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## Philosophy of Ministry

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## A Biblical Philosophy of Baptist Ministry

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### Introduction

#### A. What is a "Philosophy of Ministry" anyway?

1. Philo: fileo (Phileo):to love; love of
2. sophy: sofia (sophia): wisdom
3. Ministry: diakonia (diakonia) :service (especially of service to the Lord).  
Philosophy of Ministry is: "Love of Wisdom in Serving the Lord".
4. A counterfeit wisdom can come from the world, I Corinthians 2:6. True wisdom comes from the Lord, Psalms 51:6.
5. Time is short, so Godly wisdom is essential, Psalm 90:12.
6. It is foolish to ignore Godly wisdom, Proverbs 1:7.
7. True success can only be found in Godly wisdom, Proverbs 3:13.
8. We are commanded by God to seek wisdom, Proverbs 4:5.
9. Wisdom is the most important factor in our ministry, Proverbs 4:7.
10. Failure to seek and find Godly wisdom may result in chastisement, Proverbs 10:13.
11. Only our pride keeps us from true wisdom, Proverbs 13:10.
12. It is easy to find wisdom if you know where to look, Proverbs 14:6.
13. Godly wisdom is our guardian against folly, Proverbs 15:21.
14. Wisdom is edifying to the building up of the house of God, Proverbs 24:3.

#### B. Why is our Philosophy of Ministry so important?

The following chart shows that our Plan (Strategy of Ministry; how we do things) rests on our Position (Doctrine; what we believe), which rests on our Philosophy (the way we think), which in turn is based on our principles (what we have learned), which comes from the word of God. If we have Biblical Principles, on which we can build a Biblical Philosophy, on which will rest our Biblical Position, we will have a Biblical Plan. If we build on the Rudiments of the world, we will have worldly Principles, a worldly Philosophy, a worldly Position, and a worldly Plan. By writing out our Philosophy of Ministry we are forced to look down the chart and examine our Principles to see if they rest on the revealed word of God, which in turn causes us to move up the chart and modify our

Position and Plan to insure that all that we do truly honors and glorifies the Lord.

**Plan** - Strategy of ministry; how we do things

**Position** - Doctrine; what we believe

**Philosophy** - The way we think

**Principles**- What we have learned

**The Word of God** - Our Foundation

C. How does a "Philosophy of Ministry" help me to better serve the Lord?

1. A Philosophy of Ministry helps me to avoid distractions by giving me a written guide to keep me "on the right track".
  - a. Alligator wrestler. When you are up to your waist in alligators, it is sometimes hard to remember your original intent was to drain the swamp!
  - b. Soul Winning. One of the golden keys of a good soul winning plan, is **STAY ON THE RIGHT TRACK!**
2. A Philosophy of Ministry helps others to better understand my ministry.
  - 1) In the interviewing, selecting and training of new staff members.
  - 2) In the selection and training of new deacons.
  - 3) In the selection and training of new Sunday School teachers.
  - 4) In the orientation of new church members to your church and ministry.
3. A Philosophy of Ministry provides a written set of goals to aim for to achieve victory.
  - a. Helps to prevent "cultural creep" from infecting your ministry.
  - b. Provides a Biblical anchor to prevent destructive drift from destroying your ministry.

D. Do I have to have a "Philosophy of Ministry" in order to be a pastor or other leader?

1. Everyone that can think has a philosophy of ministry, because our philosophy of ministry is simply "how we think" on the subject.
2. The problem is that many pastors and other leaders have a philosophy of ministry, but don't really know what it is, and couldn't explain it to you if their ministry depended on it (and it probably does).

- a. Illustration: "My" soul winning plan. A pastor told another pastor about his soul winning program. The second pastor told the first, "I don't like your soul winning plan." "That's okay" said the first pastor, "Tell me about yours." "I don't have one.," replied the second pastor. "I like mine better than yours!" said the first pastor.
- b. God has a written plan for His ministry; it is called the Bible!

