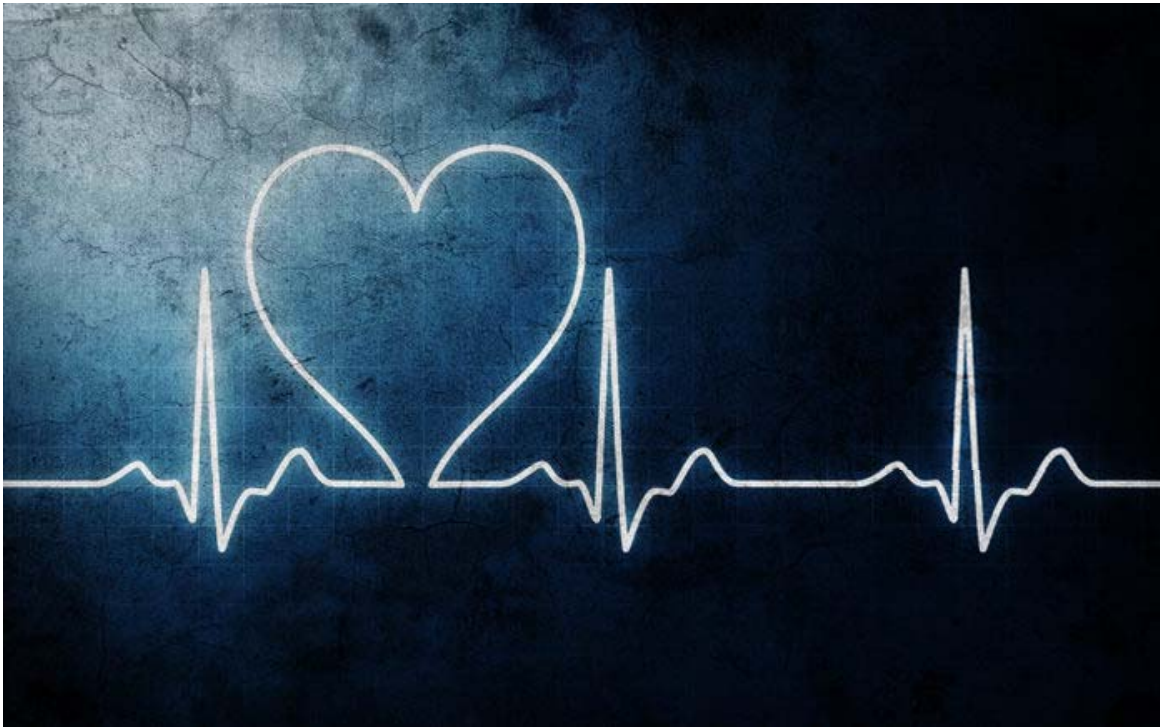


Healthy Pastor Checklist



Healthy Pastor Checklist

What follows is a series of reflective questions. The goal is not to beat you over the head or to make you feel as though you are failing or somehow “less than”. The goal is to help pastors prayerfully think through their life and listen to what God is saying to them about their life. The questions are designed to simply raise issues and bring things to mind. Hopefully, some of what surfaces are good and you can celebrate that. Some of that may be troublesome and you are strongly encouraged to respond well to issues raised.

Of course, these can be used in your own personal time of prayerful reflection with God. If working through the questions with somebody would be helpful (or at least working through the answers or issues raised by these questions), it is suggested that you share with your accountability partner, network or anyone else you feel is appropriate.

There may be times when the issues raised may require some deeper work. If this is true, you are strongly encouraged to seek a counselor or Spiritual Director to help you.

One last thought. If the idea of using this tool fills you with anxiety or dread, please pay attention to that. With God or another person, wrestle through why this is so and then respond to whatever is discovered as suggested above.

The questions have been grouped under several categories. Of course, the list of questions is not exhaustive. Again, the goal is to get you prayerfully reflecting on important areas of your life and paying attention to (and responding to) what is raised.

Notes:

Home Life Issues (spousal, children, extended family, other close relationships)

My family/closest relationships are a gift given to me by God. Is that how I feel about them at this moment? If not, why not?

Am I able to step into the God-given family/relational roles I have? Do I look forward to fulfilling those roles? If not, why not?

