

# What do church members want



By Thom Ranier

## from their pastors?

Many of my articles come from the perspective of pastors. That will not change in the future. I am an advocate of pastors and I desire God’s best for them. I have no plans to change my advocacy role.

As a change of pace, however, I recently asked a few hundred laypersons to write down what they desired of a pastor. Their responses were open-ended, and there was no limitation on the number of items they could list. Though my approach was not scientific, these laypersons did represent over sixty churches.

Here are their top ten responses in order of frequency. Since many of them gave one or more sentences as a response, I can provide a representative comment by each of the responses.

1. **Love of congregation.** “If we know that our pastor loves us, everything else falls in place. If he doesn’t, nothing else matters.”
2. **Effective preaching.** “I don’t have any expectation that my preacher be one of the best in the world, I just want to know that he has spent time in the Word each week to teach us effectively and consistently.”
3. **Strong character.** “No pastor is perfect, but I do want a pastor whose character is above reproach on moral, family, and financial issues.”
4. **Good work ethic.** “I don’t want either a workaholic pastor or a lazy pastor. Unfortunately, our last two pastors have been obviously lazy.”
5. **Casts a vision.** “Our church has so much possibility; I want to hear what we will do to make a difference in our community and the world.”
6. **Demonstrates healthy leadership.** “Most of the pastors in my church have demonstrated a good balance; they have been strong leaders but not dictators.”
7. **Joyous.** “Our current pastor is a man of joy. His joy and enthusiasm are contagious. I love him for that!”

8. **Does not yield to critics.** “I know that every pastor serving today has his critics. And I know it’s tough to deal with them. I just want these pastors to know that we supporters are in the majority. Please don’t let the minority critics dictate how you lead and serve.”
9. **Transparent.** “Every pastor that I have had has been open and transparent about the church and the direction we are headed. It sure has made our church healthier.”
10. **Models evangelism.** “Our pastor is passionate about sharing the gospel. His heart and attitude are contagious.”