

The Spiritual Leadership Cohort: Assessing Readiness

Pastor, for every potential SLC candidate, consider these questions

Each of these four broad categories offers a different way to think about a candidate's readiness. They are to be used more as prompts for reflection and evaluation rather than as a long list of entry requirements.

(1) Does he ask and answer heart-centered questions? Is he able to engage in self-reflection? Can he talk about himself in sentences that begin with words like “I feel that I am...” or “I think that I have...” or is he emotionally shut down? Can he make connections between his emotions and his circumstances? Has he ever asked someone to pray for him about his anger or his anxiety? Having been to counseling is not a categorical requirement, but how would he think or feel about the *prospect* of going to counseling? Does he experience intense resistance at the thought, and if so, why? Being more of an emotional novice than a veteran won't necessarily prevent a man from benefiting from the cohort experience, but it will put a ceiling on how much he will benefit from it.

(2) Can he name his fears and insecurities? When he prays out loud, does it sound like the real him talking to the real God? Is his view of God mostly three-dimensional or mostly flat? Is God more like a collection of rules than a person? Does he want to cultivate an interior life? Does he desire to regularly talk to God as well as make space to listen to God? Do his times of listening and talking to God tend to involve multitasking, or is he learning to set aside time to be alone in the presence of God? Is he hungry to grow in relating to, relying on, and regularly pouring out his guts to God? Does he view God as aloof and distant? Harsh and impatient? Indulgent and impotent? Is he able to confess his sin in specifics rather than generalities? Does he find it difficult to confess sin and even to admit weakness to God and others to whom he is accountable? Is shame on his radar?

(3) When facing life challenges, is he more reactionary or responsible? Is he more chaotic and flakey, or calm and convictional? Does he struggle to keep the floor of his car clean? Does he mow his yard? Does he show up to work on time? Does he call people back? Is his conversation characterized more by grumbling or by gratitude? Is he lacking in basic character? Is he a man of integrity? Does he keep his word, even when it's inconvenient (Ps 15:4)? Is he honest, sincere, kind, fair, humble, law-abiding, consistent, and compassionate to those in need? Can he point to people in his life who know him deeply? Does he enjoy close and meaningful friendship and fellowship with other Christians? Does he joyfully serve God's church?

(4) Has the pain of staying stuck become greater for him than the pain of growing? Is he closed-minded and unaccepting of new ideas? Is he paralyzed by his awareness of his sins, errors, and faults? How has he changed over the past year for the better, if at all? If he goes through the cohort, will he be open to shifting from a fixed mindset to a growth mindset? (A person clinging to a fixed mindset will: stick with what he knows, avoid challenges to avoid failure, tend to give up easily, and view feedback as personal criticism. Alternately, a person slowly learning to embrace a growth mindset is increasingly willing to: believe mistakes are an essential part of learning, embrace challenges, welcome feedback from others in order to learn, and believe feedback is a guide to further improvement.)