## I. We Must Understand Our Reason for Existing.

- A. To **communicate** God's message "And he said unto them, Go ye into the world, and preach the gospel to every creature". (Mark 16:15) "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth." (Acts 1:8)"To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: Whom we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in wisdom that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus:" (Colossians 1:28) "Preach the world; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine." (2 Timothy 4:2)

Biblical Communication is two fold, VERBALIZATION, (Proclamation evangelism): We talk the talk, and VISUALIZATION, we communicate through our lives (Affirmation evangelism): We walk the walk.

1. Communication must be **reliable**. "But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine:" (Titus 2:1)
2. Communication must be **relevant**. "For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more.<sup>20</sup> And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; <sup>21</sup> To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law. <sup>22</sup> To the weak became I weak, that I might gain the weak; I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.<sup>23</sup> And this I do for the gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you." (I Corinthians 9:19-23).
3. Communication must be **relational**. "Howbeit Jesus suffered not, but saith unto him, Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord Hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee." (Mark 5:19)

4. Communication must be **respectful**. "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is you with meekness and fear:" (I Peter 3:15)
- B. To **celebrate** God's presence. "O come, let us sing unto the Lord: let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation.<sup>2</sup> Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms. <sup>3</sup> For the LORD is a great God, and a great King above all gods." (Psalms 95:1-3) "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou has created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." (Revelation 4:11)
1. Two conditions of worship, "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. <sup>24</sup> God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." (John 4:23-24)
    - a. Spiritual worship.
    - b. Truthful worship.
  2. Four characteristics of worship.
    - a. **Celebration**. "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD." (Psalms 122:1)
    - b. **Relaxation**. "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. <sup>30</sup> For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." (Matthew 11:29-30)
    - c. **Inspiration**. "But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint." (Isaiah 40:31)
    - d. **Preparation**. "And the things that thou has heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." (2 Timothy 2:2)
- C. To **demonstrate** God's love. "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God: and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. <sup>8</sup> He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love." (I John 4:7-8)
1. God's love is demonstrated through **faithfulness**. "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one

another; and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." (Hebrews 10:25)

2. God's love is demonstrated through **fellowship**. "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." (I John 1:7)

D. To **educate** God's people. "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; 12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: 13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: 14 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive; 15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things which is the head, even Christ: 16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love." (Ephesians 4:11-16)

1. Christians grow by knowing. "For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little." (Isaiah 28:10)
  - a. This is the "**What**" of the Christian life.
  - b. The content of Scripture.
2. Christians grow by understanding. "The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of; his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints," (Ephesians 1:18)
  - a. This is the "**Why**" of the Christian life.
  - b. The convictions based on correct principles.
3. Christians grow by applying. "That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory." (I Thessalonians 2:12)
  - a. This is the "**How**" of the Christian life.
  - b. The conduct developed because of the biblical content learned and the convictions established.

#### 4. Our philosophy of Christian education.

- a. Christian education is a command from God "And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: 7 And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.8 And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. 9 And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates." (Deuteronomy 6:6-9) "Thus saith the LORD, Learn not the way of the heathen, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven; for the heathen are dismayed at them " (Jeremiah 10:2)"Cease, my son, to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge." (Proverbs 19:27) "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ." (Colossians 2:8) "As saith the proverb of the ancients, Wickedness proceedeth from the wicked: but mine hand shall not be upon thee." (I Samuel 24:13) "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." (Proverbs 22:6)"Whom shall he teach knowledge? And whom shall he make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts." (Isaiah 28:9) "If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; 4 He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, 5 Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself." (I Timothy 6:3-5)
- b. It is impossible to separate the secular from the sacred. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." (Romans 12:1) "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest." (Ecclesiastes 9:10) "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do all to the glory of God." (I Corinthians 10:31)
- c. Our mandate for our Church school comes from God not from government.
  - 1) We believe that Government is ordained by God, and our duty is to obey government. "By me kings reign, and princes decree justice. 16 By me princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth." (Proverbs

8:15-16) "Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. 6 For this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. 7 Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to who fear; honour to whom honour." (Romans 13:5-7)

- 2) However, if government ever attempts to require us to do that which causes us to break conscience with God, we are commanded to obey Him. "But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. 20 For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." (Acts 4:19-20)

d. Our goal is to glorify God by:

