



California Churches of God Eldership

READINESS FOR MINISTRY
GUIDELINES FOR PASTORAL MATURITY



Churches of God, General Conference
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Revised 2000

California Church of God Eldership Ministerial/Pastor Guidance
Adapted from: Churches of God, General Conference
“Readiness for Ministry-Guidelines for Pastoral Maturity”

READINESS FOR MINISTRY

The CGGC and California Churches of God, believe that God calls men to serve the church as pastors. This personal call is an essential requirement for anyone seeking ministerial credentials in the Churches of God.

The call by itself, however, is not enough. It must be followed by preparation and it must be confirmed by the church. The process of preparation and confirmation is taught by Scripture. For example, when Jesus called the twelve, He led them through an intensive period of training that lasted three years. The early church ordained elders by the laying on of hands, a practice which by its very nature indicated that the call required confirmation. Paul instructed Timothy that an elder “must not be a recent convert” (I Timothy 3:6 NIV) and warned him, “do not be hasty in the laying on of hands” (I Timothy 5:22 NIV). The church has a biblical mandate to measure the readiness for ministry of any man professing to have received God’s call and seeking credentials for pastoral ministry.

Readiness for ministry is a key issue in both preparation and confirmation. When is a man ready for ministry? It is helpful to think of readiness in terms of several basic dimensions of human experience:

- Spiritual Readiness: The applicant is a mature believer in Jesus Christ.
- Intellectual Readiness: The applicant has the necessary knowledge to function in the pastoral ministry.
- Professional Readiness: The applicant has the skill needed to carry out pastoral duties in the local church.
- Emotional Readiness: The applicant is emotionally mature.
- Personal Readiness: The applicant’s personal life is free of conflicts that may interfere with his effectiveness as a pastor.

A man is ready for ministry when readiness in these areas is integrated into readiness as a whole man for the pastoral calling.

The list that follows is a detailed profile of a man who is ready for ministry. It amplifies and clarifies the general description above.

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THE PROFILE

The person who is ready for ministry:

⊕ SPIRITUAL LIFE

√ **1. Confesses faith in Jesus Christ.**

- A. Has made a decision of faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.
- B. Is able to describe and reflect on his personal journey of faith and gives evidence of a changed life through Christ.
- C. Is not a recent convert.
- D. Has been baptized as a believer and participates in the Lord’s Supper and Footwashing.

2. Is committed to discipleship in his own life.

3. Practices a personal devotional life.

- A. Maintains a regular schedule for private prayer.
- B. Enriches his spiritual life with a variety of devotional materials.
- C. Maintains a regular schedule for reading and reflecting on the Bible devotionally.

4. Maintains a mutual support relationship with a community of faith.

5. Recognizes and utilizes personal spiritual gifts.

6. Manifests continuing growth and transformation through Christ in all dimensions of his life.

⊕ THE CALL

7. Demonstrates a genuine call to the pastoral ministry.

- A. Is able to describe the process by which he became aware of the call and the reasons for believing it to be a divine call to the pastoral ministry.
- B. Is confident that he is sensing a call out of a sincere desire to serve God rather than ulterior motives (such as a desire to please others, a need to compensate for feelings of guilt, or the mistaken notion that ministry will be an easy occupation).
- C. Has “counted the cost,” has a realistic expectation of what the pastoral ministry and is prepared to make the sacrifices and commitments that may be required.

8. Has a call that is confirmed by others.

- A. If married, is supported by his spouse in the decision to enter the pastoral ministry.
- B. Is supported by his pastor, who recognizes the candidate’s call and sees his potential for effective pastoral service.
- C. Has shown qualities of leadership in his local church as well as in other situations.
- D. Is supported by his local church and local regional conference.

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‡ **PERSONALITY AND EMOTIONS**

9. Is committed to becoming a whole person as defined by Scripture and shows evidence of that commitment in his life.

- A. Demonstrates the presence of the fruit of the Spirit in his attitudes and behavior, specifically: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23).
- B. Is able to recognize areas of his life that are still subject to the carnal nature and is working on surrendering those areas fully to the authority of Jesus (see Galatians 5:16-21; Colossians 3:5-10).
- C. Recognizes Jesus Christ as the model and example of a complete human person and regards faith in and faithfulness to Christ as the primary conditions for inner healing and personal wholeness.

