk to the back of the church while closing the service to greet the people. I walk through the pews to greet people who slipped by me at the door.

I have openly expressed public gratitude from the pulpit to individual people and UGBC attenders as a whole for special things they have done. I have called multiple people at UGBC when I am made aware of a blessing or a need. Though I am not the current pastor at UGBC, I have made it a point to fill in the pastoral gap with love, kindness and a bit of leadership. A pastor who does not openly show his love for the people will watch them slowly leave the church, never to return, and rightly so. God will build the church body with a shepherd who openly loves the individual people, all people, not just the select few who are the most influential. Every individual person has tremendous value to God, and to me.

12. What do you see about our church and community that would indicate to you that God might indeed be calling you as the best fit to be our pastor?

All I want to say is WOW! I see tremendous potential at UGBC. My wife and I are excited every time as we drive towards UGBC and go past farms, apartments, and homes where thousands of people are wandering about without Christ. I see a church with a tremendous leadership team, the deacons and their wives. I see a wide variety of ages showing that the church is ready to reach out to people of all ages. UGBC is alive, and if God leads us to partner together, I know I will do what I have always done, and that is sink my heart, soul and body into building up the current attendees at UGBC and working with you to get the auditorium and classrooms filled up with people.

One of the advantages I would bring to UGBC, is years of experience dealing in public secular service and church ministry. I recognize that UGBC already has the leadership and workers in place, and that the church is stable. Therefore, if the Lord leads you, we can immediately work together on what you already put in place. Yes, visitors will judge UGBC strongly on what the pastor does in and out of the pulpit, but they will also judge UGBC on the friendliness of the church, and the ministries that UGBC has for people of all ages. The basics are in place, and I believe I can help you expand your outreach to do the mission of the church, reaching the lost for Christ, discipling new and advanced believers, and having a church that is centered on loving others. That's exciting!

In addition, I have spent years in leadership and working with those in the secular field with great success that are polar opposite of a committed Christian. Understanding people from all walks of life and how to work with them to accomplish necessary outcomes is invaluable in the church setting. Corrosive, command and control styled leadership is not appropriate for the Lord's work. Pastors must be servant leaders who love people, and have the God given gift to powerfully and lovingly convey the truths of the blessed Scriptures.

13. When was the last time someone confronted you about an area where you need to grow or where you offended them? How did you respond?

To be very honest, I have not been told I offended anyone for quite some time. However, anytime someone makes a suggestion, even if I find it a bit harsh, I never challenge the person. I want everyone to find me approachable and to share exactly what is of a concern to them. A pastor must have the same “mind” as the Lord Jesus, who “humbled Himself” (Phil. 2:3-8). There not anything much worse than an arrogant pastor who will not humble himself and allow others to speak without feeling intimidated.

14. Do you tend to avoid conflict; or, on the other hand, do you tend to be too confrontational? Would you share with us an example of a time when you exhorted someone in the right way?

Conflict and confrontation are the results of when one person’s opinion or demeanor becomes offensive to the other. Leadership is the “art” (and potentially better stated applying Godly principles) of accomplishing more than the science of management, or conflict resolution states is possible. When someone is upset with another person, that normally is a sign that someone is failing to speak the truth in love, and attempting to dominate the other person. To avoid a dissertation type answer, the simplicity of this issue is “I want ___ because I said so.” Normally “___” is something that is really not worth getting upset over. However, if the conflict is the result of someone truly being offensive, then the leader must firmly and kindly speak the truth in love and hold their ground for the sake of what is right.

I have had public officials call me and begin literally screaming and using profanity regarding an issue they were experiencing. These were unsaved people with tainted ethics. My approach was always to listen carefully to the complaint, and then to acknowledge their issue, and provide a solution in a kind manner. The Scripture clearly states, reprove a scorner and they will hate you (Prov. 9:8). However, a kind word turns away wrath (Prov. 15:1). The same principle applies in a church setting. I listen, respond gently, and if a solution is needed, we get it done on the spot.

15. Can you tell us about a time when you counseled someone struggling with a particular sin problem, such as a man in your church who indicated that he is struggling with Internet pornography? Tell us about how you worked through this.