Do I have a healthy sexual relationship with my spouse? Would they agree with my assessment? Is there a sense of intimacy that characterizes our interactions?

If I am single, are my relationships characterized by appropriate and healthy levels of intimacy? Am I intentional in developing healthy helpful relationships?

How am I doing at spending appropriate Intentional time with my family/closest relationships? As a group? Individually?

How would my family/closest relationships say I am doing at being present and engaged with them? Have I asked them? If not why not?

Are there any lingering or extended unresolved issues between me and a family member?

Could my communication with my family/closest relationships be rightly characterized as consistently honest? Am I keeping any secrets? Am I holding back the truth?

Am I using my family/closest relationships as an excuse to avoid some responsibilities or tasks in other areas of my life and ministry?

Is there anyone I need to talk to or any help I need to seek out based on my answers to the above questions?

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Relational Issues

Do I feel alone?

Is there a person or people in my life who let me be me, not "Pastor me"? Anyone beyond my family? Does my spouse or my family allow me to be me?

Am I intentional in engaging in relationships beyond my family?

Am I intentional in initiating a relational connection and/or opportunities? Or do I wait for others to initiate? Why or why not?

Do I look to develop new relationships/friendships? If not, why not?

Am I a good friend? Would my friends say I am a good friend? Have I asked them? If not, why not?

Do I have established healthy boundaries with both members of the same and opposite gender? Am I living within those established boundaries in all of my relationships or have I made some exceptions?

Is there anyone I need to talk to or any help I need to seek out based on my answers to the above questions?

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Accountability

Have I developed a regular accountability relationship? Does this need to be paid attention to?

The FMCIC requires that all pastors have an accountability relationship. Am I on board with the “why” of this? Or am I simply going through the motions?



Who is/are my accountability relationship(s)? Are they fully aware they play this role in my life and do they take it seriously? Do I feel like they are on my side? Do I feel like they have no agenda beyond my well-being? If not, do I need a new accountability relationship?

Is this accountability relationship a real, deep, and honest relationship? Or is it being built to be that type of relationship? Am I keeping secrets or addictions from this person? If so, why? And what do I need to do about those secrets/ addictions?

Do I know the areas I am most tempted in? Does my accountability partner? Am I using this relationship as a way to guard against and deal with those temptations?

Beyond my accountability relationship, do I need counseling or spiritual direction during this particular season or for a specific issue? Am I open to these? If not, why not?

Beyond my accountability relationships, have I identified mentors or advisors who will be helpful to me? Do I know who I would turn to for help or expertise? Am I aware of good counselors in my area? Am I aware of where to access a spiritual director?

Where does my spouse fit into my accountability structure? Is that the appropriate place? Where does my board and/or pastor’s cabinet fit into my accountability structure? Is that the appropriate place?

Am I willing or resistant to the whole idea of accountability relationships? Am I willing or resistant to having an accountability partner? Am I willing or resistant to be accountable to my spouse? Am I willing or resistant to be appropriately accountable to my board and/or pastor’s cabinet?

Is there anyone I need to talk to or any help I need to seek out based on my answers to the above questions?

Spiritual Well Being

Am I growing spiritually? Am I praying meaningfully and deeply? Is my prayer time all me talking or am I listening as well? Am I reading widely? Am I deepening my theological understanding? Am I studying Scripture for what it has to say to me and to others?

How is my devotional life? Is it regular? Is it a time other than time spent in sermon preparation and study?

How am I doing at engaging in Spiritual practices beyond prayer and Scripture reading? Am I fasting? Giving generously? Practicing solitude and silence? Worshipping? Hearing the word beyond my own preaching? Engaged in serving beyond what is called for in my job description? Sharing my faith? Practicing hospitality? Are there any of these areas I need to improve on?

Do I enter times with God as part of a checklist or to-do list? Or do I enter with a sense of expectancy? What are my feelings about these times? Mostly positive or mostly negative? Why?

Do I know and understand the spiritual practices and pathways that are most meaningful and helpful to me? Do I engage regularly in those practices and pathways? If not, why not?

