



What is Church Planter Assessment?

Church planters are called to be persons of unusual vision and faith, believing that God can and will work through them as they establish new local churches. They are required to perform a wide variety of tasks and duties, often working with limited structure and/or little encouragement. Not every pastor is called or gifted to this kind of ministry. When a person who is not gifted or called to this work finds himself attempting to do the work of a church planter, frustration and a sense of failure are often the result. Some become disillusioned and leave the ministry as a result of a failed church-planting experience. In addition it often becomes harder to establish a new work in a community where one or more failures have already occurred.

Assessment has been developed to provide an opportunity for in-depth analysis of each candidate's skills, abilities and traits and to match these with the profile of the qualities desirable in church planting. Emphasis is also placed on self-assessment and thorough feedback by the assessment staff regarding each participant's qualifications. Participants often report that the feedback they obtain regarding their gifts and abilities is of great value to them in their ministry.

WHAT IS THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS?

Assessment is an intensive 4-day process which has the following features:

1. Multiple assessment techniques are used.
2. The assessment simulations and instruments have been selected or tailored to relevant aspects of church planting.
3. Multiple trained observers are used.
4. The data from all assessment exercises and instruments and from all observers is pooled and evaluated.
5. A single, final global evaluation for each participant is arrived at by the assessment staff.

THE OBJECTIVES OF ASSESSMENT

1. Through the use of experiential exercises, simulations and other instrumented activities, assessors will observe the ministry-related behaviors of participants and evaluate the extent to which the participants skills and abilities match those required in church planting.
2. Participants will engage in self-assessment as they participate in experiential exercises, simulations and various other instrumented activities.
3. Participants will acquire new skills and knowledge through the exercises, discussions and lectures in which they participate.

Participants are encouraged to enter into the exercises and instrumented activities with enthusiasm. While assessment is very intense, it also provides an opportunity for the participants and assessors to have fellowship as members of the Body of Christ. In addition new lifelong associations are often established.

DISCERNING HOW GOD HAS GIFTED YOU

There is no selection quota in assessment, nor are participants in competition. Someone performing better than others in a particular activity doesn't necessarily reflect poorly on the rest. Remember, not all have the same gifts. If the body is to function well, all of the gifts are needed. Furthermore, the various gifts are given to the Church, not to individuals. Each of us is merely a steward of our particular gifts through which the Holy Spirit means to edify and build up the Church. As we discover each other's giftedness, it is an opportunity for us to celebrate the unity of the Body.

10 DIMENSIONS AND 34 COMPETENCIES OF A SUCCESSFUL CHURCH PLANTER¹

Over a three-year period, extensive doctoral research of the activities of sixty-eight successful church planters was conducted. Careful examination of the findings of this research supports the following skills, abilities and character traits as desirable for church planting:

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Dimension 1: Integrity:

1. *Responsible*: tends to be answerable and accountable in work assignments
2. *Ethical*: conforms to moral standards and values
3. *Inspires trust*: demonstrates reliability in word and action

Dimension 2: Personal Spiritual Dynamics:

4. *Prayer*: listens to and converses with God regarding ministry needs
5. *Walk with God*: understands and depends on God's grace for joyful living
6. *Call*: exhibits an inner urging and outward confirmation of gifting for church ministry.

Dimension 3: Missional Engagement:

7. *Evangelism*: joyfully shares the good news of Christ's redemptive work that brings salvation and growth.
8. *Gathers people*: connects positively with diverse people drawing them to one another and to Christ.
9. *Missional culture*: cultivates a growing commitment to an outreach focus
10. *Embraces diversity*: identifies with and serves diverse peoples in the community
11. *Mercy ministry*: activates a caring ministry for the needs of people

Dimension 4: Visioning Capacity:

12. *Motivates others*: awakens inner drive in followers to serve others meaningfully
13. *Values teams*: harnesses people in a coordinated effort toward a common purpose
14. *Manages vision*: skillfully directs people and activities toward an anticipated future

Dimension 5: Gospel Communication:

15. *Redemptive preaching*: communicates God's truth from the biblical text focusing on Christ's work
16. *Effective communication*: able to express gospel truth clearly and winsomely
17. *Enables worship*: effectively draws others to focus on God in reverential praise and adoration

Dimension 6: Learning Agility:

18. *Tolerance for ambiguity*: able to take action in unclear situations
19. *Personal learning*: adept at gaining new knowledge, attitudes and skills quickly
20. *Adjusts strategies*: adapts actions to fit context and needs
21. *Self-development*: pursues personal growth toward greater effectiveness
22. *Self-knowledge*: gains insights through evaluation by self and others

Dimension 7: Emotional Stability:

23. *Stress navigation*: able to respond positively to physical and mental strain
24. *Opportunity-minded*: seizes adverse situations to advance Christ's cause
25. *Confidence*: able to move through difficulties with humble boldness

Dimension 8: Family Life:

26. *Healthy family*: maintains supportive relationships through stages of life
27. *Growing marriage*: exhibits sensitive interdependence in life's journey
28. *Spouse partnership*: demonstrate joint interest and commitment to a common vision

Dimension 9: Expectant of Results:

29. *Action-oriented*: strongly inclined to advance the mission
30. *Perseverance*: exhibits steadfastness in purpose in spite of difficulties

Dimension 10: Managerial Courage:

31. *Directing*: leads others toward a common goal in spite of problems
32. *Conflict management*: understands and mitigates sharp disagreements
33. *Staffing*: selects appropriate people to lead segments of ministry
34. *Evaluating people*: estimates the character and ability of persons to meet set requirements

CHARACTER TRAITS THAT WOULD HINDER THE CHURCH PLANTER**Staller/Stopper 1: Self-centered:**

1. *Arrogant*: displays conceited self-sufficiency
2. *Betrays trust*: breaks confidence placed in him by others
3. *Unethical*: lives on the margins of moral standards and values

Staller/Stopper 2: Doesn't relate well to context or others:

4. *Unadaptable*: exhibits rigid and inflexible behavior toward situations and people
5. *Blocked learner*: indisposed to seek learning opportunities

Staller/Stopper 3: Doesn't inspire or build talent:

6. *Fails to build teams*: hesitates to select individuals and delegate appropriate tasks
7. *Fails to staff effectively*: unable to select gifted people suited for a particular ministry

Staller/Stopper 4: Trouble with results:

8. *Non-strategic*: tends to focus on details instead of big picture

Church Leader Spouse: A Definition

Spouses of church leaders in the twenty-first century need a broad set of competencies that enables them to be effective in an increasingly secular, post-Christian urban world. This inventory focuses on spouses of ordained males. If you are a woman in church leadership you are invited to take the Church Leadership Inventory.

In today's world the spouse is freer from traditional social expectations than in the past and is no longer expected to simply be an appendage of the minister's life and career. However, because of the nature of church leadership the spouse can't have a life and career completely distinct and separate from her husband. She is an integral part of the team and her life will impact the church and vice versa. Ministry will spill into all aspects of the family's life. Church leaders and their families are entering a context that is ambiguous by nature and requires the couple and at times the whole family to discuss needs/expectations and action steps which require implementation for the sake of the family and the church. While spouses participate in various aspects of church ministry depending on the season of life and their own giftedness, the main ingredient needed for effectiveness is a living dependence on Christ. This implies an understanding that she is called first and foremost to Christ. Her identity rests in Christ forgiveness and acceptance.. Dimensions 1-6 outline the essential competencies in character and skill areas that make for an effective partner in church ministry.

"Stallers and stoppers" focus on serious problems that have potential to derail the ministry. Stallers 1-4 focus on the most common stallers or stoppers spouses in ministry face.

Six Dimensions

Dimension 1. Spiritual Dynamics: Spouses of church leaders exhibit a walk with God demonstrated in a deep commitment to Christ and his Word. They understand the truths of the gospel both for conversion and their spiritual formation. They demonstrate a growing knowledge of themselves, a gospel-centered identity and gospel robbers (idols of the heart). (4.35 importance rating)

1.1 Walk with God: understands and depends on God's grace for joyful living.(4.45)

1. Lives a life of repentance and faith in Christ's work on the cross.
2. Lives in dependence on the Spirit's power for new obedience.
 3. Demonstrates the joy that comes from acceptance by God.
 4. Uses scripture as a source of spiritual nourishment.
 5. Prayer life takes into account the power of sin, the flesh and Satan working against her.
 6. Prays for husband, family and the church.

1.2 Humble: unselfconscious in attitude and behavior. (4.16)

7. Gives credit to God and others for the good in life.
8. Is full of hope that God will work.
9. Believes Christ will build his church demonstrated by accepting the limits of what husband or self are able to accomplish.

Dimension 2. Family life: Spouses of church leaders recognize that a healthy family is of vital importance and powerfully impacts the ministry. They are committed to a vibrant, growing marriage in light of starting or ministering in a church. They lovingly pursue their husband, understanding the demands church ministry places on him. They enjoy and cultivate a thriving family as well as a thriving church. (4.10)

2.1 Growing marriage: sensitive interdependence in life's journey (3.95)

10. Enjoys a growing intimacy in marriage expressed in a healthy sex life.
11. Husband and spouse have enough emotional maturity to give perspective to the other in times of criticism or discouragement.
12. Husband and spouse use truths from Scripture to encourage each other.
13. Husband and spouse interact on how their past individual histories affect their relationship today.

2.2 Supportive: giving moral and emotional support. (4.45)

14. Is committed to and supportive of husband.

15. Trusts husband's leadership in the church and the home demonstrated by respect of him.

2.3 Healthy family: maintains awareness and support through stages of life. (4.06)

16. Aware of family's dynamics and needs in the context of church ministry.

17. Demonstrates an ability to lead family in husband's absence.

18. Husband and spouse set boundaries to protect and enhance their family.

Dimension 3. Integrity: Spouses of church leaders' lives are consistent with biblical values in spite of the consequences or pressures to conform. They are seen as direct, truthful individuals. They show integrity in their relationships in private and public life. (4.04)

3.1 Honesty: being open, authentic and truthful. (4.03)

19. Is open to admit faults.

20. Is authentic: who you see is who she is.

21. Maintains personal convictions despite pressures to compromise.

3.2 Faithfulness: loyal, responsible, and dependent on Christ. (4.05)

22. Embraces the unique personality of husband.

23. Is loyal to the church affirming its missions and values.

24. Makes commitments with the capacity to fulfill them.

25. Walks towards a joyful dependence on Christ in spite of the changing circumstances of life.

Dimension 4. Learning Agility: Spouses of church leaders exhibit flexibility and adaptability in the different contexts and situations that arise in family rearing and church ministry. They are able to judge what is needed in a given situation. With perception and common sense led by the Holy Spirit they possess courage to take action in an ambiguous context. (3.90)

4.1 Ambiguity: growing reliance on Christ in unclear situations. (4.00)

26. Is growing in ability to rely on Christ for strength in the ambiguous context of ministry.

27. Is coming to accept the risks involved in the changes that result from a growing church.

28. Is willing to adapt plans and schedule if reasonable change is required.

29. Demonstrates an appreciation for the culture to which they are called.

4.2 Discerning: showing good judgment, insight and taste.(3.76)

30. Is insightful and able to perceive and understand heart issues.

31. Graciously pinpoints the underlying issue of a personal concern.

32. Distinguishes between issues of major and minor consequence.

33. Distinguishes between issues to be handled personally and those to be referred to church leadership.

Dimension 5. Missional Engagement: Spouses of church leaders agree upon and share the ministry call bringing unique vision and abilities to ministry partnership. They affirm God's common grace in all people. This conviction enables them to warmly include others in their lives, embrace diversity and wisely link people to others and opportunities. (3.88)

5.1 Spouse Partnership: demonstrates joint interest and commitment to common vision. (3.96)

34. Senses a desire to be in church ministry with husband as a call from God.

35. Is willing to embrace the personal costs implied in an other-centered lifestyle.

36. Exhibits a willingness to serve using gifts and abilities.

37. Serves without regard for acclaim.

38. Hospitality is an 'open-home' lifestyle, not just a strategy.

39. Is generous with time and money.

5.2 Net-worker: communicates and works together with others for Kingdom growth (3.75)

40. Values those inside and outside the community of faith as God's image bearers.

41. Invites new acquaintances to journey with them in discovering God.

42. Is able to empower and release others to serve.

43. Uses wisdom in communicating with church leaders regarding the strengths and weaknesses of others.

Dimension 6. Emotional Stability: Spouses of church leaders possess emotional strength based on an accurate view of themselves. They demonstrate love, warmth and kindness in their relationships. They appropriately exhibit the full range of godly emotions including joy, peace, sorrow, anger, etc. They cope appropriately with stress and use their abilities with humble confidence. (3.76)

6.1 Accurate self-view: resilient through finding strength in Christ. (3.77)

- 44. Finds identity and strength in Christ.
- 45. Brings hope to a crisis by exhibiting a sense of poise.
- 46. Can serve alongside under-trained church leaders with patience and hope.
- 47. Is committed to persistent personal development.

