

Top 10 Ways to Discourage Ministerial Candidates

By Meg Lassiatt with Deborah Bushfield*

10. Schedule interview days at your convenience. Don't worry if it coincides with the candidates' Christmas break or finals week.
9. Make it hard for potential candidates to find the forms they need. Make sure they have to call 2 or 3 committee members before they find the person who knows how access the forms or enroll in candidacy.
8. Give them a burned-out mentor, someone who doesn't relate well to those who still have enthusiasm for the church and its work.
7. Be vague when you communicate with them about deadlines. Don't provide a timeline.
6. Assume that you know what is best for all candidates. Make arbitrary decisions about whether to ordain them as deacons or elders based on the jobs they are seeking, rather than their calls to ministry. Play down the options open to those who may want to become elders in extension ministries or deacons.
5. Ignore their individual needs, such as family, finances, culture, etc.
4. Assume they are immature rather than simply young.
3. Don't respond to their emails, phone calls, and questions.
2. Lose their names and addresses, and assume that if they're serious, they'll contact you again.

And the Number One way you can discourage ministerial candidates:

1. When people contact you about starting the candidacy process, make them call back at least two more times before you return their calls. Then wait at least a year before assigning them a mentor.

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