Sin is always present in the church, and there are always people seeking counsel on the temptations they are facing. You specified pornography in your scenario, which is one issue several men and teenagers have come to me to discuss. This issue is extremely prevalent in the Christian church, and is extremely difficult for most men and young men to get victory. I acknowledge the issue and try to put the person at ease, as their acknowledging their sin to me is usually quite difficult for them. My short answer is to direct the person to memorize specific verses such as, “Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things *are* noble, whatever things *are* just, whatever things *are* pure, whatever things *are* lovely, whatever things *are* of good report, if *there is* any virtue and if *there is* anything praiseworthy--meditate on these things” (Phil 4:8). Every time the temptation comes, ask God to help them fight the temptation, and then recite the memorized Scripture over and over again until

their head clears. Accountability partners are put in place so that they have a minimum of a weekly report on how they are progressing with victory over their addiction.

16. Tell us about your philosophy of Christian counseling. What has your experience been and how do you approach it?

Counseling in simplicity is providing a Biblical response to an issue someone or multiple people need to address. I have found that many people want to be validated and not to make necessary Biblical changes in their life. Those seeking “counsel” will be given Biblical responses to help them, and then based on the situation will in all likelihood be assigned some simple homework to assist them. If the person refuses to acknowledge that they need to change, or refuse to cooperate with the simple assignments, they will be kindly admonished that I can only help them if they are willing to do the simple things asked of them. If they comply, I will continue to assist them as long as necessary. If they simply want to vent, then our sessions will not continue.

17. Tell us about your philosophy of discipleship? What methods, materials, and approaches to you take to make disciples?

Discipleship in my ministry has been in multiple formats. The most basic format is getting people to attend church services and Sunday School. I have always been involved in Biblical educational classes during the weekdays and occasionally the weekend, where people are learning the Word.

Personal discipleship is certainly different from the classroom or church setting. There are many great books that assist with helping people grow in their walk with the Lord. One-on-one conversations are also key to discipleship, discussing their temptations, their spiritual victories, their personal daily walk with the Lord including Bible reading, meditation on the Word, memorization, prayer, sharing the gospel and their interaction with others.

18. Tell us about your strategy for leadership development. What methods, materials, and approaches do you use to develop leaders within the church?

Once again, there are a plethora of great books on leadership that I encourage those interested in leadership to read. Personal mentoring of potential leaders is something the pastor must do. If someone has a godly character, and they appear to be someone that could be a potential deacon, Sunday School teacher, youth leader, or potentially someone God may call into ministry, the Pastor must have the wherewithal to seek the person out and begin the mentoring process. Helping others recognize their gifts, spending mentoring time with them, and getting them resources they need whether books, articles or actual schooling is a necessary part of leadership development.

19. How do you protect your integrity when using the Internet, especially concerning pornography and other temptations?

The most beneficial way I have found to maintain integrity is to keep my computer and phone available to my wife at all times. My wife, who holds a very high standard when it comes to marital purity and zero tolerance for pornography has constant access to all of my electronic devices. She can login to any of my accounts, and testify to the fact that I have not been to inappropriate places. I also have the practice of never being with a female alone in any circumstance, with the exceptions being my wife or daughters. That includes counseling, transportation, restaurants etc. where many a pastor crossed the line and ruined their ministry.

20. Have you ever been in a situation that required you to enact church discipline on a fellow believer? How did you determine the most biblical course of action?

I have never personally invoked church discipline on a member, as that serious of a sin never arose where I was ministering. However, if a person was living in gross sin, and refused to address the situation, then I would follow the Biblical methodology of confronting the person, then bringing another leader of the church with me to confront the person, and if the behavior continued I would bring it to the attention of the deacons and then determine if discipline up to and including removal from the church was the appropriate Biblical remedy.

21. Have you officiated at wedding ceremonies? How do you make decisions about whether or not to do a wedding? What do you require of couples that you marry?

I have performed multiple marriages. I refuse to marry couples when both individuals are not Christians. I refuse to be a co-officiant with an unsaved pastor. There may be other issues with a couple that I find highly suspect for a successful marriage, and may delay or refuse to marry them based on those issues.

Pre-marital counseling is always a mandatory item before I will marry a couple. There are several books that they will be required to read, and they must meet with me multiple times before the ceremony.

22. Have you led funeral services? Talk to us about how you have served a family during a funeral. How do you go about it?

