



MINDING YOUR MANNERS IN MINISTRY

A GUIDE TO
MINISTERIAL ETHICS
IN THE CHURCH

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Introduction

There has not been much said in the church concerning ethics in the ministry. One of the few things I know of that has been written about the subject is “The Ministry What’s Right and What’s Wrong” by my Pastor Dr. Paul E. Paino, which is an excellent book on the subject.

Most of what I will be sharing on this subject I have learned either from him or through my own personal experience. While covering some of the same things, I will also be dealing with a few different issues and taking a slightly different slant on the subject. In this book, I will be dealing with the following:

Understanding the call to ministry, the pastor’s responsibility to the church; The church’s responsibility to its pastor; how guest ministries should conduct themselves when coming into another minister’s church or ministry; and how the church and pastor should treat guests when coming to minister in their church or ministry.

Paul wrote to Timothy, a young pastor under his oversight, and said, “I write so that you may know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of truth” (1 Timothy 3:15).

The church, (whether it be the pastor, the people or incoming guest ministry), like never before, needs to learn how to conduct themselves in the house of God. This is what I will attempt to set forth in the pages to follow.

Understanding the Call of God

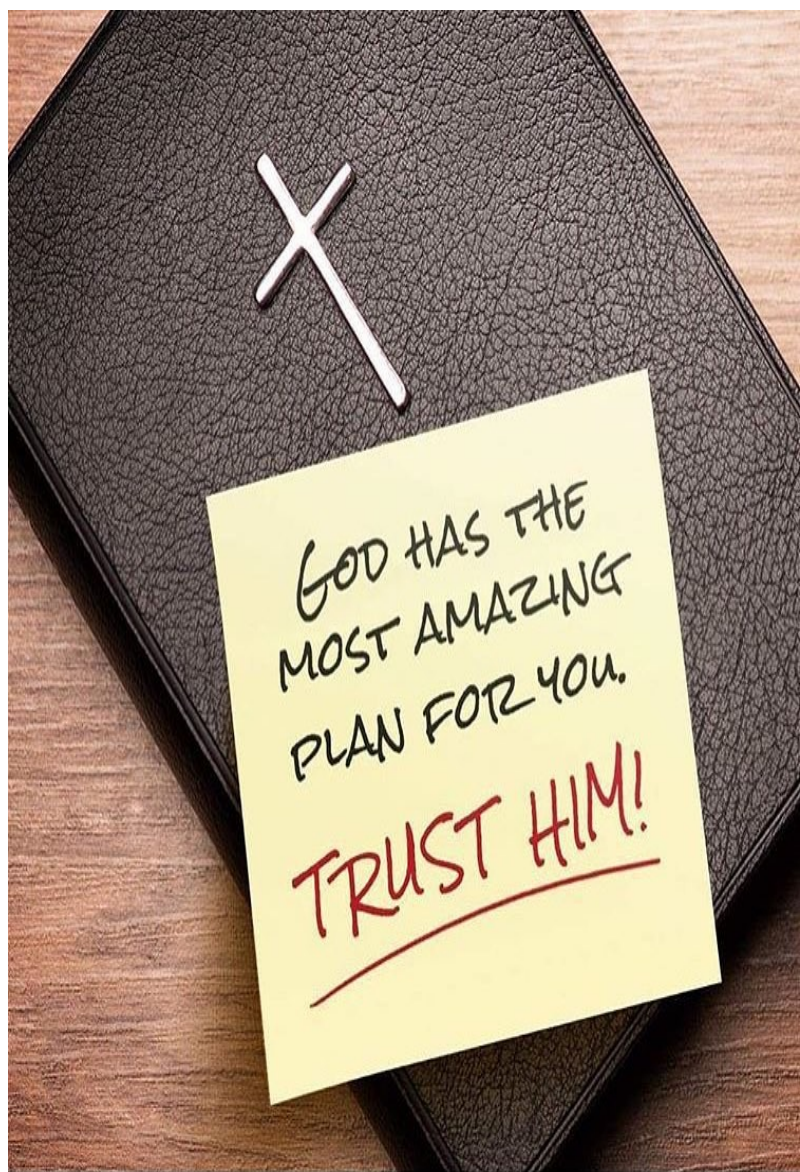
Being in the ministry can be full of joy and excitement, but it can also be very difficult. Only those called by God will survive. Hebrews 5:4 says “No man takes this honor unto himself, but he who is called of God.” Entering into the ministry without being called does an injustice to the church, the cause of Christ and yourself. If you are not absolutely sure you are called by God, get a secular job and find a good church or ministry get behind it and support it.

Once you decide to enter the ministry, there will be trials and difficulties. Here are three important challenges you will face, and ways you can obtain victory through them.

Greater Judgment

The call to ministry is both an honor (Hebrews 5:4) and a grave responsibility. According to James 3:1, those who yield to the call to preach and teach the Word of God will be held to a higher standard of judgment. This is why no one must ever take this responsibility lightly. We must enter our calling with the understanding that God will hold us accountable for what we preach, teach and do.

We must “study to show ourselves approved, a workman that needs not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15). We are to equip ourselves through prayer, study, research, and meditation “As



good stewards of the manifold grace of God”, that when we speak, we do so “As the oracles of God” (1 Peter 4:10-11).

It is becoming increasingly more difficult to minister the clear and unadulterated Word of God. Paul prophetically stated, “The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires” (2 Timothy 4:3).

I recently watched a Christian program who’s host was interviewing ministers. There were many who were pastors of large churches saying people simply were not interested in hearing about the judgment of God or anything that was offensive. As a result, they chose to give them what they wanted. I was glad to hear R.C. Sproul say, “We must not offend for the sake of offense, but we must also be careful not to take away the offense that is clearly in the Word of God.”

Jesus often offended (John 6:60 and 66). This is why Paul charged Timothy and us who are called to, “Preach the word; be instant in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort with all longsuffering (patience) and doctrine” (2 Timothy 4:2). Paul also said, “But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak, not as pleasing men but God, which tries (examines) our hearts” (1 Thessalonians 2:4). We must be able to stand before God and say the same.

There is not only greater judgment before God but also man. When you accept the call to follow the Lord in full-time ministry, you are suddenly under man’s magnifying glass and scrutiny. People will criticize, condemn and talk about you for the least little thing. They don’t like this or that, the way you did something, or a decision you made. You will have to come to your own convictions and determine not to bend to man’s every whim.

Remember, “Not as pleasing men but God which tries (examines) our hearts” (1 Thessalonians 2:4). Paul said, “For if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ” (Galatians 1:10). This must be our stand, and

yet still have a heart of love for those to whom we minister – “Imparting not the gospel of God only but also our own souls because you are dear unto us” (1 Thessalonians 2:8).

It is also important that we, if possible, take great care not to offend. James wrote, “If any man offend not in word the same is a perfect man” (James 3:2). We mustn’t be offensive if we can help it. If we offend some one in our congregation and lose them, we have cut off all opportunity to minister into their life. Let’s be careful not to offend unless truth or the vision God has given us is at stake. Our main purpose is to please the Lord and then to encourage our people in their faith.

The Spiritual Battle

The moment we get saved we are all in a fight with spiritual wickedness in high places. The Bible says, “We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places” (Ephesians 6:12). When you decide to let God use you to make an impact for His kingdom, you enter another level of spiritual conflict.

When we yield to the call of God on our lives, with a passion for doing the will of God at all cost, we begin fighting the battle in the spiritual realm at the highest level. The powers of darkness are upset when you get saved and even more so when you decide to get off the sidelines and let God use you. When you surrender your life to God’s service in a full-time capacity, Satan becomes really angry.

For example, the moment Moses decided God was leading him to deliver the children of Israel from bondage, he immediately came under attack. Paul, shortly after his Damascus Road experience, began proclaiming Christ boldly and the battle started and never quit. Peter was so committed to the cause of Christ he was ready to go to prison and even die for Him (Luke 22:33). Though he fell short of his commitment, I believe he meant what he said and proved it years later by laying down his life for Christ. It

was because of his commitment to following and being used of God that Jesus said, “Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat” (Luke 22:31). If you have committed your life to His service, to doing the will of God for your life at all cost, Satan desires the same of you.

The good news is what Jesus said afterwards, “But I have prayed for you, that your faith fail not, and when you are converted, strengthen thy brethren” (Luke 22:32). Let me encourage you. When you dedicate your life to the service of the Master you have the guarantee He is praying for you. “Where the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus” (Hebrews 6:20). “Wherefore He is able also to save (deliver) them to the uttermost (forever and completely) that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever lives to make intercession for them” (Hebrews 7:25). “Who is he that condemns, it is Christ that died, yes rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us” (Romans 8:34). He’s praying for you as you fight the battle, and you can be sure His prayers are answered.

Even if you experience failure, like Peter, know Jesus’ prayers will see you through to ultimate victory and He will continue to use you. Jesus said, “When you are converted (have turned) strengthen your brethren” (Luke 22:32b). Often we have to go through the battle and even failure before we are adequately equipped to do what Jesus called us to do. It’s only after we have been schooled in life’s difficulties, by the Holy Spirit, that we are really ready to strengthen our brethren “With the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God” (2 Corinthians 1:3-4).

Discouragement

One of the greatest battles people in the ministry fight is discouragement. Nearly all God’s prophets and ministers struggled with this at times. Elijah said, “Lord they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine alters; and I am left alone, and they seek my life” (Romans 11:3 and 1 Kings 19:10, 14). After a great victory, Elijah fled from Jezebel and laid under a juniper

tree and said, “It is enough; now, O Lord, take my life, for I am no better than my fathers” (1 Kings 19:4).

After many battles and set backs on his second missionary journey, Paul fell into discouragement after arriving at Corinth. Though discouraged, He continued ministering as we must do also. There will be times when you slip into the pit of despair, but you must keep pressing on regardless of the way you feel. It may be from criticism, things not turning out as well as you had hoped (unfulfilled vision), personal problems, or failure, but in the midst of it all the call of God does not change (Romans 11:29).

The devil’s biggest job is to get us to give up, but that is not an option. Jesus said, “No one having put his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God” (Luke 9:62). We must keep pressing on toward the purpose for which God called us and the goal (vision) He has given us (Philippians 3:12-14). Paul told the elders of Ephesus the Holy Spirit testified to him that in every city bonds and afflictions awaited him. After which he said, “But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, that I might finish my course (race) with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify of the gospel of the grace of God” (Acts 20:24).

God has a course for you. You must not let anything move, sway or detour you from that course. You must continue pursuing the course and ministry you have received from Him. When at Corinth God brought three things to Paul in order to encourage him and bring him out of his pit – Pressing on in the call of God for you:

1. Friends (Acts 18:1-3)
2. Fruit (Acts 18:8)
3. Fresh vision (Acts 18:9-10)

I'm sure the friends and fruit helped Paul, but it just didn't seem to be enough. Sometimes we get so far down that not even great friends and fruitfulness in our ministry can bring us out of it forcing God to intervene. The Lord said to Paul in the night by a vision, "Do not be afraid any longer, but go on speaking and do not be silent; for I am with you, and no man will attack you in order to harm you, for I have much people in this city" (Acts 18:9-10).

Although there will be times of discouragement in the ministry, God will do whatever is necessary to keep you on course. It may not be until you are in your darkest hour, when nothing seems to help, but God will speak to you – bringing a word and freshness of vision that only He can bring.

Always remember and never forget, "The gifts and calling of God are without repentance – irrevocable." ~ Romans 11:29

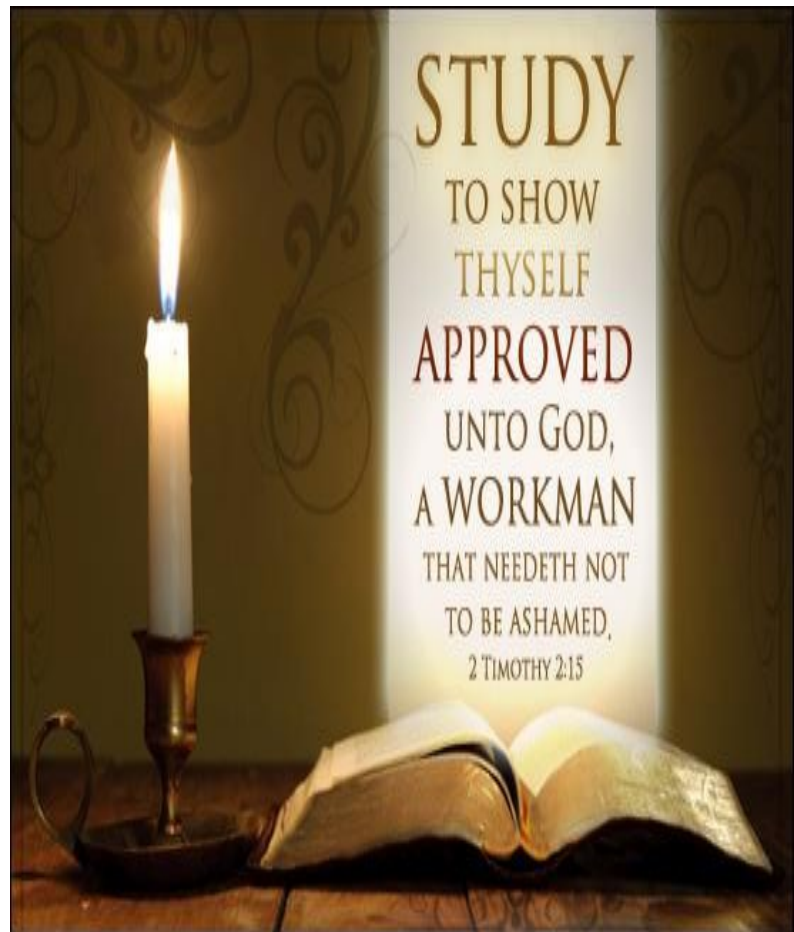
A Pastor's Responsibility to the Church

The privilege and responsibility God gives pastors is to shepherd those who belong to Him. It's a great honor, and also a heavy burden. It's incumbent on us to take our calling seriously.

1 Peter 5:2 says that pastors or shepherds must “feed the flock of God.” In Acts 20:28 Paul challenged the elders of Ephesus to “be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.”

What a proof text for the divinity of Christ! It was Jesus who died on the cross, yet Paul said God paid the price for the church with His own blood. Jesus, who was God, paid the penalty for our sins on the cross. Let's not take it lightly.

If the church was so valued by God that He shed His blood for it, we should always give it our best. “I write so that you will know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth” (1 Timothy 3:15).



Pastors should:

1. Feed the Flock

We must make sure the church gets a healthy diet of God's Word. This is why Paul told Timothy to "study to show yourself approved a workman that needs not to be ashamed, rightfully dividing the Word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15). If you are going to properly feed God's people you will have to spend much time in diligent study. Don't just throw a message together. God and His people deserve better.

I believe expository teaching and preaching accomplishes this best. Even when preaching on a specific topic you can find a passage that deals with that particular topic and give an exposition of it. If you take your people through a book of the Bible, verse by verse, you will be forced to deal with everything in it, and will give your people a balanced diet of the Word. You will also be protecting yourself from extremes.

This takes a lot of work, but is one of my favorite things to do. I especially like those passages that are hard to deal with, the ones most preachers tend to skip over. When doing an exposition of a passage I typically use at least [3-7 commentaries](#). I take one passage at a time and thoroughly study each commentary.

I write down everything that seems significant then read over the notes while prayerfully meditating on the passage. Little by little, the Holy Spirit gives me an understanding of the text and how it applies to the church, people's lives, and the vision God has for that local body.

A general outline for study should include the background, setting and customs of the time, the meaning of the passage, practical applications, and the exhortation to put what they've learned into practice. Your people need to understand the Word, but they also need to see how it applies to their lives.

Much of our time should be spent in practical application. The background and interpretation prepares the way for the application and exhortation. There is one interpretation of scripture but many applications. Let's properly equip ourselves to feed the flock of God.

Another way to insure your people are properly fed is through guest ministries. Let's face it, people need something fresh once in a while. Bring in individuals and groups you know will minister well to your church body. It's good to have varying styles to give them some diversity.

Music as well as preaching and teaching ministries can be used. Bringing in guests will help your church grow. [Guest ministries](#) and special events are easy ways for members to invite people to the church. If done regularly, over a period of time, people will start to see something is happening at your church.

Training leaders in the church is another way to make sure your people are being fed. 2 Timothy 2:2 says, "The same impart (entrust) to faithful men, who will also be able to teach others." You can't do it all yourself. God will give you people who are gifted and with your help will be able to teach and preach the Word of God alongside you. It's important to make sure people you raise up are faithful to your ministry (Luke 16:12). If not, division could arise.

It's easy for people to let things go to their head. That's why Paul said leaders should not be a novice or new convert lest they "become conceited and fall into the condemnation" (1 Timothy 3:6). Warn, encourage and watch over them. You can train leaders in a small group setting or by giving them an opportunity to minister in a public service. Start with an offertory or brief devotional then gradually move them to full messages. An added benefit is having people who are equipped to fill in when you're on vacation or out of town.

2. Guard the Flock

Paul, when leaving Ephesus, gathered the leaders together and said, “Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God, which He purchased with His own blood. I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock, and from your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore be on alert” (Acts 20:29-31a). Jesus made it clear that an identifying factor of a true shepherd is that they defend the flock against wolves (John 10:12-13).

There will be those who attempt to lead your people astray. It’s up to us as pastors to properly feed and train our people to have discerning spirits so that when someone is being deceptive or divisive they will be able to stop it before anyone is affected. It’s up to the pastor to fight against such wolves with every thing he has. If we don’t stop it right away, the turmoil that will be ahead of us will be overwhelming.

Be alert and watch, you never know when they may rise up or who they may be. It may be someone who just finished pledging their support and loyalty to you, so beware. Shortly after the people praised Jesus on Palm Sunday the very same ones were crying out “crucify him, crucify him” (Luke 23:20).

Paul and Barnabas, after the lame man was healed, could barely restrain the people from sacrificing to them as gods. When they were not allowed to sacrifice to them, they wanted to stone them (Acts 14:8-19). The one patting you on the back today could be stabbing you in the back tomorrow.

Often it isn’t someone coming from outside bringing in false doctrine, but someone from within trying to plant negative seeds and cast doubt about leadership. It will often go something like this, “What do think about the pastor’s message today? What do you think about the direction the church is taking? What do you think about the worship leader? I really think it’d be

better if they did it like this. I'm not sure if this might have been a better way to go. Did you hear this about so and so?"

We must teach people to look out for things like this and put a stop to it immediately. By the time it gets to the pastor, the damage has probably already been done. Negative seeds, even if not believed, have a way of coming to fruition. Romans 16:17 says, "Mark them which cause division and offenses contrary to the doctrine you have learned; and avoid them."

This battle usually begins with envy, bitterness, or a desire for power, to be noticed and feel important (James 3:13-17). Once it moves from the heart and through the tongue, a fire has erupted that will soon blaze out of control if not quickly extinguished.

James 3:5-6 says, "Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things, behold how great a matter a little fire kindles. And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity, so is the tongue among our members that defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature and is set on fire of hell."

Gossip and negativism will defile the whole body. It begins with a few people, but quickly spreads until the entire church is destroyed. The devil knows it's not the battles that come from outside the church that destroy us – they usually make us stronger. It's the battles from within that get us.

James 3:15 says, "This wisdom descends not from above, but is earthly, sensual and devilish." When someone tries to draw people away, remember where it's coming from and don't allow the devil to take advantage of you by being "ignorant of his devices" (2 Corinthians 2:11).

Sources of false wisdom:

- It's earthly. It comes from this world, not from above.

- It's sensual. It originates from our fleshly desires, not the Spirit of God.
- It's devilish. It comes straight from the devil himself.

3. Give Yourself to the Flock

To minister in a way that pleases God you must give yourself for those to whom you minister.

John 15:13 – “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.”

John 10:11 – “The good shepherd gives his life for the sheep.”

1 John 3:16 – “Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down His life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.”

1 Thessalonians 2:8 – “So being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls because you were dear unto us.”

Paul gave his heart to those to whom he ministered. For many, being a pastor is just a job. It's not a calling, but a vocation or occupation for them. This must not be the case. If we aren't called of God, we shouldn't be there. We must not preach the gospel only, but in doing so we must also give our heart and soul to them.

This is not easy and has with it much danger. When we give people part of us we become vulnerable. It's easy get hurt. When people criticize, gossip, get mad, or leave the church it rips your heart out. This is why many pastors just “do their job” – It's safer! We must allow the Holy Spirit to tenderize our heart so we can give ourselves to the church, following His example (Ephesians 5:1-2). God expects nothing less.

4. Dedication

If God has called you into the ministry, total dedication is required. In Luke 14:25-33 Jesus demanded full surrender and commitment in every area of our life. God must be first in:

- Our relationships (Luke 14:26).
- Our flesh and personal ambition (Luke 14:26).
- Our possessions (Luke 14:33).

Matthew 6:24 – “No man can serve two masters, either he will hate the one love the other, or he will hold to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.”

It's difficult to be in the ministry and work a secular job at the same time. Your interest will inevitably be divided. Paul is usually cited as being a tent maker, but he only did so for a few brief periods of time then promptly went back to full time ministry.

Some pastors need to be bi-vocational for a while, but it shouldn't be for very long. As soon as the ministry begins to grow, you must take a step of faith. Often either the church isn't willing to make the **commitment to their pastor**, or the pastor isn't willing to step out in faith and leave the security of his job. There will be lean times and times of blessing, and we must make the commitment of faith to trust God in it all.

2 Corinthians 5:7 – “We walk by faith, not by sight.”

Hebrews 10:38 – “The just shall live by faith.”

In Mark 1:16-20, when Jesus called the disciples they immediately left everything and followed Him. In 1 Kings 19:19-21, when Elisha was called

while plowing, he sacrificed the oxen and burned all the implements and followed Elijah. He burnt all bridges to the past so there was no turning back. Peter asked in John 6:68, “Lord, where shall we go?”

5. Go After the Wayward

The Bible makes it clear that people are prone toward drifting and falling away.

Isaiah 53:6 – “All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way.”

1 Peter 2:25 – “You were continually straying like sheep.”

This is a heavy responsibility on pastors. We can’t make people come to church and be faithful, but we do have a responsibility to go after them and bring them back into the fold when they stray. Jesus made this abundantly clear in the parables of the lost sheep, coin and son in Luke 15. Once we’ve done all we can, we must “commend them to God and the Word of His grace” (Acts 20:32).

This should be the natural tendency of a shepherd. Jesus said, “What man among you, if he has a hundred sheep and has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open pasture, and go after the one which is lost, until he finds it? And when he has found it, lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing” (Luke 15:4-5). There would be a lot more rejoicing in the church if we could bring back all those who have drifted away and slipped through the cracks.

This indicates that the shepherd grabbed the sheep while it was still running away. He grabs the sheep, throws it over his shoulder and brings it home to the fold while it was still offering resistance. There are so many people who have gone through problems, discouragement and even fallen into sin, and no one has gone after them.

I'm not referring to those who leave the church mad and go down the road to another church. You should never go after those folks. I'm talking about those who have fallen out of church and drifted from the things of God. Those you must go after.

Many people who once loved the Lord have fallen away and haven't even received a phone call from the church. I realize the pastor can't call on and go after everyone himself, especially as the church grows, but people should be trained to help the pastor go after wayward sheep.

As the church grows, leaders should be raised up with people under their care. When they see a member has missed a number of weeks, they should give them a call and set up a time to meet with them. They should find out if anything is wrong and ask what they can do to help.

This will take commitment and organization. Faithful shepherding has become a lost art in the church today. The pastor or someone on the pastoral staff should stay in touch with the leaders to make sure they are remaining faithful to the task given them.

6. Flee Temptation

The enemy knows that if he's able to strike the shepherd the sheep will be scattered and left without protection. Paul told Timothy to "flee these things" (1 Timothy 6:11) and again "flee youthful lust" (2 Timothy 2:22).

The devil knows your areas of weakness. You must be on guard continually, especially when you think you're on top of everything. 1 Corinthians 10:12 says, "Wherefore, let him that thinks he stands, take heed lest he fall." Things pastors and church leaders must avoid:

Discouragement. Discouragement is the greatest threat people in the ministry face. It doesn't just hit small, struggling ministries, it also targets large, flourishing ones. It comes from a myriad of different places and

sources. It may be like Elijah that we feel alone (Romans 11:3) or believe we can't fulfill the vision the Lord has given us.

It's important to have a support group of pastors you meet with regularly for prayer and encouragement. One church I planted was not going well and it was the weekly time I had meeting for prayer with a small group of ministers that pulled me through.

It's also good to have regular times with your wife where you simply enjoy yourselves and have fun together. Yes, pastors and their mates can have fun together. Foolish is the man or woman who thinks they are so spiritual they don't need this.

Always draw your strength from God. It's easy during these times to get overwhelmed and want to give up. When the temptation is there to sink into a pit of despair, you will have to do as David did when he had lost all and everyone was blaming him for all their problems.

1 Samuel 30:6 says, "But David encouraged himself in the Lord his God." Giving in to this temptation will cause you to miss out on all God has for you. It was shortly after this that David became king. What would have happened if he had given up? Never give up!

Financial indiscretions. In your ministry, make sure everything is always above board and that you are free from accusation. I know many have no choice at the beginning of a ministry but to handle the finances themselves.

As soon as possible, get an administrative assistant or someone to take care of the books under your oversight. Always have two ushers count the offering together and have a slip each signs verifying the amount.

The bookkeeper should also count the offering and give a report to the pastor. This gives multiple checks and balances cutting down the chance for accusation. Also, make sure you clear all expenditures beyond the

general operating expenses through the board with signed minutes on file in case any questions arise. This way you cover yourself and silence any accusations.

As for the minister's personal finances, do your best to stay clear of debt as much as possible. Ministry positions offer deductions that aren't available for many other professions. Make sure you have a good accountant familiar with clergy tax laws that can lead you through this process. Keep copies of any correspondence you have with the IRS. If you don't have things in writing, it can easily come back to haunt you.

Sexual temptation. I don't care who you are, what you look like, or how charismatic you may or may not be, there will be temptations. Some people will be attracted to you just because you are in the ministry. Most people in the ministry are there, at least in part, because they have a passionate personality. This makes you particularly susceptible to this area of temptation. Ways to avoid sexual temptation:

- **Have an open door policy.** Never have a lock on your office door. Let it be known that anyone can enter your office at any time.
- **Beware of flattery and excessive praise.** As men, we have an ego that not only likes but also needs to be ministered to. Stay away from anyone of the opposite sex who flatters you beyond a brief word of encouragement. Women see the pastor caring for the people and often see in him everything their husband isn't or that they think he should be. Run from this as fast as you can!

The temptation will be there to want to soak it all in, especially if you aren't getting this kind of attention at home. Wise is the wife who builds her husband up at home so he has no need to look for it elsewhere. The same holds true for women in the ministry, except women tend to develop more emotional attractions, which can be just as damaging as a physical affair.

- **Beware of social media traps.** It's very easy to access pornography and temptation online. It's also easy to get involved in an online affair, and no one knows, or so you think. I have friends who have paid a huge price because of online indiscretions. Another trap is spending too much time participating in social networks like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, etc.

This also includes exchanging personal emails, texts and messages. I know pastors who became addicted to their "virtual" world.

Eventually, a relationship developed which led to a physical affair.

Just ask the thousands of pastors and their wives whose churches and lives were destroyed after photos, emails, texts, Facebook posts, and cell phone logs were distributed to the congregation.

- **Maintain intimacy in your marriage.** There is no better way to thwart off sexual temptation than having a good sexual relationship with your mate. The more open and free you can be with one another the better. I believe, with all my heart, God meant for it to be this way between a husband and wife. The sad thing is, few couples in the ministry have such a relationship.

If you don't this type of openness and sexual freedom in your marriage, you are in serious danger, no matter how spiritual you are. If we don't take care of each other spiritually, emotionally and physically, someone or something else will. Work on it, get help, do whatever is necessary to get your sexual relationship where it needs to be before tragedy has an opportunity to strike.

7. Maintain Confidentiality

Whether in counseling or casual conversation, confidentiality for the pastor and his wife is imperative. Every precaution must be taken to keep everything told to you in confidence. Pastors must never get caught up in gossip of any kind.

A pastor's entire ministry can be ruined if he doesn't keep things to himself. At the very least, trust in you and your ministry will be greatly damaged if you ever violate confidentiality. This can make or brake your ministry. Ministry hinges on your people's ability to trust you.

When I was young in the ministry I started two youth outreach centers for non-church, at risk, youth. One of the centers was located above a music store. There were also other businesses located around us. Being upstairs, it was hard to keep a close eye on the kids once they left our place.

Some of the businesses began to complain about kids hanging around outside. They weren't doing anything wrong, they were just lingering outside. After the surrounding businesses complaining to our landlord, he asked us to find another place for our center. This was potentially devastating to our ministry. Our place was very reasonably priced, and we hadn't been able to find any place else that we could afford at the time.

While praying over our dilemma, I felt led to ask two local detectives for help. They liked what we were trying to do for the kids so I thought I would ask them to vouch for us with our landlord so we could remain where we were.

When I approached them, they asked if I would do something for them as well. They asked me to keep my ears open and to tell them if I ever heard of the kids being involved with anything illegal. I said, absolutely not! If I did the kids wouldn't trust me and I wouldn't be able to help them. I told the officers I would always encourage them to do the right thing, but I couldn't divulge anything told to me in confidence. They understood, respected our commitment to the kids and went to the landlord on our behalf. Consequently, we were able to stay where we were. Confidentiality is a must!

8. Set Office Hours

To properly shepherd your people you must be there for them. You need to have regular office hours so they know how and when they can reach you. This also protects your home life. If people know there are set times when you are in the office, they are not as likely to bother you at home.

Some might think, “what I am I going to do in the office all those hours?” You might think about:

- **Preparation.** Study, read and research. This is where much of your preparation is done to properly feed your people. Study the Word and research books of the Bible, use commentaries. In my first few years as a pastor I taught through a different book of the Bible every service and we had three services a week. I also studied works on theology and taught it to my people. This laid a wonderful foundation. I don’t have the time I did back then and that time of study gave me resources I can draw from today.
- **Praying.** Jesus said “My house shall be called a house of prayer” (Matthew 21:13). What better place to start than with the pastor who is to be setting the example and leading the way. 1 Samuel 12:23 says, “As for me, God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you: but I will teach you the good and the right way.”
- **Planning.** Use your time in the office to plan, organize and develop vision for the church. You should be continually thinking of new ways to structure and restructure your church to allow for continued growth. During these times, the seeds of new and fresh ministries can be birthed to better enable you to meet the ongoing needs of the congregation and community.

9. **Continue to Tithe**

Pastors must set an example in tithing for their people if they want the blessing of God to be on their life and ministry. You can't expect your people to do what you are unwilling to do. God expects nothing less of His ministers. This should be one of your first priorities, your firstfruits (Proverbs 3:9-10).

This brings with it personal financial blessing (Malachi 3:8:10), blessing in ministry, spiritual insight, vision, and an understanding of the Word of God. Jesus said, "If you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches" (Luke 16:11)?

The pastor's tithe can be given to the church in the general offering like everyone else. However, many feel that the pastor's tithe should be given elsewhere, otherwise the pastor is giving into his own ministry. Tithing options for pastors and ministers:

- Set aside your tithe for **guest ministries** that are coming into the church. This enables you to increase the offerings you take up for the itinerant ministry so they are well taken care of.
- Give your tithe to the **fellowship or denomination** you are affiliated with. Many feel this is scriptural since it is your spiritual covering.
- If you pastor an independent church, you might consider giving your tithe to a ministry you look to for personal feeding, encouragement and counsel. This too falls under the scriptural precedent since you are deriving at least part of your spiritual nourishment from this ministry. However, it is best to maintain consistency with one ministry.

10. Develop a Sanctuary

To balance total dedication and love, pastors and their families must have a place of sanctuary. Typically, this is your home. A church parsonage sounds like a great deal, but the home being a place of sanctuary is nearly impossible in this scenario.

Usually the parsonage is next to the church making it easy for congregants to stop by unannounced at any time. This makes it very difficult to have any down time or personal space, which you and your family desperately need.

At a pastor's conference a number of years ago, my overseer in the ministry was speaking on this subject. He said he lived twenty miles from the church on purpose. He went on to say, in jest somewhat, "What am I suppose to do, let you kill me?" He was overstating the point a little, but declaring a truth none the less.

Pastors need to make sure their home is set apart for them and their family. Without this they can easily get burnt out. Everyone needs a degree of privacy and the pastor's household is no exception.

They should be able to have alone and intimate times together without worrying about being interrupted. I wonder how many ministry marriages have been greatly damaged or even fallen apart for this very reason.

A Church's Responsibility to Its Pastor

It's not just pastors and church leaders who have a responsibility to their church, the church also has a responsibility to their pastor and leaders. 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13 says, "Appreciate those who diligently labor among you, and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction, and that you esteem them very highly in love for their work sake." Many churches lose dedicated pastors and ministers because they feel neglected and unappreciated. Below are a few important things pastors need from their church and its people.

Cooperation and Support

Hebrews 13:17 - "Obey them that have rule over you, and submit yourselves unto them for they watch over your souls, as they that must give an account, that they may do it with joy and not with grief, for that is unprofitable for you." You can make your pastor's job a joy or full of grief. One will be profitable to you and the other will not. That said, you should not submit to anyone in blind obedience. 1 Peter 5:3 says, "Neither as being lords over God's heritage but examples to the flock."

Follow your pastor's direction as long as their leadership is consistent with scripture. If you don't agree, pray for them instead of criticizing and talking negatively. Let God deal with it. The Holy Spirit can do a much better job than we can.

Your pastor is accountable to God. God works through headship and not the other way around. God's government is more like the military.



There are different levels of headship over various areas which are all subject to the commander and chief. Your pastor is in a headship position over the church, under Jesus, the chief shepherd (Ephesians 4:11-16). A pastor is like the central nervous system. He receives messages from the head (Jesus) and directs them to members of the body to be carried out. When this is reversed, problems arise.

Prayer and Spiritual Battles

The spiritual battles pastors and church leaders face are very difficult. That's why in 1 Timothy 2:1-2 Paul urges believers to pray for people in positions of authority. 1 Samuel 12:23 says, "Moreover, God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you." This applies to leaders praying for their people and also people praying for their leaders. We have no reason to complain or criticize when we see our pastor go through difficulties if we haven't been praying for them.