Am I intentional in my practice of the Wesleyan means of Grace? If not, why not? Also, am I participating in both the acts of piety and acts of mercy? Am I allowing myself to be stretched through the practice of means that may not be "normal" for me or may be outside of my comfort zone? If not, why not?

Would I be satisfied in the Spiritual development of my congregation if they engaged in spiritual practices and disciplines the way I do? If not, what needs to change in me?

Am I intentionally involved in the making of disciples? Do I have a person or persons that I am discipling? Do I have a person or persons who are not yet a Christian with whom I am building the type of relationship that would lead to intentional discipling? Who is discipling me?

As I think about my relationship with my Heavenly Father, how do I feel about Him? Am I experiencing His delight in me? Am I hearing His voice clearly? How do I think He feels about me? Do I need to reflect on these answers and process them with anyone?

Is there anyone I need to talk to or any help I need to seek out based on my answers to the above questions?

Emotional Well Being

How do I feel about me? Do I like me? If not, what needs to change?

Do I experience joy in a regular, ongoing and sustained way? What brings me joy? Am I doing it or participating in it or practicing it? If not, why not?

Do I laugh regularly? Am I cultivating a healthy sense of humour? Can I use humour appropriately in both public and private settings? Do I use humour as a defense mechanism?

Would I say I mostly experience hope or despair? Peace or turmoil? Meaning and fulfillment or worthlessness? Am I emotionally full or emotionally empty? What answer do I need to pay the most attention to?

What drives me? Hope? Fear? Love? Ambition? Something else?

Do I feel overwhelmed? Out of balance in some way? How can I address this?

Do I feel free to express my emotions (both "positive" and "negative")? Or do I feel like I need to hold back? When I do express my emotions, is it in a healthy and appropriate manner? Would others say this of me?

Do I feel like I am allowed to make a mistake? By myself? By others? Can I own my mistakes and failures? Or do I always look to share or deflect blame or responsibility? Do I learn from my mistakes? Are there mistakes that I keep repeating?

How do I handle criticism? How do I handle compliments?

Do I have a healthy or unhealthy need for validation? Do I have a healthy or unhealthy need to be liked? Do my needs in these areas cause me to act or respond to people, things or situations in ways that are unhealthy, manipulative or dishonest? What needs to change?

Can I allow others to shine (and receive praise, credit or validation) or do I always need the spotlight? Do I actively affirm and celebrate others both privately and publically?

Do I value people? Do I treat all people with dignity and respect? Do I love all people the way Christ loves me? Or are there exceptions? If so, what do I need to do about those exceptions?

Can I be led? Would others say that? Have I asked? If not, why not?

Is there anything from my past that is unresolved and needs to be dealt with? Would those closest to me say there is anything that needs to be resolved or dealt with?

Is there anyone I need to talk to or any help I need to seek out based on my answers to the above questions?

Physical Well Being

Am I getting proper rest? Proper daily rest? Proper Sabbath rest? If not, why not?

Do I take my days off and vacation time? Really? Or do I let work interfere with these times?

Do I take the full time I am entitled to? If not, why not?

Does my rhythm include regular times of silence and solitude? Regular retreat for refreshing and renewal? Sabbatical planning? Why or why not?

Do I regularly get some form of exercise or physical activity? If not, why not?

Am I eating properly? Am I overeating? Undereating? Binge eating? Stress eating?

Do I have a healthy or unhealthy relationship with my physical being? Do I care too little? Too much? Is anything about my physical being becoming a source of shame? A point of pride? How much is my physical being wrapped up in my sense of identity?

Is something controlling me? Is there something preventing me from getting proper rest, nutrition and/or exercise (including but not limited to gaming, binge-watching content, online activity, pornography, alcohol, drugs, a hobby that is over-participated in, working out to the detriment of other areas of life, workaholism, etc.?) Is this thing or these things also damaging other areas of my life (relationships, responsibilities, etc). Are those closest to me expressing concern about anything?

Am I receiving proper physical care? Am I regularly visiting the doctor and the dentist? Why or why not?

Is there anyone I need to talk to or any help I need to seek out based on my answers to the above questions?

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Life Long Learning

Do I embrace the idea of being a lifelong learner or do I resist the idea? If I embrace it, does my life reveal this? Or is it just a good idea? If I resist the idea, why do I resist it?