- 1) Leading every student to Christ. "Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." (John 3:3)
- 2) Leading every student to a knowledge of God's Word. "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word." (Psalms 119:9) "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." (2 Timothy 2:15)
- 3) Teaching every student how to lead another person to Jesus Christ. "The fruit of the righteous is a tree of; and he that winneth souls is wise." (Proverbs 11:30)
- 4) Teaching every student to fear God. "And unto man he said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding." (Job 28:28) "The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether." (Psalms 19:9) "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do his commandments: his praise endureth for ever." (Psalms 111:10) "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction." (Proverbs 1:7) "The fear of the LORD is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate." (Proverbs 8:13) "The fear of the LORD prolongeth days: but the years of the wicked shall be shortened." (Proverbs 10:27) "In the fear of the LORD is strong confidence: and his children shall have a place of refuge. The fear of

the is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death." (Proverbs 14:26-27) "The fear of the LORD is the instruction of wisdom; and before honour is humility." (Proverbs 15:33) "By mercy and truth iniquity is purged: and by the fear of the LORD men depart from evil." (Proverbs 16:6) "The fear of the LORD tendeth to life: and he that hath it shall abide satisfied; he shall not be visited with evil." (Proverbs 19:23) "By humility and the fear of the LORD are riches, and honour, and life." (Proverbs 22:4) "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man." (Ecclesiastes 12:13)

- 5) Teaching every student the way of holiness. According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: (Ephesians 1:4) "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." (1 John 2:15)
- 6) Teaching every student the stewardship of life. "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, loved me, and gave himself for me." (Galatians 2:20)  
"Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest." (Ecclesiastes 9:10) "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? 20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)
- 7) Teaching every student about dedication to excellence "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest." (Ecclesiastes 9:10) "And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as unto the Lord, and not unto men; that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ." (Colossians 3:23-24)
- 8) Teaching every student how to worship God. "Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name; worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness." (Psalms 29:2) "O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the LORD our maker." (Psalms 95:6) "Exalt the

LORD our God, and worship at his holy hill; for the LORD our God is holy." (Psalms 99:9) "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." (John 4:24)

- e. Our primary textbook for every subject is the Bible, the Word of God. "And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: 7 And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up, 8 And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. 9 And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates." (Deuteronomy 6:6-9)
- f. Our mission is to train soldiers of the cross so that they can go out and fulfill the Great Commission. Every member of our staff and faculty is a missionary, performing this mission. "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." (Proverbs 22:6) "Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. 2 And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also. 3 Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." (2 Timothy 2:1-3)

## II. We Must Have a Balanced Ministry With Clearly Defined Functions.

A function is a principal action which is mandated in Scripture, and which is to be practiced by the local church.

### A. Fellowship

1. **Definition:** Christian fellowship is a sharing of the common life together. It is a means of spiritual partnership with other believers. It is a practical communion with brothers and sisters in Christ.
2. **Foundation:** Psalms 55:14; 119:63; Ecclesiastes 4:9,10; Matthew 18:20; Luke 24:15; John 13:34; Acts 2:42; I Corinthians 1:9

### B. Worship

1. **Definition:** Worship is simply honor and adoration directed to God.
2. **Foundation:** Psalm 29:2; 50:23; 95:1-11; Mark 12:28-30; John 4:23; Philippians 2:10; 3:3; Revelation 4:11

### C. Service

1. **Definition:** Christian service is the use of our spiritual gifts, talents, abilities, and time for the Lord Jesus Christ. It is spiritual labor, in both a public and private way, which makes possible the ongoing ministries of the local church.
2. **Foundation:** Exodus 23:25; Deuteronomy 10:12; Matthew 5:16; John 12:26; Acts 20:18-19; Galatians 6:10; Ephesians 2:10; 6:7; I Timothy 6:18; Titus 2:7; Hebrews 12:28; James 2:17-18; I Peter 2:12

### D. Missions

1. **Definition:** Effective local church missions are a commitment to take seriously Christ's command to make disciples throughout the world. A three-fold perspective must be considered: Evangelization; Edification; Education, Missions, in a true biblical sense, must be practiced at home and abroad. Primarily, mission would include: church planting, soul winning, and discipling. The church must be committed to support missionaries (by praying and giving) and to develop missionaries (from its own congregation). A strong home base is the key to both of these objectives.
2. **Foundation:** Psalm 2:8; 96:3; Proverbs 3:27; Matthew 9:35; 24:14; 28:19; John 4:35; Acts 1:8; 13:2-3; James 1:27

