# MINISTER LIFE CHANGES RATING SCALE

Strong scientific evidence indicates that the greater number of social readjustments individuals make, the greater their chances of future significant health changes (Holmes and Rahe). The severity of health changes also tends to increase the scores even more.

As each individual’s tolerance for stress varies, the total Life Changes Score should be taken as a rough guide. For each of the events below which your consider yourself to have experienced during the past twelve months, transfer the “Average Value” to the line in the “Your Score” column. Then add these for your total Life Changes Score.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| EVENT | **AVERAGE**  VALUE | | **YOUR**  SCORE |
| Death of spouse | 100 | |  |
| Divorce | 73 | |  |
| Marital separation | 65 | |  |
| Death of close family members | 63 | |  |
| Personal Injury or illness | 53 | |  |
| Marriage | 50 | |  |
| Serious decline in church attendance | 49 | |  |
| Geographical relocation | 49 | |  |
| Private meetings by segment of congregation to | 47 | |  |
| discuss your resignation |  | |  |
| Beginning of heavy drinking by immediate family member | | 46 |  |
| Marital reconciliation | | 45 |  |
| Retirement | | 45 |  |
| Change in health of a family member | | 44 |  |
| Problem with children | | 42 |  |
| Pregnancy | | 40 |  |
| Sex difficulties | | 39 |  |
| Alienation from one’s leadership/elders | | 39 |  |
| Gain of new family member | | 39 |  |
| New job in new line of work | | 38 |  |
| Change of financial state | | 38 |  |
| Death of close friend | | 37 |  |
| Increased arguing with spouse | | 35 |  |
| Merger of two or more congregations | | 35 |  |
| Serious church financial difficulty | | 32 |  |
| Mortgage over $50,000 for home | | 31 |  |
| Difficulty with any member of church staff | | 31 |  |
| Foreclosure of mortgage or loan | | 30 |  |
| Destruction of church by fire | | 30 |  |
| New job in same line of work | | 30 |  |
| Son or daughter leaving home | | 29 |  |
| Trouble with in-laws | | 29 |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **AVERAGE** | **YOUR** |
| EVENT VALUE | SCORE |
| Anger of influential church member over minister’s action 29 |  |
| Slow, steady decline in church attendance 29 |  |
| Outstanding personal achievement 28 |  |
| Introduction of new hymnal to worship service 28 |  |
| Failure of church to make payroll 27 |  |
| Remodeling or building program 27 |  |
| Start or stop of spouse’s employment 26 |  |
| Holiday away 26 |  |
| Start or finish of school 26 |  |
| Death of peer 26 |  |
| Offer of call to another church 26 |  |
| Change of living conditions 25 |  |
| Revision of personal habits 24 |  |
| Negative church activity by former minister 24 |  |
| Difficulty with confirmation class 22 |  |
| Change in residence 20 |  |
| Change in schools 20 |  |
| Change in recreation 19 |  |
| Change in social activities 18 |  |
| Death/moving away of good church leader 18 |  |
| Mortgage or personal loan of less than $55,000 17 |  |
| Change in sleeping habits 16 |  |
| Development of new friendships 15 |  |
| Change in eating habits 15 |  |
| Stressful continuing educational experience 15 |  |
| Major program change 15 |  |
| Vacation at home 13 |  |
| Christmas 12 |  |
| Lent 12 |  |
| Easter 12 |  |
| Minor violation of the law 11  YOUR TOTAL SCORE |  |
| *Scoring the Survey:* |  |

50 or below unusually low

50-100 stress very manageable

101-150 stress moderately manageable

151-200 borderline—mild concern appropriate 201-250 mildly serious

251-300 moderately serious

301-350 very serious 351 and above alarming

*This material is from the Alban Institute which was adapted by Roy M. Oswald from the Holmes/Rahe Scale and field tested with clergy groups*

***MINISTER BURNOUT INVENTORY***

As simple as this self-rating scale is, it is amazingly consistent in how accurately it identifies those experiencing or on their way to burnout. Circle the number on each scale that best describes the associated statement. Add up the numbers and place the total on the “TOTAL” line. Check your total against “Interpreting Your Score” found at the end of the survey.

1. The extent to which I am feeling negative or cynical about people with whom I work (despairing of the ability to change or grow).

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Optimistic about parishioners | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | Cynical about parishioners |

1. The extent to which I have enthusiasm for my work. (I enjoy my work and look forward to it regularly.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| High internal energy for my work | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | Loss of enthusiasm for my job |

1. The extent to which I invest myself emotionally in my work in the church.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Highly invested emotionally | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | Withdrawn and detached |

1. The extent to which fatigue and irritation are part of my daily experiences.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Cheerfulness, high energy much of  the time | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | Tired and irritated  much of the time |

1. The extent to which my humor has a cynical and biting tone to it.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Humor reflects a positive, joyful attitude | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | Humor is cynical and sarcastic |

1. The extent to which I find myself spending less and less time with my parishioners.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Normal and anticipated | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | Increasingly withdrawn  from parishioners |

1. The extent to which I am becoming less flexible in my dealing with parishioners.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Remaining open and flexible with  parishioner needs and wants | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | Becoming more fixed and rigid  in dealing with parishioners |

