

THE 13 QUALITIES OF A CHURCH PLANTER

During the Assessment Interview, 13 Qualities of a Church Planter were looked at, each one having a significant impact on the effectiveness of the church planter. These are listed below with qualifying statements:

1. Visioning Capacity

- Demonstrating ability to formulate, express and implement a clear and compelling vision
- Being a person who projects into the future beyond the present
- Developing a theme which highlights the vision and philosophy of ministry
- Persuasively selling the vision to the people
- Approaching challenges as opportunities rather than obstacles
- Coping effectively with non-visioning elements of the group
- Not erecting artificial walls or limits either overtly or subconsciously
- Establishing a clear church identity related to the theme and vision
- Believing in God's capacity to do great things

2. Intrinsically Motivated

- Working out of a deep sense of call or mission
- Having a deep desire to do things well and a commitment to do things right
- Stick-to-it attitude and persistence
- Having initiative and determination
- Having a willingness to work harder and smarter
- Being a self-starter and a willingness to build from nothing
- Anticipating new projects

3. Creates Ownership of Ministry

- Helping people buy in and feel responsible for the growth and success of the group
- Gaining commitment of the people to the vision
- Establishing a group identity
- Avoiding imposing unrealistic goals for which the group cannot claim ownership
- Willing to give ideas away

4. Relates to Lost People and Other Unchurched People

- Communicating in a style that is understood by lost and unchurched people
- Understanding the mentality of lost and unchurched people
- Moving and functioning in the "personal space" of lost, without fear
- Getting to know lost and unchurched people on a personal level
- Breaking through the barriers erected the lost and unchurched
- Handling crisis faced by the lost and unchurched
- Intentionally seeking out lost and unchurched people

5. Spousal Cooperation

- Having an agreed upon concept of family to which each member has input and commitment
- 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 life before church and community
- Agreeing upon and sharing the ministry vision
- Deliberately planning and protecting private family life

6. Effectively Builds Relationships

- Responding with urgency to expressed needs and concerns of people
- Displaying Godly love and compassion to people
- Being proactive in getting to know people on a personal basis

- Making others feel secure and comfortable in one's presence
- Responding non-judgmentally or non-prejudicially to new people
- Appreciating and accepting a variety of persons
- Balancing the need for quality time with active and prospective members

7. Committed to Church Growth

- Believing in church growth as a theological principle
- Appreciating steady and consistent growth without preoccupation with the quick success factor
- Committing to numerical growth within the context of spiritual and relational growth (discipleship)
- Recognizing that non-growth is threatening and self-defeating
- Establishing the goal of becoming a financially self-supporting congregation
- Not prematurely falling into a ministry of maintenance
- Seeing the church project within the larger context of God's kingdom

8. Responsive to Community

- Getting involved in life of one's community or people group
- Understanding the culture of the community or people group
- Identifying, assessing and prioritizing community or people group needs
- Responding to community or people group needs by allocating resources in an efficient manner
- Determining success and failures of other organized religious attempts to respond to needs
- Meeting community or people group needs while maintaining church needs
- Understanding the character and pulse of the community or the people group
- Adapting the philosophy of ministry to the character of the community or people group

9. Utilizes Giftedness of Others

- Releasing and equipping people to do the task of ministry
- Discerning the spiritual gifts in others
- Matching the gifts of people with ministry needs and opportunities
- Delegating effectively in areas of personal limitation
- 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

10. Flexible and Adaptable

- Addressing challenges creatively
- Coping effectively with ambiguity
- Coping effectively with constant and abrupt change
- Adapting oneself and one's methods to the uniqueness of the particular church planting project
- Shifting priorities and emphasis during various stages of church growth
- Doing whatever is necessary whenever necessary

11. Builds Group Cohesiveness

- Developing a nucleus group or groups as a foundation
- Quickly incorporating newcomers into a network of relationships
- Leading the group or groups to be focused on their purpose
- Engaging others in meaningful, united activity
- Sensing the morale of people and building it appropriately
- Utilizing groups effectively
- Dealing with conflict assertively, constructively and tactfully
- Using team building skills

12. Resilience

- Experiencing setbacks without defeat
- Riding the ups and downs (i.e., attendance, morale, conflict, relationships, etc.)
- Expecting the unexpected
- Rebounding from loss, disappointments and failure

13. Exercises Faith

- Possessing a conviction regarding one's call to church planting ministry
- Believing in God's action
- Having expectation and hope
- Having a willingness to wait for answers to specific prayer requests

It is very important that the prospective church planter have a balanced profile concerning the above qualities. The Assessment interview is a means of looking at past behavior in an attempt to predict future action concerning these qualities in the life and ministry of the planter and in the ongoing growth and success of the new church.

Adapted from Charles Ridley's, *How to Select Church Planters* and *Church Planter Initial Assessment Training*, by Charles Ridley and Robert Logan, August 1996, conducted for NAMB.