### E. Evangelization

1. **Definition:** Evangelization is giving the gospel message to an unredeemed world. It is a personal responsibility every born-again believer has toward those who are without Christ in his or her "world". Five key areas of contact are to be carefully and prayerfully pursued by every Christian: Location (where we live), Vocation (Where we work), Relation (with whom we live), Recreation (where we play), Education (with whom we learn). Successful evangelization is both proclamation (an action through which the non-Christian receives a clear statement of the essential message of the gospel) and (a process of modeling and demonstrating Christian message through a Godly life)
2. **Foundation:** Psalms 126:5,6; Luke 14:23; John 4:35; 15:16; Acts 1:8; I Corinthians 9:22.

### F. Prayer

1. **Definition:** Prayer, in its simplest form, is talking with God. Prayer is an exercise of praise, whereby we thank God for His bountiful provisions. Prayer is also a means of asking for things from God (needs and desires), and giving other things to God (burdens and concerns).
2. **Foundation:** II Chronicles 7:14; Psalm 145:18; Jeremiah 33:3; Matthew 6:5-13, 7:7-8; Luke 18:1; Acts 3:1; 4:31; Colossians 1:9-11; I Thessalonians 5:17; Hebrews 4:16; James 5:13-18.

#### G. Edification:

1. **Definition:** Edification is a process of Christian growth and maturity. It is a "building up" of the individual believer as well as the local church.
2. **Foundation:** Matthew 28:19-20; Roman 14:19; Ephesians 4:11-16,29; Colossians 1:28-29; 3:16; I Thessalonians 5:11; II Timothy 2:2, 3:16-17; Hebrews 5:11-14.

### III. We Must Have a Pastor who is Godly in Character, and Biblical in Function.

#### A. The Pastor must meet and uphold all the Biblical qualifications of the office - I Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:6-9.

1. Be of Good Behavior. I Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:8.
2. Be in Control at Home. I Tim. 3:2, 4:5; Titus 1:6.
3. Be Hospitable. I Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:8; I Peter 4:9.
4. Be a Teacher. I Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:9.
5. Be Committed to Holiness. II Corinthians 7:1.
6. Be Spiritually Minded, not Materially Minded. I John 2:15; I Tim. 3:3; Titus 1:7; I Peter 5:2 (read Matt. 6:19-34).
7. Be a Man of Meekness. I Tim. 3:3-4; Titus 1:7-13.
8. Be a Man of Maturity. I Tim. 3:6; I Peter 5:5.
9. Be a Respected Citizen. I Tim. 3:7.

#### B. The Pastor must be a man of prayer - Acts 6:4.

- C. The Pastor must be a man of the Word - Acts 6:4.
- D. The Pastor's ministry is to be one of leading, not driving the flock - I Peter 5:1-3.
- E. The Pastor must be willing to spend time with his people - Proverbs 27:17; Mark 3:14.
- F. The Pastor is to be constantly equipping the members for the work of the ministry. Members must be given training and encouragement to minister - Ephesians 4:11-12.
- G. The Pastor must be Called of God to the work of the Ministry. I Tim. 1:12.
  1. A Divine Summons. Gal. 1:15-16.
  2. A Selective Summons. Mark 3:13.
  3. A Personal Summons. Matt. 4:18-22.
  4. A Deliberate Response, Isaiah 6:8.
  5. A Decisive Commitment. Matt. 4:19,21, 9:9.
- H. The pastor must be ethical.

Concerning what he called the outer life of the pastor, Hezekiah Harvey wrote in 1879: "The Scriptures require in the pastor a model life. He is to be "an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity" (I Timothy 4:12). As the leader of the flock his outward life will be expected to evince a higher moral tone and furnish more marked exemplification of Christian principles than that of the private Christian, because his office constitutes him an example, and the prominence of his position renders defects in him especially conspicuous and hurtful. (I Timothy 3:2:"a bishop, then must be blameless....")"