Can you imagine the feeling of support, encouragement and strength that's infused into a leader when he knows his people are praying for him? In Acts 4:24, the religious leaders had threatened Peter and his company "lifted up their voices to God in one accord." Imagine feeling the pressure of the threat just issued and all your people begin to cry out to God in a thunderous fashion. In Acts 12:5, Peter is arrested and thrown in prison, "But prayer for him was being made fervently by the church to God." In Acts 12:12, he was miraculously released by an angel and goes to Mary's home and sees "many gathered together praying."

Let your pastor know you are praying for him. In the churches I've pastored we had a prayer meeting before each church service. When I heard people lifting their voices to God, praying fervently for the service, it supercharged me. It gave me courage to minister with boldness and confidence. Strengthen and encourage your pastor through prayer and the anointing of God will remove every burden and break every yoke of bondage (Isaiah 10:27).

Loyalty and Faithfulness

What a blessing faithful and loyal people are to a ministry. The sad thing is there are fewer faithful people in a typical church than those who are not. Scripture gives every indication that it has been this way from the beginning. In Ephesians 1:1, Paul addresses the Ephesians as “the saints which are at Ephesus, and the faithful in Christ Jesus.”

In most churches twenty percent of the members carry the entire burden of the ministry. The only way a pastor can accomplish what God called him to do is to have faithful and loyal people behind him. He can't do it alone. Psalm 12:1 says, “Help, Lord, for the godly man ceases to be, for the faithful disappear from among the sons of men.” Many church “folk” talk a good talk but aren't there when the church needs them. Proverbs 20:6 says, “Many a man proclaims his own loyalty, but who can find a faithful man?” Proverbs 20:25 also says false declarations end up being a snare both spiritually and in the natural realm. “It is a snare for a man to devote rashly something as holy, and afterward to reconsider his vow.”

How often have you made a commitment to the church and failed to follow through? Your pastor is depending on you. James 5:12 says, “Let your yes be yes, and your no, no.” This includes your support during good times and bad. Many people are faithful, dedicated and loyal when things are going well in the church, but when things get hard, they're gone. What about when accusations are being hurled at your pastor? Do you stand firm in their defense? They need you whether what is being said is false, true or partially true. If you will be loyal and stand with them alongside God, you will have His support.

Isaiah 54:17 - “No weapon formed against you shall prosper. And every tongue that rises up against you in judgment you shall condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, And their righteousness (vindication) is from Me, declares the Lord.”

God will deal with anyone who comes against His servant. Let's always stand behind God's servants in full support. God promises His blessing will be upon all those who are faithful. Proverbs 28:20 says, "A faithful man will abound with blessing." The blessing will be there, just continue to stand firm behind your pastor through the rough times as well as the good. God will take care of anything that needs to be dealt with.

Be Willing to Learn

Proverbs 9:8-9 - "Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate you, rebuke a wise man and he will love you, give instruction to a wise man and he will be yet wiser, teach a just man and he will increase in knowledge."

Having a teachable spirit is imperative if you want to be a blessing to the ministry and your pastor. It's very difficult to pastor someone who isn't willing to learn. One of the purposes of having a pastor is for them to be a spiritual leader and mentor to you.

Church members unwilling to learn will never increase in knowledge. They will be a continual thorn in the pastor and leadership's side. They fight everything the pastor tries to do. A resistant spirit can be felt. Often people have come to me and said they felt something was wrong but weren't sure what it was. Usually when this happened there was someone with a resistant spirit I was battling with. They didn't know what was going on, but could feel something taking place in the spiritual realm.

The essence of discipleship is that of a learner and follower. Jesus is looking for disciples and not religious church members. Many of those that fought so much with Jesus were charter members of the local synagogue. Most of them just wanted to argue and prove their point. There were a few like Nicodemus who really wanted to learn, but they were far and few between. The whole point of being a disciple is to learn from one and teach someone else the thing you learned.

Paul taught Timothy this principle, “The things you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, these entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also” (2 Timothy 2:2). What any pastor really wants are disciples who have a thirst for learning and in turn will take what they have learned to minister to others. If you want to truly bless a pastor, become a disciple.

This is one of the reasons people refuse to join a church and be faithful. They feel they have no need of being disciplined. There’s not much that anyone can teach them. Pride is at the core of this type of spirit and nothing good comes from it. On the other hand, it’s the humble spirit that has a thirst for knowledge and feels they can always learn something new. This is the heart of a true disciple. It’s this kind of attitude that is a real blessing to the pastor, church and its ministries. These are the kind of people that can be depended upon. They bring exceptional strength and support to the pastor.

How to be a Blessing

The pastor gives of himself because he desires to be a blessing and usually isn’t expecting anything in return. However, if something isn’t given in return they may eventually become bitter and feel they are being taken advantage of. The Word is clear that we should bless those who have been a blessing to us.

Galatians 6:6 says, “Let him who is taught the word share all good things with him who teaches.” Romans 15:27 says, “It hath pleased them verily and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things.” It’s a spiritual principle that we should bless those who have blessed us spiritually. We are indebted to them to do so. This is not just financially, but can be in many different ways.

1. **Send a card or note.** Paul said we should “share all good things with him who teaches” (Galatians 6:6). When your pastor or church leader has taught, said or done something that blessed you, let them know. Pastors often leave the pulpit feeling like a failure. They walk away from the service and the devil starts telling them how bad they did. One word of encouragement, from someone they have unknowingly ministered to, will break an accusing spirit. Let them know how much their ministry has blessed you.
2. **Meals and getaways.** Take your pastor and his family out for a good meal. This was how pastors used to receive much of their pay from the church. Better yet, give them a gift certificate so they can take their family out alone. This can be done by different individuals in the church but can also be done by the church corporately from time to time. A good gesture would be for the church to pay for a couple days away for the pastor and his wife just to refresh themselves. Along with covering their motel and a few meals, take up an offering to cover some spending money. Every pastor needs a couple of days away at least every quarter, besides vacations, just to get out from under the spiritual pressures of the ministry. Most people have no idea what kind of battles the average pastor and his family face on a daily basis.
3. **Special offerings.** The church should look for special occasions to express their love with a special offering. Special offerings for birthdays, Christmas, vacations, etc. let them know all they do for the church hasn’t gone unnoticed. These offerings should be done enough in advance that people have time to plan ahead for what they are going to contribute. Preferably church leaders take charge and make sure everyone has an opportunity to participate. It’s also a good idea to send a letter to church members with return envelopes so those who aren’t always in attendance can participate.

Salary and Wages

Matthew 10:10 - “The worker is worthy of his support.” The Bible makes it clear that people who sow into people’s lives spiritual things should be able to do so in hope of reaping material rewards (1 Corinthians 9:6-14, Romans 15:26-27). People in the ministry face pressure in spiritual and natural realms most can never comprehend. The last thing they need is the financial burden of figuring out how they’re going to survive.

Pastors should make as much as any professional in the church or community. Paul said, “Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching” (1 Timothy 5:17). It’s clear from the context that “double honor” is referring to money or salary. If you take the average salary of the congregation, the pastor who works hard at preaching and teaching should make twice that. Churches that have a small budget should at least try to pay the pastor the average salary of the congregation.

Ministry Expenses

Pastors should not have to take money out of their personal finances to do their job properly. Any expenses they need to minister effectively should be reimbursed over and above their salary. Below are a few types of ministry expenses that can be reimbursed.

1. **Auto expenses.** If the church isn’t able to provide a car for the pastor, along with the expenses to operate the car, it should reimburse his mileage. The IRS has a set amount that’s allotted per mile. Your pastor should receive at least that amount.
2. **Conference expenses.** There are usually one or two conferences per year in most denominations and fellowships. The pastor and his wife should attend these for their personal enrichment, to rekindle vision, for training, and accountability. This is an expense the church or ministry should take care of. If the church doesn’t have a credit

card, receipts should be kept and everything that isn't prepaid should be reimbursed.

3. **Housing.** The IRS says pastors can receive a housing allowance above their salary that is nontaxable. The only thing that must be paid on it is social security or self employment tax, unless they have been exempt from social security. The church or ministry should cover the pastor's housing expenses above their salary. An accountant should be consulted to fully utilize this benefit.
4. **Insurance.** Insurance should be provided for pastors like any other professional. Many pastors and their families have suffered immense hardship and financial strain because they didn't have health care. The church should do its best to provide comprehensive health care for their pastor. Also, the pastor's family must be taken care of if unexpected tragedy strikes. God will bless the church and people who take care of the person God has given to shepherd them. The church should provide a term or universal life insurance policy on both the pastor and his wife. Make sure the value is sufficient to take care of the family in case of an untimely death.
5. **Retirement.** A retirement plan like a 401K, IRA or insurance policy should be taken out in the pastor's name. Some churches put retirement plans in the church's name and the pastor is eventually left with nothing. This should never happen.

Honor and Respect

Romans 13:7 - “Render, therefore to all their due, tribute to whom tribute is due, custom to whom custom, fear to whom fear, and honor to whom honor.” Hebrews 5:4 says, “No man takes this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God.”

