

# Emotional Intelligence for Religious Leaders

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**Abstract:** Religious leaders require tremendous skill in emotional intelligence, yet their training very rarely addresses how to develop the practical skills needed—from self-awareness to resilience. *Emotional Intelligence Religious Leaders* draws on the latest research in business, psychology, and theology to offer religious leaders the information and tools they need to increase their emotional intelligence and enhance their relationships, communication and conflict management skills, spirituality, and overall well-being. The book offers both a deep understanding of how to develop emotional intelligence and also prescriptive insights about how to practice it that will be helpful for religious leaders in many settings, including congregational ministry, lay ministry, spiritual direction, pastoral counseling, and more.

**Keywords:** Emotional Intelligence, Religious Leadership, Christian Ministry, Religious Counseling, Psychology & Religion, Spiritual Formation

## Sample from Chapter 1:

### WHAT IS EQ?

It's important for us to understand that religious leadership requires well-developed emotional intelligence, or EQ, skills. This is because so much of our work involves helping people with their emotional needs. EQ has been defined as the ability to monitor one's own and other people's emotions, to differentiate between different emotions and label them appropriately, and to use emotional information to guide thinking and behavior.<sup>1</sup> Otherwise stated, for us to productively perform our duties and survive the emotional rigors of religious leadership, we need to be able to identify, comprehend, and manage our emotions both internally and externally.<sup>2</sup> Put simply, EQ can help us to process our feelings and to address the emotions of others constructively.

### THE GAP BETWEEN THEOLOGICAL TRAINING AND RELIGIOUS LEADERSHIP

During our research, many interviewees explained to us that they were well trained in theology and religious instruction during their formal education. However, they also communicated that their theological and religious training alone wasn't enough to prepare them for the emotional rigor they faced as religious leaders. Most of the religious leaders we interviewed expressed that the Bible colleges and seminaries they attended did not include EQ training as a part of their formal education.<sup>3</sup> As a result, they were forced to advance their EQ skills through nontraditional training opportunities such as outside coaching, professional therapy, and self-study. In this book, we provide religious leaders with a valuable resource to develop their EQ traits. We hope that this will serve as a survival guide for religious leaders, so that each of you will flourish as you faithfully fulfill your calling.

### References:

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