For some time I have been increasingly troubled with the behavior of pastors. An absence of ethical standards is epidemic. Pastor's gossip and talk in an uninhibited fashion. They often do not present a professional image in their business affairs. This presentation is an effort to outline some of the ethical duties of a pastor.

If the need for Pastoral Ethics is apparent toward the family of faith, it is eminently more vital toward those who are not saved.

Colossians 4:5,6 "Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time. Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man."

Webster defines ethics as follows:

1. The doctrines of morality or social manners; the science of moral philosophy, which teaches men their duty and the reasons of it.
  2. A system of moral principles; a system of rules for regulating the actions and manners of men in society.
1. A pastor and his relationship to other pastors;
    - a. He has a duty to be loyal. I Timothy 5:19 "Against an elder receive not an accusation where there is an absence of proof. It is not uncommon for a pastor to tell of the fall of another to those who do not need the information.
    - b. He has a duty to be kind. Romans 12:10 "Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in preferring one another;"
    - c. He has a duty to be prayerful. Colossians 1:9 "For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;"
    - d. He has a duty to be responsive. Colossians 4:6 "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man."
      - 1) Return phone calls in a timely fashion.
      - 2) Respond to mail in a timely fashion.
  2. A pastor and his relationship to members of other churches.
    - a. He has duty of be protective of the other churches.
      - 1) What is your response to people who visit your church from another fundamental Baptist church in your area? It is my impression that many pastors behave almost "lustfully" toward other church members who visit. They zealously court their further attendance and even solicit their transfer of membership to their church. Many seem to feel

that they can do a better job of ministering to the family than their own pastor has done (this is pure PRIDE!). Perhaps they feel that the visiting family is going to join somewhere, "so it might as well be here." Perhaps it is the tithe they covet!!!!!!

"We do not regard it to be soul-winning to steal members out of churches already established, and train them to utter our peculiar Shibboleth; we aim rather at bringing souls to Christ than at making converts to our synagogue. There are sheep-stealers abroad, concerning whom I will say nothing except that they are not "brethren", or at least, they do not act in a brotherly fashion. To their own Master they must stand or fall. We count it utter meanness to build up our own house with the ruins of our neighbors' mansions; we infinitely prefer to quarry for ourselves." (Spurgeon)

- 2) Some suggested guidelines for response to visiting families from other churches of like faith:
  - a) Call the pastor on Monday morning after their visit on Sunday. This provides him with a chance to "mend the fence." Very likely he will not even know they are unhappy.
  - b) Pledge to the pastor that you will not visit the family.
  - c) Refuse (that is the word I mean!) to receive them into your membership until they have:
    - 1) Met with their pastor,
    - 2) Made a considered attempt at reconciliation, and
    - 3) You have a sincere blessing from their pastor!
  - d) This is the only Biblical way to receive these people, based on I Corinthians 12:18: "But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him."
- b. He has duty to be professional.
  - 1) Having fellowship with your friends when they preach for neighboring churches.
  - 2) Having fellowship with members when acting in the capacity of a guest.

3. A pastor and his relationship to members of his own flock.
  - a. He has a duty to be their shepherd.

When Dr. George W. Truett was invited to be president of Baylor University, he declined with one of the most beautiful sentences I ever heard. He said, 'No, I cannot come, for I have sought and found the shepherd heart.'

W.A. Criswell defines the ministry of shepherd in this outline fashion:

1. The Pastor possesses the ministry of comfort.
2. The Pastor possesses the ministry of encouragement.
3. The Pastor possesses the ministry of joy.
4. The Pastor possesses the ministry of feeding and nurturing.
5. The pastor possesses the ministry of loving the commendation.

- b. He has a duty to be circumspect and discrete." A ministers associations or special intimacies should not be with bad or loose or irreligious men; the taint will necessarily tarnish and injure his own reputation, even if it does not corrupt his character. He is to be "a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate" (Titus 1:8)

"The pastor's relations with the other sex should not only always be pure in fact, but should also be such as to avoid even the possibility of misconstruction. No point needs to be more carefully guarded, for even the suspicion or thought of wrong in this, however ill-grounded, is commonly fatal to usefulness, and often follows him through the remainder of life." (Harvey)

- c. He has a duty to be their confidant. Another very important area is confidentiality. No church member wants to hear his story in a sermon illustration, no matter how well concealed. No one will trust you if they cannot be certain that what you receive in confidence will remain confidential.

