



Character Assessment Guides

For Candidates for an EFCA Ministerial Credential

Name you recommend for an Evangelical Free Church of America Ministerial Credential:

Every candidate for a ministry credential with the EFCA must be recommended by the candidate's local EFC church. That recommendation is only to be made after the spiritual leadership of that church has carefully and prayerfully assessed the spiritual, emotional and interpersonal maturity of the individual.

The EFCA wants to assist you in making that character assessment. Thus, we are supplying you with two assessment guides. These are for your own voluntary use. We do not require that you use them. Furthermore, they are not to be returned to the EFCA. Rather, we encourage each member of the church's elder board, or spiritual leadership team, to fill out these guides individually and then discuss them together before determining whether or not to make a recommendation. That recommendation means if the candidate is approved, you are confident that the Lord is directing you to "lay your hands upon this person for vocational gospel ministry."

The first tool, immediately following, will guide you to weigh a candidate's character against the specific grid of the Scripture's elder qualifications (listed in I Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9; I Peter 5:1-4 and elsewhere). Many, though not all, are applicable for women in vocational ministry, as well. Please adapt as you believe most helpful. (This document is a companion document to the Policy on Spiritual and Character Qualifications [PSCQ] and its accompanying Questionnaires.)

We realize that the categorization and descriptions of this first tool are translations/interpretations of biblical terms. Your interpretations may be somewhat different. Adapt them as you consider best.

Circle the most appropriate response:
#5 high (or superior), #3 acceptable, #1 low (or weak)
U is unknown

General Qualifications

Above reproach: 1 2 3 4 5 U

This quality seems to be the overarching qualification on which the rest support. The elder must have an excellent reputation in his personal life, family life, interpersonal life and ministry life. He should carry no glaring sins in his life that would cause people not to respect his spiritual leadership, counsel and discipline. In no way does this mean he is sinless. (I Tim. 3:2, Titus 1:6-7; Acts 6:3)

Willing: 1 2 3 4 5 U

A man must serve willingly or voluntarily, without constraint. He must not feel as though he has to serve, but rather that God wants him to do so if confirmed by the leadership and church. Thus, he readily makes the necessary sacrifices to serve as an elder. (I Peter 5:2; I Tim. 3:1)

Personal Qualifications

Temperate and Self-Control: 1 2 3 4 5 U

Temperate seems to imply the idea of a balanced, moderate life. (I Tim. 3:2)

Self-control means having control over natural passions and desires by the power of the Holy Spirit. He is self-disciplined. (Titus 1:8)

Prudent and Sensible: 1 2 3 4 5 U

He shows good judgment in various life situations. Emotionally mature, he does not make quick and superficial decisions based on emotion or immature thinking. (I Tim. 2:2; Titus 1:8)

Respectable: 1 2 3 4 5 U

His peers esteem his character and see him as an inspiring example. (I Tim. 3:2; I Peter 5:3)

Not addicted to wine: 1 2 3 4 5 U

This requirement prohibits the misuse of alcohol. When alcohol rules, God doesn't. The spirit of this qualification includes all addictive substances or behaviors, for no Christian should allow himself/herself to be dominated or controlled by anything that will harm his/her body, cloud his/her thinking or hinder his/her testimony for Jesus Christ. (I Tim. 3:3; Titus 1:7; Eph. 5:18; I Cor. 6:19-20, 10:22-33; Rom. 14)

Free from the love of money and not fond of sordid gain: 1 2 3 4 5 U

A man whose priorities are to "*seek first the kingdom of God...*" will allow material things to take their proper place under God's direction. Proportionate and generous giving will be an act of joyful service. He is not greedy nor does he set his affections on money. This does not demand he be poor, but that his life not be dominated and motivated by money. He is the kind of man whose business practices and motives, in relation to financial gain, never come into question. (I Tim. 3:3; Titus 1:7; Matt. 6:19-34; I Tim. 6:9-10, 17-19; Heb. 13:5, I Peter 5:2)

