

Character Assessment Guides
For Candidates for an EFCA Ministerial Credential

rev. 04-06-04

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 EF 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 turned into the EFCA. Rather we encourage each member of the church's spiritual leadership team to fill out these guides individually. Then discuss them together among yourselves before you determine that you are prepared to make the recommendation. That recommendation means that 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, that immediately follows, will guide you to weigh a candidate's character against the specific grid of the Scripture's elder qualifications (listed in 1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-4, and elsewhere). Many, though not all, are applicable for women in vocational ministry as well (adapt as you wish).

We realize that the categorization and descriptions of this first tool are Scriptural interpretations. Your interpretations may be somewhat different - adapt as you deem best.

Circle the most appropriate response
 #5 is high (or superior), #3 is 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, 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 that he is sinless. 1 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. 1 Pet. 5:2; 1 Tim 3:1

Personal Qualifications

Temperate & Self-control: 1 2 3 4 5 U

Temperate seems to imply the idea of a balanced, moderate life. 1 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 & 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 that are based on emotion or immature thinking. 1 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. 1 Tim. 3:2; 1 Pet. 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. In general, the EFCA encourages, though does not require, total abstinence (for more information, see www.efca.org, within "search", type "alcohol" for 1985 General Conference resolution). 1 Tim 3:3; Titus 1:7; Eph. 5:18; 1 Cor. 6:19-20; 10:23-33; Rm. 14

Free from the love of money & 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 that 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. 1 Tim. 3:3; Titus 1:7; Mt. 6:19-34; 1 Tim. 6:9-10, 17-19; Heb. 13:5; 1 Pet. 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; 1 Cor 13:6

Devout: 1 2 3 4 5 U

His 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

This means 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 EFCA's national position is that an EFCA credentialed minister of the gospel is "called upon by God to model and exemplify the highest and best in Christian character and conduct." Furthermore its position is that "a biblically approved divorce and remarriage, while meeting 'the one-woman man' standard, does appear to violate the spirit of the 'above reproach' standard..." Therefore in 1982 the EFCA reaffirmed the policy that "we will not license, ordain, transfer credentials, hire, or recommend for placement in pastoral ministry, missionary service, or district or national executive leadership a person who has been divorced, or who is married to a person who has been divorced." There are four potential exceptions to this standard: 1) divorce before conversion, 2) abandonment by an unsaved spouse, 3) infidelity, and 4) fraudulent or dishonest marriage commitment. There must be objective verification that one of these conditions exists before a candidate may be cleared by the EFCA for ordination. To obtain more information about this policy and our procedures, contact your district superintendent or write to: EFCA National Ministries, 901 East 78th Street, Minneapolis, MN 55420; (800) 745-2202

The man's family:

The apostle Paul does not intend to provide an exhaustive elder qualification list in either 1 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*". If a man fails to evidence godly example, leadership, and discipline within his own family (a lesser sphere of responsibility), then how will he do this with respect to *God's* family, the church (a greater sphere of responsibility)? This does not mean that he will have a perfect family. 1 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. 1 Tim. 3:4

Keeping his children under control & 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. 1 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 (Lk. 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), exercise a sanctifying influence upon his children (1 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 & 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 emotional upheavals. 1 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. 1 Tim. 3:3; Titus 3:2; Phil. 4:5; Jas. 3:17; 1 Pet. 2:18; 1 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. 1 Tim. 3:3; 2 Tim. 2:23-25; Rm. 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 varies 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. 1 Tim. 3:7; Col. 4:5-6; 1 Thess. 4:11-12; 1 Pet. 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. 1 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. 1 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 that he must be a gifted Bible teacher, but that he can teach and apply God's Word to his life and 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. 1 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 probable 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, that immediately follows, 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 judgment. Do not check items of which you feel uncertain or in which you have had no opportunity to observe.

A. Intelligence

- 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
- Unusual ability to lead

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

E. Responsiveness *(to the 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

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 or recreation
- Avoids difficult tasks
- Does not control temper

F. Emotional adjustment

- Yields to urges or cravings
- Tense, fearful, worried
- Easily angered, easily frustrated
- Downhearted, blue, depressed
- 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

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

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 he/she may not agree with
- Needs explanation for decisions he/she 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

U. Sociability or friendliness

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

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

T. Christian experience

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

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

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

3. If the 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 credential candidate. 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

- | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Good | <input type="checkbox"/> Good |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Average | <input type="checkbox"/> Average |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Poor | <input type="checkbox"/> 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