10. Demonstrates the marks of emotional maturity.

- A. Accepts responsibility for his own actions.
- B. Can be depended on to keep commitments and honor deadlines.
- C. Is able to work on long-term goals without immediate gratification.
- D. Is able to express his needs and feelings in direct and non-aggressive ways.
- E. Is able to deal with disappointment without becoming discouraged and giving up.

11. Is able to manage anger in appropriate ways.

- A. Is able to receive criticism graciously and with an open mind.
- B. Is able to deal with angry persons in loving and constructive ways.
- C. Is willing to accept counsel from others.
- D. Is willing to accept direction from and cooperate with persons in authority over Him.
- E. Is able to resolve his own anger in constructive, non-aggressive ways.

12. Demonstrates a positive self-image.

- A. Is able to articulate a realistic assessment of his strengths and weaknesses.
- B. Is able to relate socially to other persons.
- C. Is able to maintain long-term loving relationships with significant friends and members of his immediate family.
- D. Is able to express affection in appropriate ways.
- E. Is able to express feelings of love, admiration or praise to other persons without embarrassment.
- F. Is able to receive praise and affirmation graciously.
- G. Is not hindered or controlled by compulsive or obsessive behavior in ways that would interfere with ministry.
- H. Is able to work and relate to others without the need for constant approval.
- I. Is able to express disagreement or differences of opinion without apologizing or becoming belligerent.

13. Knows his limits.

- A. Recognizes limits to his knowledge and ability.
- B. Knows how to recognize when he is overstressed and knows how to cope with stress.
- C. Is able to identify areas where he needs to grow.
- D. Demonstrates a teachable spirit.

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14. Is able to serve as well as lead.

- A. Recognizes ways in which he may be tempted to abuse the authority of the pastoral office.
- B. Is willing to protect and care for persons who are emotionally weak and vulnerable.
- C. Sees the need for accountability and is willing to be accountable to the local church, regional conference and General Conference.
- D. Understands that he will be expected to be an example to the people he will serve and accepts this without resentment.
- E. Is able to reflect on the meaning of Jesus' example in washing the feet of the disciples and is able to describe what this example means for his personal life and vocation.
- F. Is able to serve others graciously (protecting the dignity of those served), discreetly (without notice by others), quietly (without pomp), and cheerfully (without complaint).

↓ PERSONAL MATTERS

15. Understands and is committed to the biblical standard of sexual morality.

- A. Has a healthy, positive attitude toward his own sexuality and, if married, is able to enjoy a fulfilling sexual relationship with his spouse.
- B. Is committed to chastity outside of marriage.
- C. Knows the power of sexual feelings and does not underestimate his vulnerability to temptation.
- D. Is able to relate to persons of the opposite sex as persons rather than as objects of sexual desire.
- E. Regards homosexual relations as a sin. If aware of homosexual tendencies in himself, the candidate will abstain from active homosexual relations and seek appropriate counseling.

16. Is able to be faithful to his family.

- A. If married, values his marriage as the most important human relationship in his life and actively nurtures and cultivates it.
- B. Has realistic expectations of the pressures that will be placed on his marriage and family by the pastoral ministry.
- C. Is willing to set limits on work in order to be a faithful parent and marriage partner.
- D. Is willing to protect the privacy and personal lives of his children.

17. Is physically able to perform the duties of the pastoral ministry.

- A. Abstains from tobacco, alcoholic beverages and illegal drugs.
- B. Does not abuse and is not dependent on chemical substances of any kind.
- C. Practices moderation in his diet.
- D. Understands the need to balance work, recreation and rest.

18. Is a good manager of his own finances.

- A. Demonstrates a spirit of contentment that does not depend on material possessions.
- B. Is able to live within his own means.
- C. Knows that mismanagement of personal finances will damage his effectiveness for ministry.
- D. Does not become indebted at levels he cannot manage and uses credit and credit cards with caution.
- E. Will not raise the issue of compensation outside the channels established for that purpose.
- F. Will not borrow money from nor enter into business partnerships with members of his congregation.
- G. Practices good judgment in accepting gifts of cash or goods, and will return gifts that may compromise his integrity.