Am I a curious person? Does my sense of curiosity cause me to ask good questions, learn new things and explore new areas? If not, why not?

When it comes to learning and discovery, am I proactive or reactive? Do I look to learn and discover things before I need them or am I driven to read and learn in response to what is already happening? Which is predominant? Is there a balance to be found?

Am I reading regularly? Am I reading widely? Does my reading cause me to think and evaluate or does it all agree with what I already think and know? Do I occasionally and purposefully read things I may not agree with in order to help me understand other points of view? Is all my reading related to work and church or do I read for joy and pleasure?

Beyond reading, how else am I learning? Am I developing or improving current skills and/or hobbies? Am I exploring new skills and/or hobbies? Do I engage in any things that develop my creative side? Am I being stretched at all?



Am I regularly taking advantage of learning opportunities? Am I taking classes? Do I need to? Do I participate in conferences and seminars? Am I taking advantage of various media (podcasts, YouTube videos) available to me? Am I spending time with people who will help me learn or understand things better?

In all of these things, am I opening myself up to new things and ideas?

Who can help me learn new things? Am I engaged enough with the folks around me that I am learning from them? Am I seeking out people with expertise that will help me grow?

When it comes to developing my skills, am I using my Performance Appraisal to inform some of my learning choices? Am I only building on my strengths or am I taking steps to address my areas needing growth? Am I sticking with the comfortable or am I allowing myself to be stretched?

Am I accountable to anyone when it comes to being a lifelong learner? My board? My accountability partner? The FMCIC? Do I keep track of my learning and submit the appropriate CEU's to the FMCIC?

What am I doing with what I learn? Am I putting it into practice? Sharing it? Passing it on? Creating something? Teaching something? What do I need to do with what I am learning?

Is there anyone I need to talk to or any help I need to seek out based on my answers to the above questions?

Notes:

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Work Life

How is my sense of call? My overall calling and my specific ministry calling at this moment? Is it clear? How do I feel about it?

If I am married, how does my spouse feel about my calling? Is he or she still supportive? Would they say anything about the way I live out my calling?

Do I value a team approach to ministry life or do I prefer to do it all myself? How do I feel about those that are part of the leadership group of my ministry setting? How can I improve these relationships?

Have I identified leaders within my ministry setting? Am I taking steps to develop them so that they can step into all that God has for them – whether in my local ministry setting or as part of the larger church? Who specifically have I identified and who specifically am I working with? What next steps do I need to take?

How do I feel about a performance appraisal? Do I see them as an opportunity to get feedback and grow? Or are they a drain on me? Is there something I can do to help this process be more helpful and encouraging? Is there something I can do to help myself be good at receiving feedback?

The following skills are often identified as important parts of a pastor's skill set. As I read through the list I will ask myself the following – how am I at these skills? What one or two do I need to look at sharpening for the next season? How will I do that?

The skills (in no particular order):

- * Communication
- * Conflict resolution
- * Listening
- * Equipping others for the work of the Kingdom

Do I engage with the people and resources provided by the FMCIC (i.e the NLT, networks, Pastor's Conference, Regional Gatherings, General Conference)? If not, why not? Do I need to do anything about the answers to these questions?

Other Issues

Are there other issues or concerns weighing me down?

Is my financial life in good order? Am I living within my means? Is my debt-to-income ratio reasonable? Do I faithfully tithe?

Is there unresolved conflict in my life? What steps can I take to help resolve it? How do I deal with conflict? How do I need to deal with it? Is there a difference in my answers that I need to pay attention to?

Is there something I am addicted to? Something I am in danger of becoming addicted to? Are there secrets I am keeping? What do I need to do about this?

Are there any relational issues weighing me down? The health of a family member? A tragedy? Conflict? Are there conversations that I have not had that I need to have? Am I taking steps to appropriately deal with these concerns?

Are the issues at the church? Am I taking steps to address or resolve these issues?

How am I when it comes to use of social media and technology? Am I over-reliant on these things? Am I over avoidant of these things? What would those closest to me say about this area of my life? How can I find an appropriate balance?

Is there anyone I need to talk to or any help I need to seek out based on my answers to the above questions?

Notes:
