

PURSUIING EXCELLENCE

An initiative of the EFCA Ministerial Association
designed to promote personal growth and
longevity in the ministry.



The Pursuit

Some pastors intuitively know how to be life long learners and monitor their commitment to make it happen. Many need the benefit of guidelines and the help of a friend. Either way, we invite you to become part of an exciting adventure.

Of Excellence

The adventure you are about to experience involves the opportunity to complete a set of self selected activities. It will get you started on things that have likely been on your heart for a long time.

Our Primary Goal

We desire to see an increase in the number of healthy pastors who are serving healthy churches for a sustained period of time.

Our Measure of Success

We will measure success by

- ↳ the reports of pastors being granted opportunities by their local church to participate in activities known to sustain the health of those serving in the ministry
- ↳ the stories of personal growth related to us by you as participants
- ↳ the percentage of Ministerial Association members who take advantage of this learning experience

Your Primary Purpose

The Basic Structure

First. Individually designed.

Flexibility is required in order for the initiative to have the greatest impact on the greatest number of people. We want to encourage those who are already engaged in a plan for personal growth to intentionally evaluate it and continue the good things they are doing. We trust the integrity of the individuals who decide to participate.

Second. Balanced set of actions addressing three areas.

Spiritual formation - the process of being conformed to the image of Christ. Address areas such as the practice of spiritual disciplines, clarity of your calling, an integrated theological/biblical worldview, holy living, and renovation of the heart.

Personal Wellbeing - the critical areas of a pastor's personal life. Address areas such as marriage & family relationships, physical health, daily habits and a sustainable approach to life's demands.

Ministry Excellence - the opportunities to systematically "sharpen the saw" for productive ministry. Address areas such as training in one's primary focus of ministry, leadership skills, staff management, valuable new skills and ministry transitions.

Third. Mentor involvement.

The nature of this mentor relationship will vary depending on the individual's desires. We maintain that everyone needs "a brain to pick, an ear to listen, and a push in the right direction". Materials describe three types of relationships that are acceptable.

In addition, the Executive Director of Pastoral Care Ministries will be uniquely available to Pursuing Excellence participants through a prayer partnership. Progress will be recorded and celebrated.

Getting Started

In order to establish an email connection with you, we ask that you start the process by emailing the Ministerial Association at ministerial@efca.org to request a "Pursuing Excellence" enrollment form. Complete the enrollment form and email it back to us. The Executive Director of Pastoral Care Ministries will correspond with you to assure that you have everything you need to get started. Much of it is in this notebook. Downloadable forms and supplemental materials will be sent via email and/or be available on the Pastoral Care Ministries page of the EFCA website at www.efca.org. If your internet provider is not able to process documents efficiently, we will arrange to exchange information via faxes.

Step 1

Selecting a Mentor

Partnership Options

Pursuing Excellence involves asking a friend to partner with you. The way you wish to partner together will vary according to the arrangement you agree upon. There are three kinds of relationships to consider. In the first your friend serves as an advisor, in the second he is a peer mentor, and in the third he is a mentor-coach. In all three cases your friend affirms the plan you created, seeks to be aware of your progress, helps you celebrate your accomplishments, and signs your certificate of completion.

Advisor-accountability partnership

You would like to create more freedom in your schedule to prevent burnout, to strengthen your personal knowledge of the work of missions worldwide, and to have a more disciplined meaningful quiet time. You ask your friend to look at the details of a plan you outline for yourself (including updates you create along the way) and to evaluate if they fit your goals for participating in Pursuing Excellence. The friend agrees to keep in touch with you quarterly, to celebrate your progress with you along the way, and to sign your certificate of completion.

Peer-Mentor partnership

You ask your partner to join you in a peer mentor relationship for theological discussion and reflection, to assist you in being accountable to faithfully give priority to your marriage and family responsibilities, and to develop a greater passion for prayer. As a peer mentor your friend and you meet for a day 6 times over the span of a year for theological reflection based on topics you agree to study; to evaluate the priorities demonstrated by your use of time the past several months; and to spend time in prayer together. You might elect to attend the Mid-Winter Theological discussion together or grow a deeper friendship between each others family. You agree to celebrate when you have done well and give each other permission to confront when you fail. The friend signs your certificate of completion.

Mentor-Guide partnership

A third kind of partnership involves asking someone to be a mentor/coach for you. In this mentoring partnership you go to a ministerial friend or a mature lay person and ask them to help you assess your own spiritual journey and determine what you might do to improve your ministry skills, deepen your spiritual passions, and continue personal development. After asking appropriate questions your partner and you agree upon those activities that need to be included in your plan. There is a greater degree of formality of reporting back to you in this partnership in that you expect to address key areas of growth, receive critical feedback, periodically update the plan, and see significant results. The friend will celebrate your growth and sign your certificate of completion.

Mentor Partnership

Selected Mentor _____

Type of Partnership _____

Signature of Partner _____

Date _____

Step 2

Creating Your Plan

Prayerful Planning

Almost everyone will greatly over estimate what they can do in one year and significantly under estimate what they can do in five years. The planning forms used in Pursuing Excellence allow you to dream what might be (describing what you'd like to do during your three years of participation) and yet focus on what must be (making a commitment to what you are going to do the coming year).

