

Thirteen Essential Qualities for Successful Church Planters

(as identified by Dr. Charles Ridley)

1. **Visionizing capacity**
 - 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-visionizing elements
 - 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**
 - having a desire to do well and a commitment to excellence
 - stick-to-itiveness and persistence
 - having initiative and aggressiveness without the negative connotations
 - having a willingness to work long and hard
 - being a self-starter with a willingness to build from nothing
 - having a high energy and vitality level; physical stamina
3. **Creates ownership of ministry**
 - helping people to "buy in" and feel responsible for the growth and success of the church
 - gaining commitment of the people to the vision
 - establishing a congregational identity
 - avoiding stereotyping of congregation by imposing unrealistic goals for which it cannot claim ownership
4. **Relates to the unchurched**
 - communicating in a style that is understood by the unchurched
 - understanding the "psychology" or mentality of the unchurched
 - moving and functioning in the "personal space" of the unchurched without fear
 - quickly getting to know the unchurched on a personal level
 - breaking through the barriers erected by the unchurched
 - handling crises faced by the unchurched
5. **Spousal cooperation**
 - 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
 - getting to know people on a personal basis
 - making others feel secure and comfortable in one's presence
 - not responding judgmentally or prejudicially to new people
 - appreciating and accepting a variety of persons
 - spending quality time with present parishioners without overstepping them for new people

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 (more and better disciples)
- recognizing that non-growth is threatening and self-defeating
- establishing the goal of becoming a financially self-supporting church within a specific period of time
- not prematurely falling into a ministry of maintenance
- seeing the church project within the larger context of God's kingdom

8. Responsive to community

- understanding the culture of the community
- identifying and assessing community needs
- responding to community needs on a priority basis such that resources are most efficiently used
- determining successes and failures of other organized religious attempts to respond to community needs
- not confusing what the community needs with what the church wants to offer
- acquiring and understanding of the character and "pulse" of the community
- adapting the philosophy of ministry to the character of the community

9. Utilizes giftedness of others

- releasing and equipping people to do the task of ministry
- discerning of 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

- 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
- engaging others in meaningful church activity
- monitoring the morale of people
- utilizing groups effectively
- dealing with conflict assertively, constructively and tactfully

12. Resilience

- experiencing setbacks without defeat
- riding the ups and downs (i.e. attendance)
- 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