4. A Pastor and his relationship to other professionals in his community.

a. He has a duty to perform the role of a Professional.

1). Punctuality.

2). Seriousness.

3). Competence.

4). A Business like manner.

"In conversation he should be genial, courteous, affable, avoiding that tone and manner of condescension which carries in it an implied sense of superiority, and exhibiting that breadth of intelligence and culture which will secure respect for his views in general society. Slang phrases, vulgar anecdotes, boisterous discussions, idle gossip, and scandal...ill become a pastor, and will in the end seriously militate against his usefulness...Attractive social qualities, such as enable the pastor to exercise a leading and governing power in society, are to be the most earnestly sought; their effect on pastoral usefulness can hardly be overstated." (Harvey)

5. A Pastor and his relationship to the unsaved in his community.

a. He has a duty to be honest. I Thessalonians 4:12, "That ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing."

b. He has a duty to be compassionate. Matthew 9:36 "But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were abroad, as sheep having no shepherd."

Question: Can a pastor who has fallen into the sin of adultery be restored?

To Fellowship, yes. I John 1:9

To Leadership, no. I Tim. 3:2,7 -cf-Prov. 6:32-33

In summary, the pastor's work is as follows: Pray, Prepare, Preach, Protect, Preserve, and Perfect the Flock. The pastor's final task will be to present the church, the Bride of Christ, faultless, a chaste virgin, to the Bridegroom, the Lord Jesus Christ, at the Marriage Feast of the Lamb.

#### IV. The Church Membership Must Be Involved in Ministry.

- A. Every Christian is to minister (serve) - Ephesians 4:11-12.
- B. Spiritual gifts are to be used in ministry - I Corinthians 12:11; I Peter 4:10.
  - 1. Spiritual gifts help individual Christians make their life count for God - I Corinthians 12:14-22.
  - 2. Spiritual gifts help the church as a whole - Ephesians 4:13-16.
  - 3. Spiritual gifts glorify God - I Peter 4:11.
- C. Lay leadership should be developed to further enhance local church ministry.
  - 1. Through prayer.
  - 2. Through pulpit teaching and preaching.
  - 3. Through special training sessions:
    - a. Clinics for Sunday school workers.
    - b. Training programs for deacon candidates.
    - c. Seminars on discipleship, stewardship, missions, and evangelism.

#### V. The Church Must Follow God's Word Regarding Biblical Church Discipline.

Members of the church who err in doctrine or conduct shall be subject to discipline and/or dismissal according to Matthew 18:15-18. Before such dismissal, however, it shall be the duty of any member of the church who has knowledge of the erring member's heresy or misconduct to warn with love and to correct such erring member. If the erring member does not heed this warning, the warning member shall again go to the erring member, accompanied by one or two witnesses, to once again warn with love and correct the erring member. If the erring member still refuses to heed this warning, it shall be brought to the attention of the pastor and deacons. If the erring member refuses to heed the warning /correction of the pastor as he counsels on behalf of the church, he or she will be dismissed from the church. Excluded members may be restored to membership on confession of their error and by giving evidence of repentance.

- A. The Word of God presents four general reasons for refusing fellowship in a church, which is the final step in church discipline:
1. Unrepentant immorality (all moral judgments are to be based on God's Word, not public opinion) - I Corinthians 5.
  2. Persistent doctrinal heresy - I Timothy 1:19-20; Titus 3:10.
  3. Refusing to reconcile with another brother or sister in Christ - Matthew 18:17.
  4. Maintaining a divisive spirit which results in rebellion against God's Word and/or God-ordained authority, and which promotes trouble-making within the church - I Corinthians 1:10; Romans 16:17; II Thessalonians 3:6-7, 11.
- B. It should further be understood and agreed upon by every member that church discipline is Biblically mandated on the basis of:
1. Obedience to Scripture, which clearly requires church discipline.
  2. Commitment to maintain purity in the church, thus removing the defilement of sin - I Corinthians 5:6-8; Galatians 5:9; Ephesians 5:27.
  3. Concern to reclaim sinful offenders - Matthew 18:15; Galatians 6:1.
  4. Desire to deter other members from sin - I Timothy 5:20.
- C. It should also be noted that while a church is biblically required to take a firm stand in opposition to sin, the church should discipline members in a spirit of meekness (Matthew 7:5; I Corinthians 10:12; Galatians 6:1), and should continue to manifest love toward those members guilty of sin (II Thessalonians 3:15). The church should eagerly forgive those who repent and confess their sin (Luke 17:3-4; Ephesians 4:32)