I have conducted multiple funerals. I approach funerals from the standpoint that I am there to provide every bit of comfort I can to the those who are experiencing a tremendous loss. I choose to go to the home of the deceased and spend significant time talking to the spouse, children, family members and any friends who are there. When the person(s) are ready, I will assist as necessary with the funeral plans.

I make every effort to make a funeral about the person who has died, and to provide a memorable service for the family and friends. I make funerals very personal. The family is asked what they would like to be said and done at the funeral, and I make every reasonable effort to comply. Funerals are not the place for lengthy impersonal sermons. This is a time to comfort the grieving. Those attending the funeral, many which may be unsaved, will get

an impression about Christianity by how the funeral is conducted. A simple, understandable, and comforting message will be given, and a loving and kind gospel presented.

23. How do you keep organized for ministry? Talk to us about how you maintain your calendar, your approach to filing material for sermons, and your system(s) for filing in general.

Having worked in a bi-vocational world for the majority of my life, including multiple meetings every week, preaching and teaching and scores of other activities, I have learned to schedule as necessary down to the minute. I am extremely organized with an electronic calendar, and a very specific electronic filing system for all of my ministry activities and messages. I know exactly what I preached or taught and when it was presented. I know my hundreds of books (my babies) and where each one is located. I know how to get what I need in an expeditious manner. To write out everything I have and do in this area would fill a book.

Biblical Preaching Questions

1. What is your philosophy or theology of preaching?

Preaching and teaching the Word of God is designed to fulfill:

2 Timothy 3:16-17

¹⁶ All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,

¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Ephesians 4:11-16

¹¹ And He Himself gave some *to be* apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers,

¹² for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ,

¹³ till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ;

¹⁴ that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting,

¹⁵ but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head-- Christ--

¹⁶ from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.

God calls pastors (preacher/teachers) to help God's people grow and mature in the Lord Jesus Christ. Preaching is not simply pushing knowledge and facts into a person. I like to say, "If you leave a service the same way you entered a service, then we both just wasted our time." Pastors are given the awesome responsibility to help people progress in every aspect of their lives. The mark of an unprepared, unmotivated, and poorly connected pastor is a dead church, which is probably losing members, and lacking young couples, teens and children. Yes, it is important to teach Biblical facts and impart knowledge, but if Christians are not changed for the better, and the unsaved are not coming to the Lord, then Biblical preaching and teaching were not being accomplished

2. What biblical passages on preaching have influenced your approach to preaching?

See the verses in question one of this section.

3. What well-known preachers do you hold in high regard?

I have a plethora of pastors and preachers that I hold in high regard. Every time you mention a preacher by name, there will be some who love the person or potentially criticize them because they do not agree with them on every doctrinal issue. Understanding that all Christian preachers are not perfect, I can state that the following men have had a positive impact on my life, though we may not agree exactly on every theological issue.

Dr. Thomas Ice, Dr. Jimmy DeYoung, Dr. John MacArthur, Dr. Timothy LaHaye, Dr. Ed Hindson, Dr. Randall Price, Dr. J. Vernon McGee, Dr. Mark Hitchcock, Dr. David Jeremiah, Dr. John Walvoord, Dr. Sam Horn and Dr. Warren Wiersbe are just a few of the teachers that came to mind as I was typing in the last few minutes. There are so many more that I could name, but this quickly prepared typed out list is a fraction of those Godly men, most of whom are well known, who have preached and written their way into my spiritual growth.

4. What constitutes a good sermon?

A good sermon yields results. God uses the preaching of His Word to change lives.

Now, if the question is more about homiletics and structure rather than about the Holy Spirit's movement in the lives of His people, then we can discuss the mechanics. I do believe in a structured message that includes a proposition that states the key purpose of the message, main points, subpoints, illustrations, and appropriate cross references. The message should be well prepared and bathed in prayer. However, though the mechanics may be perfect and get an "A" from a homiletics professor, if the pastor/teacher fails to have the blessing of God, and fails to connect with the people, then the sermon and the sender have failed to produce a "good sermon."

