

Gathering Documentation from a local Church

When undertaking any consulting assignment, gathering some basic overall information from the local church is valuable. It is worth considering asking if the church has the following:

1. Constitution or Articles of Association
2. The last 5 years of annual financial returns (including key areas of income and expense)
3. Annual Board, Elders, Church Council and Pastor's reports
4. Vision or Mission Statements
5. Annual Objectives, Goals or a Strategic Plan
6. Statement of Core Values
7. Church Policies, Guidelines, Procedures and Covenants: (Especially Conflict, Grievance procedures, Staff Teamwork Covenants, Safe Ministry Guidelines)
8. Records of pastors names, positions and years of service
9. Position Descriptions for Staff, Elders, Deacons, Board Members
10. Review processes and their outcomes
11. Church Histories
Some Ministry Training programs ask students to compile a report on a church of their choosing. These are often quite extensive and can be valuable in providing background for a consultation.
12. Previous consultation reports
13. Membership / Attendance records
14. Church Demographics: Age, gender, socio-economic, education
15. Community demographics: E.g. A profile prepared for a pastoral search process
16. Minutes from relevant leadership or ministry team meetings
17. Results of surveys the church may have participated in – e.g. NCLS (ask permission to access this – it is best if the church gives you their own access code rather than using a denominational code)
18. Other relevant documents that might be submitted in relation to objectives

Note: Most of this is covered if the church completes the Local Church Questionnaire.

Note: Always seek explicit permission to access documents, especially any documentation held outside the church.