

What Makes a Great Profile?

Honesty, humor, passion and compassion!

Some helpful tips from the Search and Call Team Readers:

The point of the profile is to open a door to an interview

Consider your audience. Try to imagine the people who might be serving on the search committees who will read your profile. What might their questions or concerns be? These are people who have invested a great deal of time and energy and love serving on behalf of their congregation to search for a new pastor. Speak to them about who you are and why the church is important.

You have been immersed in an academic setting. Writing your profile is a different kind of challenge. Avoid getting too abstract. Be careful about letting theological language or concepts get in the way of the committee learning about you and what matters to you.

Be genuine. Find ways in the profile to help the committee learn enough about you that they want to know more. Use the profile questions to share your story and your passion. If there are concerns that are at the heart of your call, be direct and share them.

Be bold. Mention your challenges and how you've grown in them, and how God is at work in you. Talk about your hopes for God's church and how a congregation can be a part of those hopes.

Be loving. Describe how you love God by loving God's church in its ministry and vision, and in its mistakes and messiness.

Watch out for idioms. Be careful using clichés or metaphors. They really stand out and they clang around in the reader's mind and can end up distracting from what you are trying to convey.

The current profile allows you to name information about your experience outside the local church. Describe what you have done and share your accomplishments and what you learned that might be valuable as a pastoral leader.

Try to determine to which types of ministry you might actually be called right now, rather than checking every category.

Make good use of the availability of a website. It is another way for you to share your story and for you to upload versions of worship and preaching. Use this and each opportunity in the profile to allow the committee to see different dimensions of you as a person and your vision for ministry.

Spellcheck! Even if you are a good proofreader, it is hard to proof your own work. Have someone else proofread the profile for spelling and grammar, and then spellcheck it again!

Choose your references carefully. You are allowed up to 3 and they will describe you through both written and phone communication. Be sure they can be good at both. Let them know if there are particular areas that you feel they might be able to address.

Search committees have discovered the internet! Know what they might find on the internet about you. In some cases, you might choose to anticipate this information by presenting it in your own words in the profile.

Take the church and your call seriously, but avoid taking yourself too seriously.

Be prayerful. Developing your profile is another step in discerning the ministry to which you truly feel called. The profile grows out of your conversation with God to become the beginning of conversations with search committees and the churches they represent.