

12 Things a Pastor Should Never Ask a Church Member

I'm thinking of one-on-one conversations in which a pastor might ask this of the church member. ... Not a good idea. Do not try this. ...

1. How did you vote on that issue?
2. Are you a Democrat or Republican?
3. Will you support my political candidate?
4. Why did you not support me in that project I was pushing?
5. Have you ever committed adultery (or any number of other things)?
6. Would you give me money? Would you lend me money?
7. How much money do you make? How much do you give?
8. If I will preach this sermon you've been asking for, will you do (something) for me?
9. Have you ever seen my wife with another man (or any of a thousand variations on that)?
10. Do you think I'm handsome? If we were not married, would you be interested in me (or anything equally horrendous)?
11. What do you think are my best assets? My strongest points? (The variations are endless: What do you like best about me? Or even, how do you feel about me?)
12. What did (someone) say about me? (Believe me, pastor, you do not ever want to know what others are saying about you!! So, please do not ask.)

Is this a foolish exercise, suggesting that pastors not do something so blatantly offensive? To those who think it is, I wish you could read my mail.

The most recent letter—it arrived this morning—told of a minister saying to a new member, “You are so beautiful I wish I were not married!”

Here is a prayer that works perfectly for those of us prone to going verbally where no one in his right-thinking mind should venture ...

“Set a guard, O Lord, over my mouth; keep watch over the door of my lips” (Psalm 141:3). And this: “Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer” (Psalm 19:14).

If you are as prone to misspeaking as I am, you will want to join me in praying this daily. God help us all to let our speech be pure and our hearts likewise, and to work only to bless those in our charge, and never ever to use or manipulate them.

*After five years as director of missions for the 100 Southern Baptist churches of metro New Orleans, **Joe McKeever** retired on June 1, 2009. These days, he has an office at the First Baptist Church of Kenner, where he’s working on three books, and he’s trying to accept every speaking/preaching invitation that comes his way.*

For the original article, visit .