

Code of Professional Ethics for Ministers¹

Pre-amble:

This Code is based on the assumption that ministers of the Gospel should adhere to the highest ethical and professional standards according to the nature of Christian ministry as defined by the New Testament Scriptures. The Code articulates the standards to which ministers of the Gospel should subject themselves and aims to protect the church and the general public from the abuse of the ministerial office. As such, on one hand, the Code seeks to curtail incompetence, immaturity, and misconduct in ministry, and on the other hand, it seeks to encourage the highest standards and sound biblical principles in the performance of Gospel ministry. As Paul says, “it is required of stewards that they be found faithful” (1 Cor 4:2), and “no one is crowned without competing according to the rules” (2 Tim 2:5). Ministers should endeavor in all their conduct and service to glorify the Lord Jesus and to bring honor to the vocation of the gospel minister.

Five Values:

The Code is based on five primary values: beneficence, integrity, respect, competence, and responsibility.

Beneficence: Ministers’ primary motivation in Christian service is to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ, and to benefit the church and society. They do not enter Christian ministry for self-advancement or personal gain.

Integrity: Ministers maintain truthfulness, honesty, and openness with respect to the motives, standards, and conduct of their ministry. They do not engage in deception, manipulation, or hypocrisy. They recognize when their conduct departs from biblical and professional standards.

Respect: Ministers respect and protect the dignity, privacy, confidentiality, and rights of all people they serve or meet. They do not slander, degrade others, or discriminate on the basis of race, culture, gender, disability, socioeconomic status, religion, or theological stance.

Competence: Ministers understand the nature and purpose of Christian ministry, and are able to carry out their responsibilities effectively. At the same time, they work within the limits of their calling, knowledge, and skills. They value the need for preparation, education, and ongoing training throughout their lives.

Responsibility: Ministers recognize that they are responsible to the Lord Jesus, their leadership team, the church, and the larger society in which they serve. They uphold biblical and professional standards and work under the protocols of church and society. Ministers take advice, cooperate, and consult with others.

¹ This code was produced by Eric Liddell Institute in 2014.

Ten Principles:

Beneficence

- 1) Ministers should strive, first of all, **to please the Lord Jesus** in all things, even despite personal cost and suffering. The sole purpose of their work is to promote the Gospel, the spiritual growth and welfare of the church, the betterment of society, and the cause of the needy. They do not act for the sake of their own reputation, financial gain, or social standing.
- 2) Ministers should strive **to support the work of the Gospel and the poor beyond their local ministry context**, as is practical. They do not compete with others, but are concerned about the wider Christian community and society and not only their own ministry.

Integrity

- 3) Ministers should strive **to maintain theological orthodoxy** throughout the duration of their lives and ministry. They focus their preaching and teaching ministry on the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, avoiding peripheral and non-profitable doctrines that often distract and divide the church.
- 4) Ministers should strive **to maintain moral integrity**, holiness, and respectable behavior in both their public and private lives. They avoid greed, dishonesty, promiscuity, and unjust behavior. They live, pure, upright, and blameless lives, maintaining strict ethical boundaries.

Respect

- 5) Ministers should strive **to honor all people**, keep confidentiality, and protect the reputation of others. They do not cause offense, degrade others, and especially do not slander or disparage other Gospel ministers and Christian churches. They do not misuse their position to lord it over others, but give people freedom as independent human beings who are responsible for their own actions.

Competence

- 6) Ministers should strive **to maintain competence** in the performance of their primary duties of preaching the Gospel, teaching the Word of God, praying for the needy and the sick, and pastoring and equipping the people of God through the enabling of the Holy Spirit. As such, they will spend much time in prayer, ministry preparation, and ongoing theological training.
- 7) Ministers should strive **to understand their calling** to the ministry of the Word and prayer, and as such, they stay within the parameters of their vocation, avoiding matters that lie outside the purview of their role. Therefore, they have clear boundaries regarding their ministry function, and do not engage in matters such as politics, healthcare, financial advice, psychological counselling, social work, etc. Instead, they may refer people to qualified experts as appropriate.
- 8) Ministers should strive **to grow in the knowledge and grace of the Lord Jesus**, and develop sound character in accordance with their vocation. They do not harbor bitterness and are not quarrelsome, but instead are forgiving, gentle, and temperate.

Accountability

- 9) Ministers should strive **to work under the accountability structures of the church and the larger Christian community**. They understand their role as a servant leaders and being part of a ministry team. As such, they do not operate independently but are open to, welcome, and seek out the input of others in relation to their ministry performance.

- 10) Ministers should strive **to be humble and considerate in all situations**. They are always open to correction, take advice, and are proactive in conflict prevention and conflict resolution.