

Criteria for Ministry

In looking at the criteria for selection for the ministry in the Seventh-day Adventist Church the Conference or Mission officials will look at how the applicant responds to the following areas:

1. **Call to Ministry** – Candidates should be able to speak of a growing sense of being called by God to ministry, referring both to their own conviction and extent to which others have confirmed it. “Because of ministry’s uniqueness in its divine appointment, ministry is more than a profession. It is a calling” (Minister’s Handbook, pg 15). “Ministers for God do not consider themselves ‘self called.’ As with the apostle Paul, the initiative is not the individual’s, but the Lord’s. Paul did not choose the ministry of the gospel; rather, God chose him for that ministry. Paul’s choice was whether or not to respond to God’s call. A call to the gospel ministry is a call to become an ambassador for Christ. This call demands the full commitment of one’s being to this high calling.” (Minister’s Handbook, pg. 16).



(Gospel Workers, pg 100)

2. **Spirituality** – Candidates must demonstrate a conversion experience and should show a commitment to prayer and Bible study. “My message to ministers, young and old, is this: Guard jealously your hours for prayer, Bible study and self-examination. Set aside a portion of each day for a study of the Scriptures and communion with God. Thus you will obtain spiritual strength, and will grow in favour with God.”

3. **Relationships** – Candidates need to demonstrate a capacity to build and develop healthy personal, pastoral and professional relationships. “Christ’s instruction to His disciples before His ascension was directed to the care of people. And this directive extends to all aspects of pastoral ministry. The supreme interest of the pastor must be serving people. As important as study, preaching, administration, teaching, or any other aspect of ministry may be, with each being centred in the service to people, it will not lead to success as a minister of Jesus Christ. People are a pastor’s speciality. In this service the personal characteristics of integrity and warmth rate higher than professional skills. (Minister’s Handbook, pg 22) “Tact and good judgment increase the usefulness of the labourer a hundredfold.” (Gospel Workers, p. 119).



4. **Personality and Character** – Candidates should be seen by others as having a Christian character. “The influence of a true Christian character is like the cheering rays of sunlight that pierce to the remotest corners of the dark places into which they are allowed to enter.” (Review & Herald, Aug. 8, 1878).

Candidates should develop such traits of character as self-sacrifice and compassion. They should show a positive attitude, be dependable and a good example to those they work with.

5. **Relationship to Church Organization** – Candidates should recognize the distinctiveness of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, be familiar with its structure, its teachings and mission. “Christ called the church into being, and while demonstrably evident that the church exists as an imperfect organization (being made up of imperfect people), yet ‘enfeebled and defective as it may be, [the church] is the only object on earth on which He bestows His supreme regard’ (Testimonies to Ministers, p. 15). To be Christian means to love His church, for Christ ‘loved the church and gave Himself for it’ (Eph. 5:25).” (Minister’s Handbook, pg. 50)



6. **Leadership** – Candidates should be able to demonstrate qualities of leadership and if possible have had some experience as a lay-leader at local church level.

7. **Christian leadership is servant leadership.** “Personality and leadership style are intimately related to the natural way ministers lead, yet leaders should adapt to different settings and the needs of those to whom they direct their ministry. Servant leadership demands adaptation and flexibility. The apostle Paul gives the example of this adaptation, saying, ‘Though I am free from all men, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win the more; and to the Jews I became a Jew, that I might win Jews; . . . to the weak I became as weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some’ (1 Cor. 9:19-22)” (Minister’s Handbook pg. 102)



8. **Evangelism** – Candidates should understand that the mission of the church is to take the gospel to the world. “Churches continue to exist only by receiving a steady growth of new members. . . There are three sources of membership growth – biological, transfer and evangelism – and each one is vital and important to the future of the church.” (Minister’s Handbook pg. 116) Candidates should be enthusiastic about proclaiming the gospel in a clear, attractive way to those who will listen.

9. **Training for Ministry** – Candidates should have the necessary educational qualifications in order to undertake a graduate and post graduate course in theology at Newbold College. They should also be able to cope with the intellectual demands of ministry and exhibit a readiness to reflect and enquire.

