

## What is Church Planter Assessment?

Church planters are called to be people 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 people are not gifted or called to this work they find themselves 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 because 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 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 four-day process with the following features:

1. Multiple assessment instruments are used.
2. The instruments and assessment experience are tailored to relevant aspects of church planting.
3. Multiple trained observers are used.
4. All data from the assessment process is combined and evaluated.
5. Every candidate receives a final rating with recommendations for moving forward.

### **THE OBJECTIVES OF ASSESSMENT**

1. Utilizing interviews, instruments and assessment exercises assessors evaluate the extent to which the candidate's skills and abilities are suited for church planting.
2. Candidates engage in self and peer-assessment as they participate in the exercises.
3. Candidates will acquire new skills and knowledge through the assessment process.

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

### **DISCERNING GOD'S GIFTING**

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 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 edifies and builds 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 PLANTER<sup>1</sup>**

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:

### **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 people's needs

### **Dimension 4: Visioning Capacity**

12. Motivates others: awakens a 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 act 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 love's journey
28. Spouse partnership: demonstrates 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 despite difficulties

**Dimension 10: Managerial Courage**

31. Directing: leads others toward a common goal despite 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 the candidate 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

**6 DIMENSIONS AND 13 COMPETENCIES OF A SUCCESSFUL CHURCH PLANTER SPOUSE****Dimension 1: Spiritual Dynamics**

1. Walk with God: understands and depends on God's grace for joyful living
2. Humble: unselfconscious in attitude and behavior

**Dimension 2: Family Life**

3. Growing marriage: sensitive interdependence in life's journey
4. Supportive: giving moral and emotional support
5. Healthy family: maintains awareness and support through stages of life

**Dimension 3: Integrity**

6. Honesty: being open, authentic, and truthful
7. Faithfulness: loyal, responsible, and dependent on Christ

**Dimension 4: Learning Agility**

8. Ambiguity: growing reliance on Christ in unclear situations
9. Discerning: showing good judgment, insight, and taste

**Dimension 5: Missional Engagement**

10. Spouse Partnership: demonstrates joint interest and commitment to common vision
11. Networker: communicates and works together with others for Kingdom growth

**Dimension 6: Emotional Stability**

12. Accurate self-view: resilient through finding strength in Christ
13. Relational maturity: being genuinely other-centered without self-absorption

**CHARACTER TRAITS THAT WOULD HINDER THE CHURCH PLANTER SPOUSE**

**Staller/Stopper 1: Doesn't sense a call to church ministry**

1. Fails to support spouse: doesn't sense call to church ministry
2. Disloyal: displays lack of devotion to ministry vision
3. Unadaptable: unable to adapt to differences

**Staller/Stopper 2: Self-Centered**

4. Lacks accurate self-view: looks to others or success for identity
5. Irresponsible: does not take responsibility for self or commitments
6. Unethical: lives on the margins of moral standards and values
7. Betrays trust: does not share information appropriately

**Staller/Stopper 3: Performance-based Spirituality**

8. Fails to live by gospel dynamics: views spirituality as fulfilling a list of duties
9. Tends towards works-righteousness: relies on human effort for Christian growth

**Staller/Stopper 4: Doesn't relate well to others**

10. Insensitive: unable to respond appropriately to people
11. Unforgiving: unwilling or unable to forgive

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