

Robertson McQuilkin's [*Five Smooth Stones: Essential Biblical Principles for Ministry*](#) has five units and twenty chapters. Each of the 20 questions in the evaluation that follows corresponds to the chapter in the book. See suggestions for how to use this evaluation for yourself or in introducing the five principles to a congregation or ministry.



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EVALUATION OF CURRENT MINISTRY WITH THE FIVE STONES

Instructions for the Reader (30 minutes)

Complete each item in the inventory applying it to your own understanding and practice. You may want to choose to focus on the exercises in the study guide where your scores indicate the greatest need.

Instructions for a Group (one hour)

An alternative plan is to read *The Five Smooth Stones* book within a church staff, a group of congregational leaders, or as a study for all of the small groups and classes in the church. Have each person answer the questions without discussing the answers. Tally the group's scores for each item on a flip chart. Count how many gave an item "0", "1" etc., Each item will either have a great deal of agreement (almost all of the scores close to the same) or there will be a wide spread (some will feel the church is at "0" and others may give it a "5").

As the group begins to discuss the scores look first at the ones where there was high agreement. You may want to post two lists (strengths and weaknesses of the congregation) around which there is agreement. Discuss the reasons and examples for why they chose the high or low score.

Now look at the ones where there were very different perceptions. Ask the people to share what their reasons were for that particular score. List on one flip chart the reasons given for a "low score" and the reasons for a "high score" on another.

Often when you step back and look at the two contrasting lists you discover that the difference in perspective centers on different **definitions** or **expectations**. For example if some define evangelism as equal to the weeknight visitation of guests who attend the weekend service, and others define evangelism as going to those who have had no previous contact with the congregation, they may assign very different scores. This exercise can reveal definitions and expectations that need a biblical perspective.

WRITE A CONGREGATIONAL PRESCRIPTION

Using a clean flip chart – see if the group can agree on two lists:

- 1) Strengths we can leverage to address our weakness
- 2) Weakness that must be addressed if we are to be an effective church

Checklist for Evaluating Biblical Principles for Ministry

Evaluate your own congregation or ministry in each of the following categories.

Assign a grade of "0" to "5" by each item.

"0" = "We are not doing this at all"

"1" = "We have talked about doing this"

"2" = "We have been attempting to practice this. It is our goal."

"3" = "There are some people or groups within the church who practice this."

"4" = "Many throughout the congregation are supportive and are involved in doing this."

"5" = "We are doing so well in this, we should be helping other congregations do it."

_____ 1. Every new approach or old tradition that is challenged is thoroughly evaluated by the entire body through rigorous examination of all biblical data, bringing all church doctrine and practice under the functional authority of Scripture.

_____ 2. Church leadership strives to stay current on societal shifts toward postmodern assumptions and takes appropriate action to distinguish among those concepts to be adopted, adapted and rejected. The membership is regularly alerted to the emerging societal shifts in education, entertainment, and media.

_____ 3. All psychological insights and popular assumptions are consciously and constantly brought to the bar of Scripture to evaluate the validity of church-based counseling and preaching/teaching.

_____ 4. Worship is defined biblically in terms of whole-life worship. The music ministry is God focused, not man-focused, and developed in a way that all can fully participate emotionally and spiritually.

_____ 5. The teaching ministry of the church is multi-faceted, including small group accountability, and the results in spiritual transformation and growth are evident.

_____ 6. Member care reaches beyond spiritual pastoring to full-service emotional, physical, and material responsibility for all members.

_____ 7. The congregation has programs and involvement in mercy ministries to the community at home and abroad.

_____ 8. It is assumed that every member has a Spirit given ability (gift) to minister. The church has a program and leadership in place to help every member discover, develop to the full, and deploy his or her gifting and calling.

_____ 9. People understand that talents, while not the same as Spirit given gifts, but given in creation and growth, should be invested for Gods' glory.

_____ 10. When some purpose of the church is less than optimally fulfilled, the leaders and members actively "desire earnestly" in prayer the Spirit gifts necessary.

_____ 11. Corporate prayer is pervasive (involving a majority of members, and in many formats), vital, expectant (faith-filled), and focused on spiritual needs of the congregation, the community and the unreached of the world, not just on the physical needs of the members.

_____ 12. The constantly articulated goal is for all members to be faithful witnesses in life and talk. Teaching and training are provided to guide and empower for effective witness. Evidence is seen in consistent 'body-life reproduction.'

_____ 13. Leaders are constantly on the look-out for those who might be evangelistically gifted and provide training and encouragement to make them ever more effective.

_____ 14. The church body is knowledgeable and concerned about the unreached of the world, and a steady stream of career missionaries moves out from the congregation.

_____ 15. Short-term ministry and financial provision for God's people away from home are carefully planned and harnessed to maximize Kingdom effectiveness.

_____ 16. Prayer for global outreach is informed, vital, and pervasive throughout the body, throughout the year.

_____ 17. Great effort is put into in helping people progress in their level of investment in ministry. Tithing is expected and honest managership is encouraged. Sacrificial love giving is celebrated.

_____ 18. Safeguards are in place to keep leaders from slipping into lordly attitudes or behavior, and every leader—"full-time and part-time"—authentically models God's own qualities of leadership. The people joyfully follow the leaders.

_____ 19. There is an accountability structure that includes all members, and biblical church discipline is practiced. No one who is guilty of unrepented moral dereliction or teaching heresy is allowed to continue in the fellowship.

_____ 20. Unity is seen not only in the absence of conflict, but by caring relationships that provide a safe haven for all and a sense of family solidarity.