There’s honor in being called by God and we are to give honor to whom honor is due. They are not better than anyone else, but respect is to be given for the office and calling. By showing respect for the pastor and church, we also show respect for God. God says the man of God should be honored not because they’re better than everyone, but because of their calling.

Hebrews 5:1 says ministers are “taken from among men” who have the potential for failure just like the rest of us. When a judge enters a courtroom all rise to their feet. Why? Because it’s expected and demanded. The church is a higher court. Let’s restore honor and respect to the ministry. Below are a few areas we can all improve upon.

1. **Being on a first name basis.** Today, everyone is on a first name basis with the pastor. This is a definite show of disrespect for the ministry. Part of the problem is with pastors. We don’t expect it. I used to feel the same. I wanted to be everyone’s friend. I found out the hard way this causes many difficulties. When people really need help they need their pastor, not a friend. It also makes it difficult when you must assert pastoral authority. People can usually deal with things coming from their pastor, but it’s much harder coming from a friend. I don’t have any problem using “Pastor...” with their first name. That’s a step in the right direction.
2. **Sanctity of church services.** Reverence and respect for God, the pastor, and the ministry should be upheld in all services. God and your pastor deserve this.

3. **Talking during services.** I can't count the times I've heard people carrying on conversations during worship services. They talk with their neighbor and wonder why they don't get anything out of the service. This is very disrespectful and distracts from what the Holy Spirit wants to do in people's lives.
4. **Allowing children to be disruptive.** Allowing children to be disruptive is disrespectful, distracting, and takes away from all the Lord wants to do. Today, most children are out of control and not disciplined at all. If kids or adults get up and down and roam around during the service people will be distracted and the purpose of God will be thwarted. Many parents think it's cute when their children are moving up and down the aisle. It isn't cute and the Lord is not pleased. They must be taught to respect the Lord, pastor and the church.
5. **Disrespecting the altar area.** The platform and altar is an area where sanctity must be preserved. It's a place where worship is led and the Word of God expounded. It should be off limits to anyone who is not there to minister. Children should never be allowed to play on the platform. It's not only disrespectful, but the equipment could be damaged or dangerous to the children.

God always blesses churches that take care of their pastor. He can't bless those that don't. Let's properly care for the men and women God has sent to watch over us.

Itinerant Ministry Guide

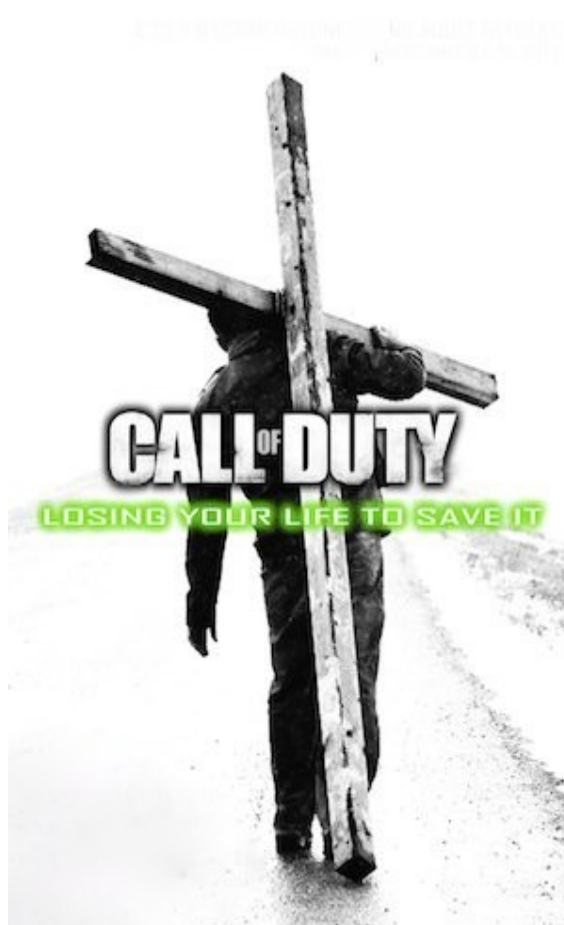
Guest, evangelistic and itinerant ministries have a huge responsibility to the local pastor and their congregation. Much of this guest ministry guide can also be applied to associate pastors, other staff members, church leaders and volunteer staff. There are things that should and should not be done when ministering in another person's church. Whether you have a music, teaching or preaching ministry, there are ethical guidelines that must be considered.

You have been invited to the church to bring blessing to that particular body of believers. To build it up, unify and equip the church under the leadership of the local pastor (Ephesians 4:11-13). If these things are not taking place, your purpose for being there is void. Facing your responsibility to the pastor and the church will help you build a good reputation, keep the door to ministry open in that local assembly, open up new opportunities in other churches, all while building the kingdom of God.

"I write so that you will know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth" (1 Timothy 3:15).

Always be Respectful

The pastor is the one who invited you in to minister and should be shown the utmost respect. Part of your job as a guest minister is to encourage and support the pastor. You should never do anything that might show disrespect toward him, his wife or



family. The Bible says, “Render therefore to all their due – honor to whom honor” (Romans 13:7).

Always refer to him or her as Pastor (their name). Unless they tell you otherwise, never call the pastor by their first name, especially when ministering to their congregation. You may be tempted to think you are peers and should be on a first name basis. This may be true in your personal dealings with each other, however, when in front of their congregation or church leaders, you must show respect to the pastor.

When the pastor walks to the platform the guest minister should also. Stay there throughout the entire service. It is very disrespectful to leave before the service is over. Often the guest wants to arrive when it's their time to minister and leave when their time is over. This should never take place. You should never leave until the service has been dismissed. The guest should be supportive of all that is taking place. If he/she expects to be listened to, he must also listen to what others have to say. We reap what we sow (Galatians 6:7).

Not only should you remain in the service, but you should also participate. Your body language and actions tell everyone whether you are behind the ministry or not. If they are worshiping or praying, then so should you. When an offering is being taken, you should always be prepared to give in that offering. When the pastor is encouraging the people in a certain direction, you must lend him your complete support. In short, you should be his biggest “amen” corner.

Never make the pastor or church the punchline of a joke. Often the pastor is used in the context of a joke to his personal embarrassment. This should never be done. This type of jesting does not elevate the pastor and his ministry, but shows blatant disrespect. Nothing negative should ever be said about the pastor, his family, his appearance, or ministry. Always show the utmost respect and honor for the pastor and their ministry.

Maintain Doctrinal Unity

You must present a unified front doctrinally. A guest minister should never address areas of doctrine that he is in disagreement with the pastor. The Bible says, “Mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which you have learned”(Romans 16:17). You are there to support the church. Stick with the areas you agree on and not areas of disagreement. The last part of that verse says, “And avoid them.” If you tread into areas that do anything but build and strengthen that local body, the pastor, and his position doctrinally, you will be avoided the next time they are considering having a guest in to minister.

Be Punctual

Find out what time the pastor needs you to arrive and be there on time. It is never OK to be fashionably late. There must be time for you to set up any personal equipment or displays. Let the pastor know how much time you need, and be there on time. If there is a prayer meeting before the service, make sure you are there in time for it.

I once had a fairly well known musician in our church and sent someone to the motel to get him. He had just ordered food, knowing what time I said he needed to arrive. Needless to say, the person had to wait on him. He finally showed up, a great deal past the time to pray, and still needed time for a sound check and to go over the service with me. He acted as if everything revolved around him, the “star.” I can’t tell you how much stress this put on me and my church. If you need to arrive at a certain time, be on time! No matter how good he was, and how well he was liked, I never asked him back after that.

Follow Time Restraints

Always ask how much time you have been allotted and stay within that structure. Whether it’s twenty minutes or an hour, stop when your time is

up. Our church once shared a service with another church. They were to take care of the worship, communion and offering and I was to preach the message. We were at their church and he suggested I should keep the sermon within thirty minutes because of other things that were taking place. I preached and condensed much of what I had to remain within his time restraints. The Lord really moved and we had a great altar time. After the service, the pastor said to me, "You didn't take much time." I told him he asked me to stay within that time period and so I did. His reply to me was, "Yes but nobody ever does!" That should never take place. You must always stay within the time frame given to you.

Also, it is never proper to ask for more time in front of the congregation while ministering. To do so is to upstage the pastor and usurp his authority. Often the pastor is put on the spot by the guest asking him, in front of the entire body, if he could have just a little more time. It is often blamed on the Holy Spirit, saying He is moving and not to continue would be to quench what He (the Holy Spirit) wants to accomplish. The pastor is the one who is ultimately in charge of that body and the service, and should decide if the service should be extended. Always be considerate of the pastor and the time structure the church has established.