A Personal Retreat

Generally, a two day personal retreat at the start of your pursuing excellence adventure will provide adequate time to complete the big picture (which is open to be revised a year later) and to decide what you will undertake the first year (which you then place into your schedule).

Sample PURSUING EXCELLENCE Summary

SPIRITUAL FORMATION	PERSONAL WELL-BEING	MINISTRY EXCELLENCE
<p>Description of Activity</p> <p>Begin a consistent reading program. Include a variety of spiritual growth books along with books on leadership.</p>	<p>Description of Activity</p> <p>Commit to a regular walking program that works for me. Start a long term weight lose program through healthier eating.</p>	<p>Description of Activity</p> <p>Enter into a mentoring relationship with Steve Hudson to learn and implement his monthly and yearly ministry rhythm.</p>
<p>Description of Activity</p> <p>Listen to worship tapes as part of my devotional life. Read long passages of Scripture at one setting.</p>	<p>Description of Activity</p> <p>Complete a successful 3 month Sabbatical experience.</p>	<p>Description of Activity</p> <p>Complete an appropriate DMIN course.</p>
<p>Description of Activity</p> <p>Continue the practice of recruiting "short term prayer partnerships" for specific concerns. Communicate regularly with a group of personal prayer partners.</p>	<p>Description of Activity</p> <p>Regain a delight in working on projects around the house. Continue to treat family events as a high priority in my schedule.</p>	<p>Description of Activity</p> <p>Redesign office space and filing system to serve me better.</p>

My PURSUING EXCELLENCE Summary

SPIRITUAL FORMATION	PERSONAL WELL- BEING	MINISTRY EXCELLENCE
Description of Activity	Description of Activity	Description of Activity
Description of Activity	Description of Activity	Description of Activity
Description of Activity	Description of Activity	Description of Activity

MY PURSUING EXCELLENCE PLAN

Area #1: SPIRITUAL FORMATION

The process of being conformed to the image of Christ

God's Work in the Past	The Next 12 Months	The Next 3 Years
<p><u>Milestones - In my life</u></p> <p>1.</p> <p>2.</p> <p>3.</p> <p>4.</p>	<p><u>Projects – In my calendar</u></p> <p>1.</p> <p>2.</p>	<p><u>Ideas – In my vision</u></p> <p>1.</p> <p>2.</p> <p>3.</p> <p>4.</p>
<p><u>My Prayer of Thankfulness</u></p>	<p><u>My prayer for Discipline</u></p>	<p><u>My prayer for Faith</u></p>

MY PURSUING EXCELLENCE PLAN

Area #2: PERSONAL WELL-BEING

The critical areas of a pastor's personal life

God's Work in the Past	The Next 12 Months	The Next 3 Years
<p><u>Milestones - In my life</u></p> <p>1.</p> <p>2.</p> <p>3.</p> <p>4.</p>	<p><u>Projects – In my calendar</u></p> <p>1.</p> <p>2.</p>	<p><u>Ideas – In my vision</u></p> <p>1.</p> <p>2.</p> <p>3.</p> <p>4.</p>
<p><u>My Prayer of Thankfulness</u></p>	<p><u>My prayer for Discipline</u></p>	<p><u>My prayer for Faith</u></p>

MY PURSUING EXCELLENCE PLAN

Area #3: MINISTRY EXCELLENCE

The need to "sharpen the saw" for productive ministry

God's Work in the Past	The Next 12 Months	The Next 3 Years
<p><u>Milestones - In my life</u></p> <p>1.</p> <p>2.</p> <p>3.</p> <p>4.</p>	<p><u>Projects – In my calendar</u></p> <p>1.</p> <p>2.</p>	<p><u>Ideas – In my vision</u></p> <p>1.</p> <p>2.</p> <p>3.</p> <p>4.</p>
<p><u>My Prayer of Thankfulness</u></p>	<p><u>My prayer for Discipline</u></p>	<p><u>My prayer for Faith</u></p>

Step 3

In Summary

How to Enroll in Pursuing Excellence

Email the Ministerial Association at ministerial@efca.org to request a "Pursuing Excellence" enrollment form. Complete the enrollment form and email it back to us. Much of what you need is in this notebook. Downloadable forms and supplemental material will be sent via email and/or be available on the Pastoral Care Ministries page of the EFCA website at www.efca.org.

Designing your three year plan

1. It is recommended that you start the process of designing your Pursuing Excellence plan with a 2 day personal retreat. Off site and overnight will add a great deal of value to the experience but it is not required.
2. The goal of day one is to spend time listening and speaking to God and writing down things you dream of being able to do in the next three years as you participate in Pursuing Excellence. Write down as many things as you like in each area. You will refine the list at future annual retreats and with the help of your mentor.
3. The goal of day two is to thank God for what he has already built into your life through past experiences and determine which of the things in your 3 year vision ought to be placed into your one year calendar. This is a harder process. You must limit yourself to that which you can see yourself accomplishing in the coming year because these are the things about which your mentor will ask you report your progress.
4. Record the details of you plan, share them with your mentor and send a copy to us so we can pray and correspond with you.
5. The next step is, get started!