

# **Four Marks of the Healthy Ministry Professional**

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## **I. The Burden of Unresolved Issues.**

**The first mark of the healthy ministry professional is that he or she has addressed and resolved issues that relate to his or her family of origin.**

### Common Obstacles to Addressing Family of Origin Issues (Myths)

- The past is the past. There's no reason to revisit what I can't change.
- I am made new by God. Old things have passed.
- The Bible says to honor my parents. That means I can't find fault in what they did.
- I don't need professional help; I have God.

Although we need not be controlled by the events of the past, we are a composite of our life's experiences, good and bad.

## **II. Distorted view of "call."**

**The second mark of the healthy ministry professional is that he or she has examined his or her "call", and has an understanding of the Biblical perspective of "call."**

### Common Calling Myths

- Calling is to a vocation.
- Career Christian service is the highest calling.
- Never question or doubt your call.
- A call to ministry will result in personal reward.

### Unhealthy Calling Assumptions

- If I am called, they will follow.
- If I "do the right things" then I will avoid problems.
- If I leave where I am serving, the next place will be better.
- If I go to a larger church, I will not face the same problems.

### Healthy Calling

- All are called.
- God's calling is to relationship with him.
- Our identity in Christ is more important than our identity as pastor.

## **III. Boundaries**

**The third mark of the healthy ministry professional is that he or she has learned to set and maintain boundaries.**

Most in ministry have been hurt and/or are spread too thin because they neither understand the concept of nor set boundaries. Boundaries benefit those on either side of the boundary.

### Boundary Myths

- Setting boundaries means I'm selfish.
- Boundaries are a sign of disobedience.
- If I begin setting boundaries, others will hurt me.
- If I set boundaries, I will hurt others.
- Boundaries are permanent, and I'm afraid of burning my bridges.

### Guidelines for Maintaining Boundaries

- Do not look for those in your care to meet your need for validation.
- Avoid dual relationships, when possible.
- Limit emotional intimacy with church members.
- Declare what is off limits for public knowledge.
- Make your marriage and family's privacy a priority.
- Honor your day off and vacation.
- Be clear in what others can expect of you.

## **IV. Friendship**

**The fourth mark of the healthy ministry professional is that he or she understands the limits of most relationships and embraces and values deep friendships.**

Though surrounded by people, ministry professionals are often very lonely. Most have a lack of understanding of the different types of human relationships and what one can expect from each.

### Types of Relationships

- Acquaintances
- Colleagues
- Close friends
- Sworn friends

### **Summary:**

The trend of my peers "leaving" the ministry is not only alarming, but tragic. We should not be afraid to examine our calling, we should not be afraid to get our "house" in order. We should not be afraid to set boundaries and we should not have to suffer with loneliness. The healthy ministry professional is not the person whose life is "perfect." The healthy ministry professional is the person who handles the difficulties and joys of life in a healthy manner. I believe that most of what ministers say about the "crap" in their church is true. However, I believe that the healthy ministry professional is able to do something about those bad situations besides complain, deny and quit. It is time for a generation of God's leaders to say that God wants me to be the person he created me to be. - John Daniels