Be Supportive

When I am taking part in another person's ministry, it is my job, above all else, to support him. Jesus said, "If you have not been faithful in that which is another man's who shall give you that which is your own" (Luke 16:12). The job of the guest ministry is not only to bring blessing to the body, but to back the pastor and support them in every way.

When you are ministering in someone's church, make it your passion to uplift and support that local church pastor with all that you have. It is the right thing to do and is very pleasing to the Lord. You don't know what the pastor may be going through and the pressures he is under. He typically has no one to support him and undergird his ministry. God has most probably sent you, the guest minister, to be that person.

You can support the pastor personally by encouraging their people to be faithful to the church, the services, by giving, with their involvement, etc. Be observant. Anything you see or hear that the church is doing, or the pastor is challenging them to do, get on the band wagon. Make a note of it and incorporate it into your ministry. I guarantee you will notice the difference in God's blessing and anointing during the service. Push his vision and challenge the people to get behind it in full support. Your ministry will be blessed and increased as a result of your efforts.

Mailing Lists and Contacts

A guest ministry should never try to build their ministry off another's work. It's just not ethical or proper. Jesus Himself didn't even do this. He sent a very important message through an angel to his servant John (Revelation 1:1) and had the apostle John convey it to the church through the local pastor. In Revelation 1:16 John describes his vision of Jesus saying, "And He had in His right hand seven stars," and in verse twenty declares the stars were the angels or messengers (pastors) of the seven churches. Jesus didn't even go directly to the people of the churches in this case but sent His word to them through the pastor or messenger of that church. In each letter that follows He says, "unto the angel (messenger or pastor) of the church in..." I believe this makes a strong case for itinerant and evangelistic ministries not to build their mailing list off of fellow minister's churches and their congregations.

Let's face it, most mailing lists are put together primarily for the purpose of raising money. When a ministry is invited into a local church to bless that body and the guest draws monies from the people (that should be going to support the local ministry) something is wrong. I believe this is a very unethical practice. One of Jesus' main purposes was to build the church and this does just the contrary. It takes away from the church and drains it of much needed support. You'd be surprised how many people cut back on their tithe and offerings to fund these ministries.

Any mailings done by guest ministries to the churches they've ministered in should be done through the pastor and church. They could either send a copy of the newsletter to the church for the pastor to let them read, or send a bundle for the pastor to give out to his people at his discretion. At the very most, if anything is sent to an individual, it should never be done without the express permission of the pastor – and he should never be asked in front of the person, but in private.

Receiving Offerings

The church has usually arranged for the guest to receive an honorarium or love offering prior to the guest's arrival. When people have been blessed by an incoming ministry, they will often get him off to the side and give him extra cash or a check. Often this is done for the attention that is given them. There has usually been an offering taken for him already. They should have given it then, which makes you wonder why they are doing so later. It could be they were struggling with what they should give during the offering. In any case, to receive such a gift without the pastor's knowledge is unethical and improper.

There are many problems that could arise. For example, it can bring the credibility the guest's ministry into question. Also, many times after giving such a gift, the giver will expect a tax receipt at the end of the year. They will often come to the church and request it be added to their end of the year giving record. This puts the church in a very awkward situation. If they add it to your end of the year contributions receipt, with it not having gone through their books, they are being unethical. If they refuse, tension may arise between the giver and the church.

If you are the giver, the ethical thing is to go to your pastor, usher, or bookkeeper and ask if they could add it to the ministry's check. If you're the guest minister, you should take the gift to the pastor and give it to him. This clears up any potential misunderstandings and gives the pastor added respect for you. Most generally, he will either tell you to keep it or will add it to your check. Either way, you have done the ethical thing.

Counseling Church Members

A guest ministry should never counsel people in another person's congregation without the express permission or request of the pastor. At best, you have a very limited knowledge of that person, their situation, and what they may be going through. Often people come for counsel to get an "OK" for something they want to do. Without you knowing their background, or what is really going on, you may place your blessing on something you shouldn't. If you had full knowledge of their situation, you might counsel them totally different.

Also, being in another person's church, you must present a unified front. People can often be divisive without even knowing it. If the pastor has counseled them one way and you come along and give them totally different advice, you are being divisive. It has the potential of bringing difficulty to the pastor, ministry and the local body. It also can bring confusion into the life of the person you were attempting to help.

It is always best to refer them to the pastor and ask whether he would like for you to talk with them. If so, he can request it. This keeps lines of communication open, presents a unified front, and prevents the devil from getting a foothold in the church or causing a schism between you and the pastor. If he decides you should counsel them, he can at least let you know where he stands and some generalities of their situation, so you can minister effectively while maintaining unity in the body and with the pastor.

Personal Visits

It is never a good idea to spend personal time with the people in another person's congregation. Everything should be kept on a professional level. People will frequently want to go out to dinner with you or invite you to their home. This is usually not a good idea unless the pastor is going with you. Often they want to get to know you on a personal level, but there are times when they want to get you off alone to voice their opinions on some issue

or to drag you into the middle of an issue in the church. They might ask you something hypothetical like, “What do you think about a situation like this?,” or “What would you do if you were in this position?” It may be a trap and will often come back to haunt you.

A good thing to do when given an invitation is to say, “I’ll ask the pastor to come along with us.” Another thing you can say is, “Let me check with your pastor. He may have already made plans.” Never go out with someone or to their home unless the pastor is either with you, has suggested it, or you have his permission and blessing.

This obviously doesn’t apply when you’re filling in for a pastor and he designates a couple to take you out for a meal, or if he arranges for you to stay in someone’s home. He knows those he can trust and you are doing so at his suggestion.

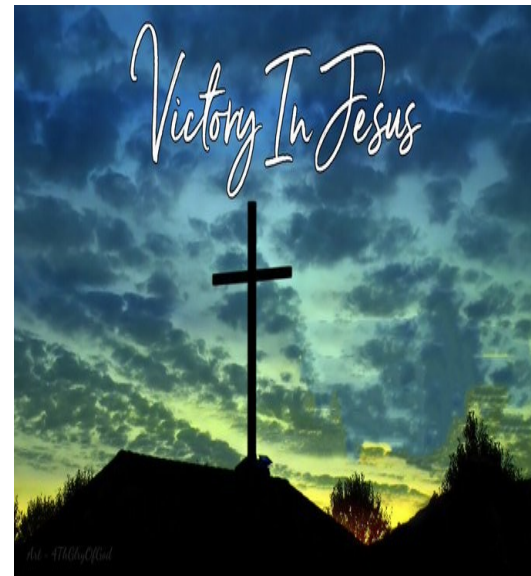
Always run everything you do by the pastor first. This shows proper respect and prevents the enemy from having an opportunity to accuse you. It’s always right to go through the messenger. This is what Jesus did (Revelation 1).

A Church's Responsibility to Visiting Ministries

This visiting ministry guide is directed toward the church's responsibility to preachers, evangelists, teachers and musicians who come into the church to minister. It can also be applied to missionaries who come to raise support. Though most of the points apply to them, there may be some differences since their main purpose is to bring awareness to their ministry while developing a financial base so they can continue to do what they feel God has called them to.

Hopefully, any type of visiting ministry is coming to bless the church, not just earn a living. Motive is always of the utmost importance. They must first and foremost make sure they are called by God and not merely following a vocation or career. This makes all the difference in the world in their endurance, steadfastness and attitude.

Many ministries coming into the church have contracts that must be signed and agreed upon before they will come to minister. If this is for clarification, so there are no misunderstandings, that's great. However, if it is set forth concerning those things they insist upon before they will come and minister, I have a problem with that. Where's the faith and trusting God? We need to get back to those basics of trusting God and going wherever He tells us, even if they aren't able to meet our demands.



The problem is we've become too commercialized, especially in America. We see this proliferated especially in the Christian music industry. It has also drifted over into every other aspect of ministry. An acceptable approach would be for them to say, "This is what we really need, if you are unable to meet our need, we will come and trust God to make up what is lacked." In this way, faith is being expressed while the need is being made known. This, I believe, is a good balanced way of approaching it.

I do believe there is good reason why many have gone to such extremes. Far too often churches have been negligent in their responsibilities to those willing to come in and minister. When they have been willing to trust God and come for whatever the church was able to do, the church has failed to treat them as they should.

After frequently being taken advantage of they've had to do something to protect themselves – the contracts, requirements, and demands. If both sides would trust God and be faithful to their responsibilities before God much of this could be avoided. There probably should be something in writing to assure there are no misunderstandings.

Below are a few guidelines I believe will help the church to properly take care of those God sends our way to bless, strengthen and encourage us.

Lodging, Meals and Transportation

Years ago it was expected guest ministries would be staying in someone's home in the church. This should be a rarity in our day. Times are different. Those on the road are typically much busier and on the road for longer periods of time. They need time alone where they can get refreshed in order to be adequately ready to minister. Pastors and their congregations are also much busier today. With their hectic lifestyles, it's asking a lot to have people staying in their home.