## VI. The Church Must Ordain Gifted and Dedicated Personnel To Serve As Staff.

- A. The basic qualifications of staff.
1. All staff must be saved, baptized, and a member of this local church. I Cor. 4:2.
  2. All staff must have a deep love for God, strong desire to serve God and show obvious loyalty to the church and its leadership. Matt. 22:37; I Peter 5:5

3. All staff must live a separated life as God's Word commands. Ephesians 5:11

B. The performance and ministry of staff.

1. All staff will function according to the job description written by the pastor. Hebrews 13:17
2. All staff will answer to the pastor, or to a supervisor under the pastor's authority

C. The reasons why staff members are necessary. Eph. 4:11-12

1. To assist the pastor in ministry needs and functions.
2. To direct select programs and ministries of the church.
3. To help the pastor develop the spiritual gifts and talents within the congregation, for the purpose of effective ministry.
4. To handle the many administrative and executive duties in which churches are involved.
5. To enable the church as a whole to properly carry out its Philosophy of Ministry.

VII. The Church Must Develop and Cultivate a Solid "Family" Foundation.

Deut. 11:1,2.

A. The church should work at establishing various ministries that would focus on select needs of the family unit.

1. A competent nursery.
2. An active children's program.
  - a. Sunday School activities.
  - b. Master Club (or similar) ministry.
3. A balanced youth (teen) program. Note these underlying principles of operation.

- a. Preventative rather than remedial! Is. 28:10
  - b. Soft pillows don't make strong men! 2 Tim. 3:3
  - c. Christ has first claim! Phil. 1:21
  - d. You get what you honor! Phil 4:8
4. An effective and inviting singles ministry.
  5. A total adult ministry.
    - a. Sunday School class outings.
    - b. Men's fellowship meetings (to train men in God's Word).
    - c. Ladies fellowship meetings (to train ladies in God's Word).
    - d. Couples Retreats.
    - e. Bible study opportunities.
- B. The church should uplift Biblical principles that relate to the family unit.
- C. The church should study Biblical passages and topics that deal with the family unit.
1. Morality. Ex. 20:1-17
  2. Roles and functions of marriage partners. I Cor. 11:3; Col. 3:20
  3. Divorce and/or remarriage. Rom. 7:1-3; I Cor. 7:10-15; Matt. 19:9

#### VIII. The Church Must Conduct Services Which Are Balanced In Scope and Nature.

- A. Sunday Morning. Mark 16:15
1. Key word: EVANGELIZATION.
  2. Basic aim: OUTREACH.
  3. Musical emphasis:

- a. Special music that relates well to the unsaved and un-churched.
  - b. Special music that shares a simple Gospel testimony or a message of Christ's relevance.
  - c. Limited congregational singing of more familiar, fast-tempoed songs.
4. Ministry of the Word directed toward the unsaved and un-churched.
- B. Sunday Evening. Phil. 4:4
- 1. Key word: CELEBRATION.
  - 2. Basic aim: UPREACH.
  - 3. Musical emphasis:
    - a. Special music that ministers to the needs and hearts of believers.
    - b. Special music that is a source of praise and encouragement.
    - c. Congregational singing of choruses and joyful hymns and Gospel songs.
  - 4. Ministry of the Word directed toward Christians in general.
- C. Mid-Week. I Thess. 5:11
- 1. Key Word: EDIFICATION.
  - 2. Basic aim: INREACH.
  - 3. Musical emphasis:
    - a. Special music and congregational singing limited.
    - b. Special music and congregational singing should emphasize great truths found in God's Word which strengthen and build the church.
  - 4. Ministry of the Word directed toward instruction and edification of Christians.

