

INTRODUCTION TO THE “ESSENTIAL QUALITIES FOR A PASTOR IN THE EVANGELICAL CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH”

The Evangelical Congregational Church is grateful to the Lord for his continued leading in the lives of individuals called to His service as pastors. The Holy Spirit speaks and men respond to that call by placing themselves into His hands, answering the call to pastoral ministry. Through His Holy Spirit He calls and gives gifts so they can serve Him and His church. We recognize that it is our heavenly Father, working through His Holy Spirit, who gives various gifts to those He calls. Those gifts differ from person to person. Through the Evangelical Congregational Church’s Pastoral Assessment Center we have developed a process to confirm the call, the gifts and the graces present in the life of pastoral candidates.

In addition, the Assessment Center, in cooperation with established leaders both inside and outside the denomination, has developed a list of “Essential Qualities” for a pastor in the Evangelical Congregational Church. These are not spiritual gifts or graces, but are essential qualities that must be evidenced in the life of a pastor in order to serve effectively in the context of the Evangelical Congregational Church.

This list of thirteen “Essential Qualities” is a valuable resource for pastors as they examine themselves for healthy ministry and as a resource to share with those who are sensing a call to pastoral ministry within the Evangelical Congregational Church.

ESSENTIAL QUALITIES FOR A PASTOR IN THE EVANGELICAL CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH Approved August 2004

- 1. Empowering Leadership**
 - Helping people to “buy in” and feel responsible for the growth and success of the church
 - Gaining commitment of the people to the vision
 - Establishing a congregational identity
 - Avoiding stereotyping of congregation by imposing unrealistic goals for which it cannot claim ownership
 - Committing to numerical growth within the context of spiritual and relational growth (more and better disciples)
 - Encouraging functional structure for congregational health/ministry

- 2. Need-oriented Evangelism**
 - Communicating in style that is understood by the pre-Christian
 - Understanding the mentality and culture of the pre-Christian
 - Moving and functioning in the “personal space” of the pre-Christian without fear
 - Quickly getting to know the pre-Christian on a personal level
 - Breaking through the barriers erected by the pre-Christian
 - Handling crises faced by the unchurched
 - Identifying and assessing community needs and culture

- 3. Spousal Cooperation**
 - Having an explicit agreement regarding each partner’s respective role and involvement in ministry
 - Having explicit rules regarding the use of home as an office
 - Evaluating the consequences of ministry demands upon the children
 - Functioning as a team through individual and collective action
 - Having a strategy for dealing with strangers
 - Modeling wholesome family like before the church and community

- Agreeing upon and sharing the ministry vision
 - Deliberately planning and protecting private family life
- 4. Loving Relationships**
- Displaying God's love and compassion to people
 - Quickly incorporating newcomers into a network of relationships
 - Engaging others in meaningful church activity
 - Responding with urgency to expressed needs and concerns of people
 - Getting to know people on a personal basis
 - Making others feel secure and comfortable in one's presence
 - Not responding judgmentally or prejudicially to new people
 - Appreciating and accepting a variety of persons
 - Spending quality time with present parishioners without overstepping them for new people
- 5. Gift-Oriented Ministry**
- Discerning of spiritual gifts in others
 - Matching the gifts of people with ministry needs and opportunities
 - Releasing and equipping people to do the task of ministry
 - Delegating effectively in areas of personal limitations
 - Avoiding personal overload by delegating effectively
 - Not prematurely assigning ministry assignments before people are adequately equipped
 - Not placing unwarranted restrictions on other's spiritual giftedness
- 6. Passionate Spirituality**
- Regularity of devotional life, including prayer and Bible study
 - Reading of appropriate books/magazines
 - Involvement in an accountability group
 - Possessing a conviction regarding one's call to ministry
 - Believing in God's actions
 - Having expectation and hope
 - Having a willingness to wait for answers to specific prayer needs
 - Dealing with conflict assertively, constructively and tactfully
- 7. Visionizing Capacity**
- Being a person who projects into the future beyond the present
 - Seeing the congregation within the larger context of God's kingdom
 - Developing a theme which highlights the vision and philosophy of ministry
 - Persuasively selling the vision to people
 - Approaching challenges as opportunities rather than obstacles
 - Coping effectively with non-visionizing elements
 - Not erecting artificial walls or limits whether overtly or subconsciously
 - Establishing a clear church identity related to the theme and vision
 - Believing in God's capacity to do great things
- 8. Intrinsically Motivated**
- Having a desire to do well and a commitment to excellence
 - Stick-to-itiveness and persistence
 - Having initiative and aggressiveness without the negative connotations
 - Having a willingness to work long and hard
 - Being a self-starter with a willingness to build from nothing
 - Having a high energy and vitality level, good physical stamina

9. **Flexible and Adaptable**
 - Coping effectively with ambiguity
 - Coping effectively with constant and abrupt change
 - Adapting oneself and one's methods to the uniqueness of the particular congregation
 - Shifting priorities and emphasis during various stages of church growth
 - Doing whatever is necessary whenever necessary

10. **Resilience**
 - Experiencing setbacks without defeat
 - Riding the ups and downs (attendance)
 - Expecting the unexpected
 - Rebounding from loss, disappointments and failure
 - Matching the gifts of people with ministry needs and opportunities

11. **Theological Distinctives**
 - Agreement with the Articles of Faith
 - Willingness to work with leadership

12. **Financial Stability**
 - Agreement with spouse on spending
 - Proper balance between income and expenditures
 - Need for the wife to work outside the home
 - Realistic financial expectations from the church
 - Disclosure of financial statement

13. **Wellness Issues**
 - Physical health concerns that would hinder effectiveness in ministry
 - Exercise program to keep the body healthy
 - Involvement in hobbies as an outlet/escape from ministry pressures

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