It should be expected that the host church provide a nice hotel room for their guest. You don't have to be elaborate, but it should be nice enough where they can be comfortable. If it could be one that has a restaurant where they can eat without going out, this would be great. If their family and children have come with them, it would be a good gesture to get a motel with a pool to allow for a little family time.

If possible, the church should provide some meals during their stay. The church should at least take the guest out after every service for a time of

fellowship and a good meal. If they can provide breakfast and/or lunch also it would greatly help. Remember, they are coming for you and will have to eat one way or another.

At times a guest may fly in and have meetings for multiple nights. Often it is arranged for a number of churches to have a ministry in combined services or a number of services in each church. In such cases, it is good, if possible, to provide transportation for them during their stay.

Often there may be a car dealer in the church who can lend the church a car for the guest. Make sure it is a decent and dependable automobile. If this isn't possible, renting a car is always an option. This gives them some flexibility as opposed to being stuck at the motel and dependent on the pastor and church to take them places.

Ministry Time Frame

Always make it extremely clear of any time restraints that may exist. If you don't want it going past a certain time; let them know it. We can't complain about someone going too long if we don't let them know what restrictions are there. Do make sure you give them ample time to develop their ministry. You invited them in to minister and you need to give them enough time to do a quality job. Be very careful not to fill the service up with non-essentials.

I was at a church to minister once when the pastor was gone and his mother was in charge. They had worship and she had people come up for a time of prayer. This went on and on for an extended period of time. By the time they gave the service over to me, there was absolutely no time for me to develop my message, nor have any ministry time afterward. I had to give a very brief and condensed presentation and give the service quickly back over to them.

I had something, I believe, that could have blessed the people and brought great support to the pastor and his ministry. As it was, I didn't have time to adequately do what God had called me to do. I truly believe they missed out on something that could have brought great blessing to the body. We will never know for sure.

Honorariums, Love Gifts and Offerings

If you have agreed with them on a certain amount then you should fulfill your commitment. As men of God, we must be men of our word (James 5:12). In fact, if the Lord has blessed the meetings and you are able to do more than agreed upon, as the Lord may lead, you should do so. If they have agreed to come on a love offering basis, you should make sure the offering is enough to meet their needs. Many think they have only agreed to an offering and so that is all they are responsible for. This is true in a legalistic sense but hopefully we are not legalistic but men and women of grace.

I believe that unless the offering is extremely good we should always plan on adding to it. We may not be obligated to do so but in doing so we will be demonstrating love and grace. The worker on the road is still worthy of his hire or support (Matthew 10:10). In fact, just like the pastor, he too is worthy of double honor if he has worked hard at being a blessing and ministering to God's people (1 Timothy 5:17-18).

As in the case of the pastor, this means twice as much. To be practical, you should never give your guest ministry any less than what you make as your weekly salary. In fact, if at all possible, it should be more. Remember, as a traveling ministry, there are weeks when they have no engagements and therefore there is no pay check.

As a side note, it's very unlikely for churches to have any guest in to minister for weeks surrounding major holidays such as Easter and Christmas. As a result, it's unlikely guest ministries will have any income during those seasons. Most churches have particular ministries in regularly.

For these, I believe, it is proper to send them an offering for such holidays as Christmas. As in the case of the pastor, it would also be nice to find out their birth date and send them a gift then as well.

When we give sacrificially to a men and women of God, God will go out of His way to meet our needs. The Philippians gave a love offering to Paul while he was in prison. His response was as follows: "I have received everything in full, and have an abundance, having received from Epaphroditus what you have sent, a fragrant aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God. And my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:18-19). As we look at the context, we see this promise follows their sacrificial gift of love. When we do the same, we are able to claim the same promise and only then.

When the church is young and/or small and unable to pad the offering special measures should be taken to allow for this. My pastor always encouraged us to put back our personal tithe in order to supplement the offering. I have always tried to do this to the best of my ability. I would usually have my check recorded and then place it in an envelope until the next guest ministry came in.

After receiving the offering, I would add what I had accumulated to the offering before writing the check out to them. This usually made for a fair and substantial honorarium. When we take good care of our guest like this word will spread. Soon more and more ministries will want to come minister for us.

Let me also add that effort must be put forth to challenge our people to give generously. Our people listen to us. If we will challenge them they will respond. This should not only be done at the time of the offering, but also on an ongoing basis. We must teach our people these principles over and over. The Bible makes it abundantly clear, "Let the one who is taught the Word share all good things with him who teaches" (Galatians 6:6). When

we do so, we can be assured that “God is not mocked, for whatever a man sows that he will also reap” (Galatians 6:7).

Also, make sure the guest ministry is given a check before he leaves. It is never right to say you will mail it to them. Often when this has happened, it is weeks before they get the check, if they get it at all. It may be because you thought someone else sent it when they did not or everyone got busy and forgot. Even if it is sent out the very next day, they should never be treated this way. It's just not that difficult to get it to them before they leave.

Let's treat our guests right and they will continue to come back. Along with them others will follow. God will make sure of it. As you are faithful, God will bring your way more and more anointed and talented ministries. After a while, you will begin to get a reputation for having in quality ministries, which in turn will help your church to grow.

Promotion and Advertising

It's the responsibility of the church and the pastor to do the best possible job they can in promoting the ministries they invite in. When we do this, it will expand our ministry, encourage the guest, and bless the church. The more often people in your community (city) are made aware of special events going on at your church or ministry, the more attention it will draw to you.

In two different churches I began we had those to visit who said they had noticed, over a period of time, things going on and figured something must be happening there so they thought they should visit and check us out. Often their visit was over a year after seeing the advertisement.

You should use all that you are capable of to get the word out concerning your event. Most all newspapers, Christian radio and TV stations offer free news releases or community service announcements. Paid advertisements

are great if you can afford it. We are not being faithful stewards if we don't take advantage of the opportunities allotted us.

You should also use fliers, posters, bulletins and every other means possible to promote the ministry you're having in the church. Assign people to be in charge of placing fliers, etc. in all of the establishments in their region. Make sure you or those you send out ask the owners or managers if they will please keep the fliers up until the date of the event. Express your sincere gratitude to them for their help.

A mailing and phone campaign is also good. I always kept the addresses, phone numbers and e-mails of everyone that I've come in contact with or who has visited the church. Approaching a special event I do a mailing to all on our mailing list approximately two weeks prior to our meeting.

Days just prior to our meeting, I make sure everyone on our list is called, reminded, invited, and encouraged to be in attendance and bring someone with them. In the beginning days you often have to do this yourself but hopefully as you grow you can appoint others to do this for you.

Don't forget about online advertising. Feature the event on your website and promote it on social media sites, etc. We are obligated to use everything at our disposal to promote our event. We should expect it of ourselves, our congregation, and God expect it of us as well.

Protecting Guest Ministers

There will always be people who try to get the guest minister involved in a private conversation. If you've done a good job of promoting them, they will likely be viewed as somewhat of a star in the eyes of the people. There will inevitably be some groupies. They will attempt to get them to talk privately, get counsel, prayer, or ask them what they think about certain things. This is usually pretty innocent and is okay to a point.

The problem comes when there are those who dominate their time. It is even worse when multiple people do the same. Suddenly they are swamped. No matter how willing the guest is this can be very draining. Remember, they have just spent considerable time ministering and have already given out most of what they have emotionally, mentally, and spiritually. If you are not able to take them off right after the service, at least look out for them and be ready to rescue them if need be. It is also good to train and teach your people accordingly.

Privacy and Rest

Don't keep them going all the time. Often we feel as if we need to entertain our guests. When, in actuality, they would be glad to just rest and be alone. Ask them what they would prefer and encourage them to be honest. This will make it much easier on both of you. Especially if they are on the road going to place after place, they need time alone with God and to just be alone and rest.

Allow them this simple luxury. Be sure others aren't allowed to interrupt them either. To be safe, it shouldn't even be made public knowledge where they are staying. Give them a place of sanctuary. As a minister yourself, you know how important this is. Their ministry to you and your people will be all the better for it. They will also be eternally grateful.

Conclusion

Let's learn "How one ought to conduct themselves in the household of God" (1 Timothy 3:15). If we will be faithful to all those in the household of faith, we will be sure to have the blessing and favor of God.

Proverbs 28:20a - "A faithful man will abound with blessings"

Sadly, this is hard to find this our day, both in the pew and the ministry. The

Psalms 12:1 - "Help, Lord, for the godly man ceases to be, for the faithful disappear from among the sons of men."

What an indictment against our day. Let's not let this be said of us or our ministry. What's right is right. Let's strive to do the right thing.

Hebrews 3:5 - "And Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after."

Let's make way for a testimony of faithfulness to follow us and our ministry. When we do, we have the promise of His favor and blessing.

May the Lord richly bless you as you faithfully serve Him and His house!