

ELIM | MINISTRY

DISCERNMENT PROCESS

A guide for pastors and leaders supporting those exploring a call to Elim ministry



INTRODUCTION

Throughout Elim's journey, pastors and leaders have played a vital role in discerning and preparing those called to ministry. The National Leadership Team expects local church pastors to help equip applicants for ministry, ensuring they have sufficient local church experience and spiritual formation. This process is a partnership between the local church and the Ministry Department, supporting applicants as they prepare for ministerial responsibility.

THE SACRED WORK OF DISCERNMENT

OUR CONVICTION

Ministry preparation begins in the local church. The partnership between local leaders, the Ministry Department, and Regents Theological College forms a holistic foundation for raising healthy, capable, Spirit-filled ministers.

This process should be led and assessed by the church leadership team under the direction of the senior minister, and the final assessment of a candidate suitability will need to be confirmed by the church leadership team for them to progress.

WHY THIS DOCUMENT EXISTS

The call to Christian ministry is a profound and sacred invitation. Throughout Elim's history, God has consistently raised up men and women through the life of local churches—individuals whose gifts were noticed, encouraged, and nurtured by pastors and leaders who took the time to invest in them.

This document exists to help pastors guide those who may be sensing a call to ministry within Elim. It outlines the early discernment process that should take place before an applicant formally enters the Minister-in-Training pathway.

THE PASTOR'S ROLE IN THE DISCERNMENT JOURNEY

Pastors are uniquely placed to help individuals test and understand their calling. This involves more than creating opportunities; it involves prayerful reflection, honest conversations, ongoing mentoring, and a willingness to evaluate both readiness and suitability.

YOUR INSIGHT

Your insight into an individual's character, behaviour, relational health, and leadership potential forms a vital part of the application process. Your endorsement carries weight because it reflects the experience of someone who has seen the applicant grow, serve, and engage within the local church community.

PATHWAYS INTO ELIM MINISTRY

Every applicant to Elim ministry should have been actively involved in an Elim church for at least two years, unless their formation has taken place through RTC with meaningful engagement in Elim.

RTC CAMPUS STUDENTS

College life provides theological formation and ministry exposure, but local church partnerships are where leadership gifts are tested. Students should be placed where they can grow in real ministry responsibility.

RTC CONTEXT STUDENTS AND THOSE TRAINED ELSEWHERE

The local church is the main setting for demonstrating readiness. Service, leadership development, and pastoral involvement should form the basis for application.

A NOTE ABOUT THEOLOGICAL STUDIES

All applicants must complete theological studies, and their understanding will be assessed. Studies completed outside RTC will be benchmarked against Elim's minimum requirements, and any gaps may need to be covered before application or in the first year of the MIT journey.

UNDERSTANDING THE CALL TO ELIM MINISTRY

When someone senses a call, help them explore what it means personally and within the wider Elim movement. Applicants need to understand that they are becoming an Elim minister first, then serving in whatever local context God places them.

Discernment therefore involves understanding:



GENUINE CALL

Is there a real call from God to spiritual leadership?

AFFIRMATION

Is this call recognised by trusted leaders and the church community?

ELIM UNDERSTANDING

Does the person understand Elim's mission, values, and responsibilities?

STATIONING TO AN ELIM CHURCH

Successful interview does not mean automatic stationing to the applying church. Stationing is the responsibility of the National Leadership Team and depends on the real opportunity for the MIT to exercise ministry, plus confidence in the church's support.

BENCHMARK QUALITIES AND EXPERIENCES

Pastors should be able to describe, with examples, how the applicant has demonstrated the following qualities—or how they show clear potential for them. Not every individual will have had identical opportunities, but there should be evidence of growth, aptitude, and teachability.

A. CHARACTER

We place strong emphasis on Christlike character. Applicants should demonstrate:

- personal integrity, including financial and relational integrity
- emotional maturity and self-awareness
- sexual propriety and healthy boundaries
- a positive attitude toward authority, accountability, and correction
- humility, repentance, and a desire to grow in Christlikeness

Character is not merely one item on the list—it is central to sustained, trustworthy ministry.

B. LEADERSHIP

Applicants should have opportunities to lead teams, groups, or ministry activities. While not everyone will have faced complex conflict situations, they should show signs of:

- initiative and responsibility
- the ability to influence others positively
- teachability in how they develop their leadership capacity
- humility and wisdom when navigating challenges

Where certain experiences are missing, pastors should consider whether the person's potential suggests they will grow into these areas during formal training.

C. PASTORAL MINISTRY

Applicants should have opportunity to walk alongside people in church life and be able to:

- show sensitivity to people's needs
- offer appropriate support
- build healthy relationships

Evidence may include pastoral conversations, small group involvement, or supporting those in crisis with compassion and boundaries.

D. WORSHIP LEADERSHIP

The local church is a worshipping community, and as such all those with the potential to serve as ministers should be learning what it is to lead people in moments of encounter with the presence of God. This might include:

- hosting services
- leading prayers
- helping facilitate congregational worship

The aim here is not musical gifting alone but an ability to lead others spiritually and sensitively.

BENCHMARK QUALITIES AND EXPERIENCES (CONTINUED)

E. PREACHING AND TEACHING

Public communication is a key part of ministry, and applicants should have opportunities to explain and apply Scripture clearly.

