

Life Changes for Clergy

Event	Average Value	Your Score
Death of a spouse	100	_____
Divorce	73	_____
Marital separation	65	_____
Death of a close family member	63	_____
Personal injury or illness	53	_____
Marriage	50	_____
Serious decline in church attendance	49	_____
Geographical relocation	49	_____
Private meetings by segment of congregation	47	_____
To discuss your resignation		_____
Beginning of heavy drinking by immediate family member	46	_____
Marital reconciliation	45	_____
Retirement	45	_____
Change of health in family member	44	_____
Problem with children	42	_____
Pregnancy	40	_____
Sex difficulties	39	_____
Alienation from one's PCC	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 parish financial difficulty	32	_____
Mortgage over £30,000 for home	31	_____
Difficulty with member or church staff (associate, organist, choir director, secretary, caretaker, etc.)	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	_____
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	28	_____
Remodelling or building programme	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 parish	26	_____
Change in living conditions	25	_____
Revision of personal habits	24	_____
Negative parish activity by former minister	24	_____
Difficulty in 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 £30,000	17	_____
Change in sleeping habits	16	_____
Developing new friendships	16	_____
Change in eating habits	15	_____
Stressful continuing education experience	15	_____
Major programme change	15	_____
Vacation at home	13	_____
Christmas	12	_____
Lent	12	_____
Easter	12	_____
Minor violation of the law	11	_____

YOUR TOTAL

Adapted by Roy M. Oswald and Linda Kramer from the Holmes/Rahe Life Changes Rating Scale.

The following will give you a sense of your score in relation to other clergy.

50 or below	unusually low
51-100	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

The Strain Response

This self-assessment tool is for me, the most important one. It measures only the physical and psychological indicators of stress. Once you have completed it, we will relate this score to your other scores.

- 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, and fidgety
- 5. Feel depressed or remorseful
- 6. Like myself less
- 7. Have difficulty in 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 disorientated 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. Fee 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, cough, infection, etc.

----- **YOUR TOTAL SCORE**

- 0-20 Below average strain in life
- 21-30 Stress starting to show its effects in your life. You are living 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.
- Above 40 Unless you do something soon to alleviate your stress, more serious illness will follow.

Adapted from John D. Adams' survey, "The Strain Response." Used by permission.

I invite you now to place your two survey scores together on this page.

LIFE CHANGES -----

THE STRAIN RESPONSE -----

If your strain response score is above twenty-five, try to pinpoint the specific areas that produce the greatest stress for you. What are the things that give you headaches or upset stomachs? With specific stressors in mind, can you develop specific strategies to counteract their destructive impact?