5. If you preach topically, how do you select passages to support your points?

The simplistic answer is that a well-schooled, and well-read pastor will have skills in systematic theology and know how to get through the 66 books of the Bible and pull out the

appropriate supporting passages. I have been called an expert in eschatology, and have done extensive teaching on that particular doctrine. Not one book in the Bible gives all of the points in God's prophetic calendar. Therefore, after years of study, memorization of passages, and painstakingly going through every book of the Bible, plus reading many external books on the subject, I can present God's past, present and prophetic Word with clarity. This is one of the key benefits of not being a novice.

6. How far in advance do you prefer to plan your sermons?

Sermon preparation, based on the season, issues within the local body of believers, and subjects and books of the Bible that are essential to build the local body of believers will determine how much time there will be to prepare. Expository preaching, or going through a book of the Bible verse by verse is essential for a church body. However, a myopic or disconnected pastor may choose to stick with a book despite the fact that there may be a major issue within that local church that an astute connected pastor knows needs one or more messages to address the need.

Therefore, if the pastor is doing a series, then the flow will be put together weeks and even months in advance. Christmas, Easter and other major Christian events during the year will in all likelihood call for a message that is appropriate to those special events. Again, the shepherd's position demands that he do whatever is necessary to protect, care for and feed the flock.

7. Could you give an overview of one or more sermon series that you have preached?

I have preached many a series on everything from every possible aspect of eschatology and God's chronological prophetic timeline to book studies that have spent multiple months going through a single book in the Bible. At UGBC on Sunday nights I have been going verse by verse through the Olivet Discourse, Matthew 24-25. That is a series of messages being presented in an expository manner. I am currently going through a topical series on Sunday morning regarding the Essentials for a Thriving church. I have basically demonstrated at UGBC what this question addresses.

8. Do you develop your own messages, or do you re-peach others' sermons, or borrow from material that someone else has prepared?

I always prepare my own messages and have never repurposed another person's work. As a student of the Word, I am always seeking out thoughts from my study that I can develop into either a single or series of messages. When a pastor chooses to preach someone else's messages, they do a disservice to themselves and to the people they serve. "Study to show yourselves approved unto God, workmen that need not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15).

9. How important do you believe it is in preaching to focus a sermon on one central thought or "big idea"?

Expository preaching, and appropriate topical studies will lend themselves to picking out the key intent of the text being studied. The issue in the use of a text or texts is, are you attempting to force a text to fit a “big idea” or “central thought” or is the pastor teacher properly exegeting the passage and using it as God intended in its historical, contextual, grammatical and literal interpretation?

10. How do you make sure that your sermon speaks to a wide range of people?

UGBC, like many churches has an eclectic congregation. There are different ages, cognitive abilities, and spiritual maturity levels. The seasoned preacher knows how to convey complex theological content with words and illustrations that virtually all in the room can comprehend. At times, theological words and advanced concepts may be stated for the mature, but the experienced pastor will then restate the same in easy to understand language for the benefit of the young and less experienced Bible student.

11. In what area(s) would you say that your preaching needs to grow?

I greatly enjoy teaching on heavy doctrinal subjects that display the great depth in God’s Word. I am aware that teaching on this type of content requires illustrations and applications that really bring home the meaning and push for spiritual advancement in the listeners. I am always looking to improve the application side of my teaching that really causes every person in the room to see something that will help them in their walk with the Lord, and lead to a life that is God honoring and useful in His service.

12. What do you consider to be your greatest strength as a preacher?

As the adage goes, “self-assessments are always flattering.” However, if I may be so bold, I believe I understand what people need in a congregation and can tailor my messages to meet the needs of the people. I always attempt to give serious theological content conveyed in a style that is easy to understand for the vast majority of the flock. I almost always have spent a lengthy period of time preparing and learning my messages so that I am not using notes. I want to see the eyes and body language of every person and discern if the message is connecting. My style is straight forward and I am not apologizing or guessing about what I am saying. I do not use made up stories, and I attempt to never say anything, even in jest, that is not absolutely true. People want the truth, presented in a loving and personal style, that is life changing and Christ exalting. The pastor must be balanced and able to honestly and sincerely demonstrate that he loves every person in the room while also teaching them the context of the Word of God. That is what I strive for, and what I beg God for every time He gives me the privilege to preach and teach His Word. The people deserve absolutely nothing less. Here we must stand, we cannot be moved from this essential function of the ministry!