- speak publicly
- communicate Scripture with clarity and relevance
- lead times of reflection and discussion

F. PRAYER MINISTRY

The ability to pray with others—whether for salvation, Spirit baptism, healing, or encouragement—is an important pastoral skill. Applicants should:

- show sensitivity
- practise discernment
- minister confidently in the power of the Spirit

G. MISSION AND OUTREACH

Elim is mission-minded, so applicants should engage practically in the church's mission through:

- evangelism
- community initiatives
- activities like Alpha, schools work, or outreach ministries

H. UNDERSTANDING ELIM

Applicants should recognise that their local church is part of a wider movement. Attendance at regional or national events, such as the Elim Leaders' Summit, is encouraged.

ELIM DISTINCTIVES

Applicants must demonstrate alignment with Elim's core distinctives, including:

FOUNDATIONAL TRUTHS

A clear commitment to Scripture and Elim's biblical convictions.

BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT

A clear grasp of Spirit baptism and its reality in personal experience.

EVANGELISM AND MISSION

A passion for reaching the lost and serving wherever needed.

WOMEN IN MINISTRY

Full affirmation of women in all areas of ministry and leadership.

SUMMARY AND NEXT STEPS

This discernment process is not intended to be a barrier but a supportive pathway that ensures individuals are well-prepared for ministry application. It helps pastors invest intentionally in those God may be raising up, while giving applicants clarity about what lies ahead.

This process is a partnership between the local Elim pastor, leadership and church family with Elim's National Leadership Team to develop healthy, capable, Spirit-filled ministers who understand the importance of their character matching their calling to serve God in this generation.

You will find further guidance in this document in the form of a chart plotting the major stages of a process of application for the Elim ministry and also some guidance for pastors regarding occasions when they feel unable to recommend a candidate for ministry within our movement.

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APPLICATION PATHWAY

The following chart represents the route for all applications to the Elim ministry



GUIDANCE FOR PASTORS

WHEN NOT TO RECOMMEND A CANDIDATE

Honest, courageous discernment is one of the most significant things a pastor can do — for candidates, for congregations, and for Elim's witness. Endorsing someone with genuine reservations defers harm, it does not prevent it.

THE WEIGHT OF YOUR ENDORSEMENT

Your recommendation carries real authority. Completing the Pastor's Assessment Checklist is not a formality — it lends your personal credibility to the national process. Withholding endorsement or raising concerns is not a failure of pastoral care: it is often the most responsible and loving action you can take.

GROUNDINGS FOR NOT RECOMMENDING

2A. READINESS CONCERNS — 'NOT YET'

Genuine potential, but more time or development needed. Appropriate response: deferred endorsement with a clear development conversation.

- Limited or untested ministry experience in key areas
- Insufficient time in an Elim church to assess fit and identity
- Emotional immaturity or underdeveloped self-awareness
- Significant life instability (relational, financial, vocational)
- A sense of calling that feels too recent or insufficiently tested

2B. SUITABILITY CONCERNS — DEEPER ISSUES

Raises questions about fitness for ordained ministry. Do not complete the checklist as an endorsement — contact the Director of Ministry directly.

- Patterns of dishonesty, manipulation, or financial impropriety
- Persistent inability to receive correction or work under authority
- Unresolved conflict history or significant relational patterns of concern
- Known safeguarding concerns not appropriately resolved
- Significant theological divergence from Elim's Foundational Truths
- Motivation rooted in personal ambition or platform-seeking rather than calling

HAVING THE CONVERSATION

BE HONEST, NOT EVASIVE

Vague encouragement leaves the candidate unclear and can cause greater disappointment later. Say clearly what you see and why.

DISTINGUISH PERSON FROM APPLICATION

Not endorsing now is not a rejection of their worth, faith, or calling — it is an honest assessment of their readiness.

BE SPECIFIC

Name the specific areas of concern. This gives the individual something concrete to work with and protects you from appearing arbitrary.

OFFER A PATHWAY WHERE POSSIBLE

If the concern is about readiness, outline what development you want to see and over what timeframe. Offer to walk that journey with them.

DOCUMENT THE CONVERSATION

Keep a brief record of what was discussed, when, and what was agreed — for both parties' protection.

WHEN A CANDIDATE PUSHES BACK

You are not obligated to change your assessment under pressure. Your honest, considered judgement is what the process requires.

- The candidate has the right to raise concerns with the Director of Ministry — this is a legitimate part of the process.
- You should not feel pressured to escalate simply because the candidate is unhappy.
- Contact the Ministry Department if you have any uncertainty about how to handle the situation.

REFERRAL ROUTES AT A GLANCE

Readiness / Deferral	Speak honestly with the candidate. Contact the Director of Ministry if you need support beforehand.
Suitability Concerns	Contact the Director of Ministry directly before proceeding further conversations.
Safeguarding Concerns	Refer immediately to Elim's National Safeguarding Team — independent of the application process.
Candidate Disputes Your Assessment	Confirm your church leadership agrees. Contact the Ministry Department if you need support.

A FINAL WORD

The goal throughout is not just to produce more ministers, but to raise healthy, well-formed, Spirit-filled men and women who will serve Elim's churches with integrity for a lifetime. **A pastor who helps someone understand that now is not the right time — or that ministry may not be their path — is doing profound pastoral work.**



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