Loves what is good: 1 2 3 4 5 U

His moral excellence is evident to others. In addition, from within his heart, he earnestly desires those things that are holy and good. (Titus 1:8; Phil. 4:8; I Cor. 13:6)

Devout: 1 2 3 4 5 U

He is to be a man who is close to God and separated from sin. (Titus 1:8)

Marriage & Family Qualifications

The husband of one wife: 1 2 3 4 5 U

If he is married, he should be purely devoted to his own wife. He should be known literally as a “*one woman man*.” Whether married or single, his reputation in relationships with the opposite sex should be *beyond reproach*. The issue of a previous divorce and/or marriage to one previously divorced is not an automatic disqualifier for a ministry credential, but it will be reviewed. Although marital history must be considered, the focus of Scripture is primarily on one’s current life and character. (Please see the statement on A Biblical View of Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage, and Church Leadership.)

The man’s family: 1 2 3 4 5 U

The apostle Paul does not intend to provide an exhaustive elder qualification list in either I Timothy 3 or Titus 1 or in both combined. What he does list however, provides helpful indicators of a potential elder’s genuine spiritual maturity and fitness to lead others. One key area to examine is the man’s example and leadership within his own family, if he has one. The reasoning is from the “*lesser to the greater*” (not lesser and greater in importance, since the primary responsibility is in the home, but rather in respect to sphere and scope of responsibility). If a man fails to evidence godly example, leadership and discipline within his own family (a more limited sphere of responsibility), then how will he do this with respect to *God’s* family, the church (a broader sphere of responsibility)? This does not mean that he will have a perfect family. (I Tim. 3:4-5)

Manages his own household well: 1 2 3 4 5 U

He is to be the leader in his home who effectively oversees and manages his family. (I Tim. 3:4)

Keeping his children under control and not accused of dissipation or rebellion: 1 2 3 4 5

U

As a father, his *firmness* makes it advisable for his children to obey, his *wisdom* makes it natural for them to obey and his *love* makes it a pleasure for them to obey. (I Tim. 3:4; Titus 1:6; Eph. 6:4)

Having children who believe: 1 2 3 4 5 U

The Bible does not promise that every child of a believer will become a dedicated follower of Christ. God is a perfect Father and yet He has wayward children. (Luke 15:11-32, 13:34-35, 19:41-42). However, an elder must model a genuine godly example within his home and through his nurturing influence and teaching (Eph. 6:1-4) and exercise a sanctifying influence upon his children (I Cor. 7:14). If so, then one can *generally* expect to see his children following in the faith of their father. (Titus 1:6)

Interpersonal Qualifications

Not pugnacious and quick tempered: 1 2 3 4 5 U

He must not be quick-tempered and given to physical violence or verbal abuse. He exhibits restraint during times of volatile and emotional upheavals. (I Tim. 3:3; Titus 1:7)

Gentle: 1 2 3 4 5 U

He is conciliatory, considerate, reasonable, respectful, and while never compromising truth, is willing to yield his rights for the sake of love. (I Tim. 3:3; Titus 3:2, Phil. 4:5, James 3:17; I Peter 2:18; I Cor. 6:7)

Uncontentious: 1 2 3 4 5 U

He does not quarrel and engage in selfish argumentation, but is peaceable. He is not critical, argumentative or punitive but tolerant, accepting, patient and considerate. (I Tim. 3:3; 2 Tim. 2:23-25; Rom. 12:16-18, 14:19, 15:5-6; Eph. 4:1-3)

Not self-willed: 1 2 3 4 5 U

He does not force his own ideas and opinions on other people. He does not stubbornly insist upon having his own way. Where opinions or methodology differ among secondary issues, he must be willing to yield in a peaceable and respectful manner to the consensus of the total leadership. (Titus 1:7; James 3:13-18)

