

**Study Questions for “On the Road to Pastoral Excellence: A Process of Becoming”
By Frances Townsend**

1. Frances Townsend says that strong pastors must “know themselves deeply,” have a “sense of self-assuredness,” and “cultivate humility and openness.” Insofar as all members of a congregation are ministers, how does your congregation foster these characteristics in its members?
2. Part of self-understanding is knowing where one’s boundaries are. For instance, at what point should the pastor stop getting involved in every program of the congregation and tap others to take leadership roles? What are some ways that the pastor can hand off leadership to others, such as deacons, educators, youth leaders, and board members? How would you evaluate the balance in your congregation between pastoral control and member participation? How could you improve it?
3. A self-assured pastoral leader is willing to take some risks for the good of the congregation. Where do you think a pastor should take risks?
4. Townsend argues that pastoral leaders need self-awareness, the ability to know where they stand as things change around them because change is certain. What things should change in the church and what should remain the same—worship? The peace position? Attitudes about nonconformity? Ministry? Why?
5. To what extent should a pastor strive for unity in a congregation? What valuable role, if any, can disunity play in a congregation? Where is your congregation on a continuum between unity and disunity?