

The Qualities of an Effective Pastor

Integrity: Stephen L. Carter of the Yale Law School, in his book, *Integrity*, defines this characteristic as “*discerning* what is right and what is wrong; ... *acting* on what you have discerned, even at personal cost; and ... *saying openly* that you are acting on your understanding of right and wrong”

Humility: Leaders tend to be aggressive/assertive types (“type A”). But great leaders temper this with genuine humility. They have to work at this – and sometimes they struggle with it. But the best genuinely see themselves as servants for others, and strive to put the needs of others before their own.

Passion: Leaders truly believe in what they are doing; they have convictions. But leadership goes beyond mere convictions to the ability to inspire others with those convictions.

Vision: Leaders see things that others do not see. They see opportunities others miss. They anticipate problems before they become problems. They know how to think strategically. They see potential others simply do not see.

Perseverance: Leaders never give up on anything critical without a fight. They know that there will always be opposition and roadblocks to accomplishing great things. They don't run over people, but they are also not deterred at the first sign of opposition and they don't allow temporary setbacks and defeats to determine their future.

Decisiveness and Risk Taking: Leaders make decisions. Effective pastors must always weigh the risks and rewards of their decisions, and they must also be willing to fail.

Being Purpose-Driven: Sometimes the word driven is used in a negative sense, but here I mean those leaders whose hearts beat and whose deepest desires are to see the church faithfully pursuing God's purposes. Purpose-driven leaders align resources including staffing, facilities, and finances, as well as their own time, to accomplish the purpose or mission of their organizations, as they understand them.

Communication Skills: Effective pastors are nearly always effective communicators. Effective pastors have strong interpersonal skills, sometimes demonstrated by initiating conversations with parishioners rather than waiting for others to speak first. They demonstrate strong listening skills so that others feel heard by them.

Encouragement and Mentoring: Great leaders know how to encourage others. They constantly praise others and build them up. They love to help others succeed and be their best. They exercise restraint in criticism but pursue praise and encouragement with a passion. Successful leaders mentor others and help others hear God's call into ministry.

A Personal Relationship with Jesus Christ: It would be very difficult to lead a congregation of Christians to “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ,” if the pastor is not doing this herself. This is the most important characteristic of effective pastors and church leaders; it is the foundation upon which the rest of the ministry will be built. Effective church leaders pursue the spiritual disciplines, are involved with others in accountability groups, and earnestly seek to grow in their relationship with Christ.

ⁱ Source: *Leading Beyond The Walls, Developing Congregations with a Heart for the Unchurched*
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