A good reputation with those outside: 1 2 3 4 5 U

Unbelievers, as well as believers, are to respect his integrity. He is to be “*above reproach*” in the world, as well as in the church. (I Tim. 3:7; Col. 4:5-6; I Thess. 4:11-12; I Peter 2:12, 3:15-17)

Ministry Qualifications

Not a new convert: 1 2 3 4 5 U

He must be a mature believer who has been a Christian long enough to demonstrate the reality of his conversion and the depth of his spirituality. Linking a trusting, obedient heart to time produces maturity. A person placed in leadership before he senses the awesomeness of Christian service is particularly vulnerable to sinful pride. (I Tim. 3:6)

Hospitable: 1 2 3 4 5 U

“*A lover of strangers.*” Rather than being cliquish, he warmly reaches out to believers and non-believers that he does not know. He ministers to their temporal and emotional needs. This may be expressed by ministering to people within his home. (I Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:8)

Able to teach: 1 2 3 4 5 U

He must be able to communicate God’s truth in the Bible to others. This does not mean he must be a gifted Bible teacher, but he can teach and apply God’s Word in his own life and to the lives of others. However, those who aspire to teaching/preaching ministries must display spiritual giftedness for this role before being credentialed. He must also be well equipped to instruct others in sound doctrine and correct those who espouse doctrinal error. (I Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:9)

Holding fast the faithful Word: 1 2 3 4 5 U

He is stable in his faith and obedient to the Word of God in all respects. He is not a hypocrite but earnestly seeks to live what he teaches. (Titus 1:9)

Just: 1 2 3 4 5 U

This may have reference to his being a righteous man. It is equally probably that it refers to the prospective elder's dealings with others. He is to be fair and impartial. He is able and willing to make honest, objective judgments based upon Scripture's commands and principles. (Titus 1:8)

- To what extent does this individual already function as a spiritual leader in your midst (though he may not have an office)? **1 2 3 4 5 U**
- To what degree does this individual exemplify the Christian character necessary for you to be under the authority of his spiritual leadership at your local church (Heb. 13:17)?
1 2 3 4 5 U

The second tool, immediately following, will guide you to assess a candidate's character in terms of general emotional and interpersonal health and maturity.

Please rate the candidate by placing a **check mark by one or more** items under each of the headings below. If you wish, describe briefly and concretely, specific instances which support or interpret your assessment. Do not check items which you feel uncertain or which you have had no opportunity to observe.

A. Intelligence
and

- Learns and thinks slowly
- Average mental ability
- Alert; has a good mind
- Brilliant; exceptional capacity

C. Leadership (*ability to inspire others and maintain their confidence*)

- Makes no effort to lead
- Tries but lacks ability
- Has some leadership promise
- Good leadership ability
- Exceptional ability to lead

E. Responsiveness (*to feelings and needs of others*)

- Slow to sense how others feel
- Reasonably responsive
- Understanding and thoughtful
- Responds with unusual insight and consideration

G. Teachability

- Rigid, argumentative
- Highly opinionated
- Open-Minded
- Willing to receive instruction
- Eager to receive instruction

I. Self-image

- Insecure
- Inferiority complex
- Self-confident
- May be prone to boast
- Modest, true estimate of self

B. Achievement (*ability to formulate, execute and carry plans to conclusions*)

- Does only what is assigned
- Starts but does not finish
- Meets average expectations
- Resourceful and effective
- Superior creative ability

D. Teamwork (*ability to work with others*)

- Often causes friction
- Usually cooperative
- Prefers to work alone
- Able to work with those of different personality or temperament
- Seeks to dominate

F. Emotional adjustment

- Yields to urges or cravings
- Tense, fearful, worried
- Easily angered, easily frustrated
- Maintains balance, self-controlled

H. Perseverance (*in completing task*)

- Gives up easily or easily discouraged
- Needs encouragement to persevere
- Persists in most circumstances
- Persists even under adversity

J. Wisdom in use of money

- Talks frequently of debt or financial worries
- Expects others to meet needs
- Careless
- Extravagant
- Careful; has a budget

K. Integrity and honesty

- Exceptionally trustworthy
- Honest and forthright
- Often unreliable
- Of doubtful integrity

M. Self-Discipline

- Shows good self-discipline
- Perfectionist
- Often late for meetings
- Overindulges in hobby/recreation
- Avoids difficult tasks
- Does not control temper

O. Following directions

- Works well under supervision
- Good follow-through with delegated responsibilities
- Needs supervision to function adequately
- Sometimes completes assigned tasks
- Often disregards directions

Q. Submission to leadership

- Submits to decisions s/he may not agree
- Needs explanation for decisions s/he does not agree with
- Often vocalizes disapproval about leaders
- Undermines/challenges authority

S. Witness

- Shares faith naturally, effectively
- Has zeal but tends to be insensitive
- Shares Christ reluctantly and self-consciously
- Indifferent/apathetic about sharing the gospel
- Overemotional

U. Sociability or friendliness

- Avoided by others
- Tolerated by others
- Liked by others
- Well-liked by others
- Sought by others

L. Adaptability

- Adjusts well to unusual circumstances
- Usually adjusts to change
- Slow in adjustment to change
- Unable to cope with new situations

N. Personal appearance

- Meticulous
- Consistently well-groomed and neat
- Dresses modestly and appropriately
- Usually neat
- Careless

P. Judgment and common sense

- Displays outstanding judgment and sense
- Usually shows good judgment and sense
- Impulsive in making decisions
- Finds it difficult to make decisions
- Somewhat impractical

R. Expression of feelings

- Speaks well of others
- Tactful
- Non-argumentative
- Fault-finding and critical

T. Christian experience

- Vital and contagious
- Rich and growing
- Mature and stable
- Relatively superficial

1. Please comment on any insights/concerns you have regarding this applicant's qualifications in the previous noted in the previous section.

2. How is this person gifted for vocational Christian ministry?

3. If this applicant is married, how would you evaluate his/her marriage relationship?

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know | <input type="checkbox"/> Reserved |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Superficial | <input type="checkbox"/> Warm, growing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Detached, aloof | <input type="checkbox"/> Good communication |

Comment to discuss with fellow leaders:

4. Listed below are some of the tendencies which may reduce the effectiveness of the candidate for credentialing. Place a check mark by any characteristics or traits which you have noted in the candidate.

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Impatient | <input type="checkbox"/> Self-centered | <input type="checkbox"/> Nervous |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Domineering | <input type="checkbox"/> "Cocky" | <input type="checkbox"/> Frequently worried |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Easily Offended | <input type="checkbox"/> Rude | <input type="checkbox"/> Impersonal |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Irritable | <input type="checkbox"/> Quick-tempered | <input type="checkbox"/> Rigid, not adaptable |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Discouraged | <input type="checkbox"/> Anxious | <input type="checkbox"/> Easily embarrassed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Unteachable | <input type="checkbox"/> Depressed | <input type="checkbox"/> Argumentative |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tense | <input type="checkbox"/> Intolerant | <input type="checkbox"/> Critical of others |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sullen | <input type="checkbox"/> Lacking tact | <input type="checkbox"/> Aloof |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Given to exclusive and absorbing friendships, i.e. "crushes" | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lacking in humor or inability to take a joke | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prejudiced toward groups, races or nationalities | | |

Comments to discuss with fellow leaders:

5. How would you rate this person's ability to build and maintain healthy friendships?

With those of the same sex:

With those of the opposite sex:

- Good
- Average
- Poor

- Good
- Average
- Poor

Further comment:

6. If you were asked to have this person as a co-worker for several years, how would you respond?

7. How do you rate this person's potential for Christian service?

- Exceptional
- Good
- Average
- Below average

8. Do you recommend acceptance?

- Yes
- Yes, but with some reservation as suggested by above comments
- No, but could become acceptable with growth in areas mentioned above
- No, I cannot recommend acceptance

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