6.2 Relational maturity: being genuinely other-centered without self-absorption (3.76)

- 48. Is genuinely interested in others.
- 49. Laughs easily at self, not taking self too seriously.
- 50. Is vulnerable and open with others.
- 51. Views life and circumstances without naiveté or pessimism.
- 52. Views setbacks as opportunities to grow in reliance on Christ.

Four Stallers and Stoppers

A staller/stopper likely results from many sources—what a church leader spouse under-does, such as failing to relate well to others and what she may over-do such as over-confidence. Or it may have to do with deep character issues left unaddressed.

Staller 1. Doesn't sense a call to church ministry: In a call to church ministry both the husband and wife have talked together, prayed and come to agreement regarding their call. While this understanding of call looks different in each couple's marriage and in the role each spouse may take, there is still a desire from both to see a community changed by the gospel. When the spouse does not perceive a call to church ministry it seeps into all aspects of her life affecting her involvement with the church, her relationship with people, her husband and her children. (4.51)

S1.1 Fails to support her husband: doesn't sense call to church ministry. (4.65)

- 53. Verbally undermines husband.
- 54. Tends to live a parallel life from husband.
- 55. Exhibits signs of emotional and physical distance from husband.

S1.2 Disloyal: displays lack of devotion to ministry vision. (4.40)

- 56. Places unrealistic demands on husband's time.
- 57. Shows indifference to the type of ministry husband is called to do.
- 58. Is critical of the church.

S1.3 Unadaptable: unable to adapt to differences. (3.93)

- 59. May withdraw from the church when change seems too disorienting.
- 60. Tends to be unwilling to adapt to changes and new situations.
- 61. Often unwilling to compromise on issues of minor importance.

Staller 2. Self Centered: Spouses of church leaders find their identity in Christ's forgiveness and acceptance. When they are overly preoccupied with self they may tend towards complaining, blaming and irresponsibility. Or they may show signs of insecurity, irritation and anger. (4.27)

S2.1 Lacks accurate self view: looks to others or success for identity. (4.30)

- 62. Tends to look to others or successes for identity.
- 63. Is easily discouraged by the demands ministry or family requires.

S2.2 Irresponsible: does not take responsibility for self or her commitments. (4.00)

Is slow to follow through on commitments.

- 64. Places the responsibility for personal growth on others.

S2.3 Unethical: lives on the margins of moral standards and values. (4.56)

- 66. Is involved in indiscreet relationships with the opposite sex.
- 67. Wrestles with an addiction (excessive eating, dieting, internet porn etc.)
- 68. Operates too close to the margins of appropriate behavior.

S2.4 Betrays trust: does not share information appropriately. (4.25)

- 69. Shares confidential information with others.
- 70. Gives partial accounts of events when a full account would put her in bad light.
- 71. Listens to gossip,
- 72. Hesitates to take courageous steps to stop gossip.

Staller 3. Performance-based Spirituality: Spouses of church leaders exhibit an understanding of the truths of the gospel both for conversion and their spiritual formation. When they look to their performance for acceptance they may struggle with being judgmental and overly critical. (4.24)

S3.1 Fails to live by gospel dynamics: views spirituality as fulfilling a list of duties. (4.28)

- 73. Views spirituality as a list of duties rather than a vibrant relationship with Jesus.
- 74. Perceives spiritual practices as optional.
- 75. Tends to base worth on performance.
- 76. Is often judgmental.
- 77. Deals mainly with surface issues and settles for superficial fixes.

S3.2 Tends towards works-righteousness: relies on human effort for Christian growth. (4.20)

- 78. Serves the church to the detriment of family.
- 79. Serves family to the detriment of the church.
- 80. Behaves differently in public than in private.
- 81. Relies on human effort to plant the church demonstrated by a lack of prayer.
- 82. Ministers out of a sense of need for personal fulfillment.

Staller 4. Doesn't relate well to others: Spouses of church leaders are an integral part of building the church through helpful relationships with people. They are interested in others and go out of their way to serve them. When spouses of church leaders are emotionally distant or cold in their interpersonal contacts, strangers and new acquaintances may feel they are unapproachable and withdraw. (4.10)

S4.1 Insensitive: unable to respond appropriately to people. (3.95)

- 83. Expresses impatience or irritation with people in a public way.
- 84. Is unable to work with difficult church strugglers/leaders.
- 85. Gravitates toward exclusivity in relationships

S4.2 Unforgiving: unwilling or unable to forgive. (4.25)

- 86. Tends to carry the offenses committed against self, husband or children.
- 87. Is confrontational or defensive in her relations with those who differ with her.