1. The extent to which I feel supported in my work.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Feeling fully supported much of  the time | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | Feeling alone and isolated |

1. The extent to which I find myself frustrated in my attempts to accomplish tasks important to me.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Reasonably successful in  accomplishing tasks | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | Mainly frustrated in  accomplishing tasks |

1. The extent to which I am invaded by sadness I cannot explain

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Joyful most of the time | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | Sad much of the time |

1. The extent to which I am suffering from physical complaints (aches, pains, headaches, lingering colds, etc.).

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Feeling healthy most of the time | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | Constantly irritated by physical ailments |

1. The extent to which sexual activity seems to be more trouble than it is worth.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Sexual activity is high | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | Sexual activity is just  another responsibility |

1. The extent to which I blame others for problems I encounter.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Minimum blaming or scapegoating | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | Others are usually to blame for the malaise I am feeling |

1. The extent to which I feel guilty about what is not happening in this church or with church members.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Guilt free most of the time | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | Feeling guilty much of the time |

1. The extent to which I am biding my time until retirement or a change.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Highly engaged in my work | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | Doing what I have to to get by |

1. The extent to which I feel used up and spent.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| High source of energy for my work | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | Feeling empty and depleted |

**Total up the numbers in your circled ratings. TOTAL SCORE**

INTERPRETING YOUR SCORE

0-32 Burnout is not an issue for you.

33-48 You are bordering on burnout. 49-64 Burnout is a factor in your life.

65-80 You are a victim of extreme burnout. A radical intervention into your life is necessary if you are to regain control of your health and vitality. Please take your condition seriously.

This material is from the Alban Institute, adapted by Roy M. Oswald.

# THE STRAIN RESPONSE INVENTORY

The Strain Response Inventory is another way to measure whether you are living your life below, above, or just at your stress threshold. Stress that is no longer productive for us usually results in some sort of strain on our lives.

Place the number that represents the best response to the statement on the blank line in front of the number that corresponds to the statement. Add up the numbers and place the total on the “Total Score” line. Check your total against “Interpreting Your Score” found at the end of the survey.

0 = Never

1 = Infrequently

2 = Frequently

3 = Regularly

1. Eat too much.

2. Drink too much alcohol.

3. Smoke more than usual.

4. Feel tense, uptight, fidgety

5. Feel depressed or remorseful.

6. Like myself less.

7. Have difficulty going to sleep or staying asleep.

8. Feel restless and unable to concentrate.

9. Have decreased interest in sex.

10. Have increased interest in sex.

11. Have loss of appetite.

12. Feel tired / low energy.

13. Feel irritable.

14. Think about suicide.

15. Become less communicative.

16. Feel disoriented or overwhelmed.

17. Have difficulty getting up in the morning.

18. Have headaches.

19. Have upset stomach.

20. Have sweaty and/or trembling hands.

21. Have shortness of breath and sighing.

22. Let things slide.

23. Misdirect anger.

24. Feel “unhealthy.”

25. Feel time bound, anxious about too much to do in too little time.

26. Use prescription drugs to relax.

27. Use medication for high blood pressure.

28. Depend on recreational drugs to relax.

29. Have anxiety about the future.

30. Have back problems.

31. Unable to clear up a cold, running nose, sore throat, infection, etc.

**TOTAL SCORE**

INTERPRETING YOUR SCORE

0-20 Below average strain in your life

21-30 Stress starting to show its effects in your life. You are living life near your stress threshold, at times crossing it.

31-40 Above average strain. Stress is having a very destructive effect on your life. You are living a good portion of your life beyond your stress threshold.

40+ Unless you do something soon to alleviate your stress, more serious illness will follow.

*This material is from the Alban Institute which was adapted by Roy M. Oswald.*

***Minister Personal Support System Checklist***

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Support Strategy | ***Already***  ***Active*** | ***Not Yet***  ***Active*** | ***Target***  ***Date*** |
| 1. Regular participation in a small group of five or fewer |  |  |  |
| 2. Regular participation in a collegial task group |  |  |  |
| 3. Scheduled periodic mini-sabbaticals |  |  |  |
| 4. Regular practice of some spiritual disciplines |  |  |  |
| 5. Planned continuing education track |  |  |  |
| 6. Planned weekly family time |  |  |  |
| 7. Planned annual family vacations |  |  |  |
| 8. Planned marriage enrichment activities |  |  |  |
| 9. Identified professional counselor/caregiver if needed |  |  |  |
| 10. Participation in a denominational or other peer  network |  |  |  |
| 11. Participation in non-church related peer network |  |  |  |
| 12. Annual medical check-ups |  |  |  |
| 13. Regular physical exercise |  |  |  |
| 14. Collaboration with personal support team |  |  |  |
| 15. Collaboration with church personnel team |  |  |  |
| 16. Participation in annual effectiveness review process |  |  |  |
| 17. Consultation with Certified Financial Planner |  |  |  |
| 18. Planned interpersonal effectiveness growth activities |  |  |  |
| 19. Periodic contact with long-time friends |  |  |  |
| 20. Consultation with expert resource persons as needed |  |  |  |