## IX. The Church Must Operate and Minister with a Biblical Emphasis on Music.

- A. Seven reasons for including music as a major part of church services.
1. Music is a means of worship and praise - Psalm 150; Rev. 5:8-12.
  2. Music is an effective channel of Biblical instruction - Colossians 3:16.
  3. Music is an evidence of Spirit-filled lives - Ephesians 5:18-19.
  4. Music is a vehicle of Christian service - Psalms 100:1-2.
  5. Music is an appropriate way to testify and express faith in Christ - Acts 16:25-30; I Peter 2:9.
  6. Music is an indication of joyfulness - James 5:13.
  7. Music is a source of comfort and encouragement - I Samuel 16:23.
- B. Specific purposes of church service music.
1. It relaxes visitors who may be tense and/or nervous.
  2. It prepares the hearts of God's people for the ministry of the Word.
  3. It prepares the heart of God's preacher for the preaching and/or teaching of the Word.
  4. It encourages the congregation to make necessary spiritual decisions.
- C. Guidelines for music selection and use (I Corinthians 14:7).
1. Words - Galatians 5:16-26; Philippians 4:8.
    - a. What does the song say? What is the message?
    - b. Are the words a force for God (righteousness) or Self (sin)? Proverbs 14:34.
  2. Life-style and testimony of writers and/or performers. Proverbs 13:20; Matthew 12:34; Romans 12:1-2; I Thessalonians 5:22.
    - a. Is the life-style and testimony of the writers and/or performer in agreement with God's Word?
    - b. What do the writers and/or performers think of Jesus Christ? Matthew 22:42; II John 7-11.

3. Effect on listeners - John 14:27; I Corinthians 6:19-20, 15:33.
  - a. What does this song motivate one to do or to be?
  - b. Can this selection be used as a vehicle of Christian growth and blessing? II Peter 3:18.
4. Appropriateness - Ecclesiastes 3:1.
  - a. Is this musical selection appropriate for this service or occasion?
  - b. Does this number agree with the church's "Philosophy of Ministry" in the area of church services? I Corinthians 14:40.

D. Basic Music Guidelines. The following guidelines will provide a starting point form which to build a separated music ministry in our church.

1. As a general rule, avoid using taped accompaniments. Their weaknesses are as follows:
  - a. Eliminates the use of people.
  - b. Most tapes sound very sensual (appeal to the flesh).
  - c. Almost all tapes are recorded by worldly or compromising musicians.
  - d. Most tapes emphasize rhythm more than melody.
  - e. The use of tapes leaves no room for musical interpretation.
2. Plan special music about a month in advance so musicians have time to practice. This will improve the quality immensely. Under normal circumstances it is too late to give or get notice on the Saturday preceding the Sunday services.
3. Criteria for Evaluating Music:
  - a. **WORDS:** The words of the song must be doctrinally correct. Most of the contemporary gospel songs have very shallow messages. There is an over-emphasis on "love" and "nature". Be sure to sing a balance of gospel songs and hymns. Minimize the use of experiential songs and maximize the use of songs that focus on the Lord.

- b. **MELODY:** The melody must be strong and clear. Contemporary music makes use of slurring and sliding between pitches, and ornamental embellishments that call attention to the performer rather than the message. A strong melody will build to one major climax and possibly several minor climaxes. Variety is the key. Sliding between pitches destroys a clear-cut melody, and produces a "country music" or "pop music" sound.
  - c. **HARMONY:** Harmony should show some creative ability on the part of the composer/arranger. Avoid music that does not resolve; that overuses chord clusters (clusters destroy tonality which is an absolute); that utilizes "blues" notes as found in "rhythm and blues" music. These points are difficult for non-musicians to evaluate objectively.
  - d. **RHYTHM:** Rhythm is a vital part of music but should not dominate. There should be a natural accent in the rhythm. ONE-two-THREE-four. Accents should fall on the strong beats. Rock music accents the weak beats and weak parts of a beat (one-TWO-three-FOUR). Do not use music that incorporates too much syncopation. Syncopation is an unnatural shift of accent to weak beats or weak parts of beats. Syncopation creates tension. An overuse of syncopation will call attention to the performer and the music and distract from the message. A steady, driving beat causes tension. Rhythm should not dominate the melody.
  - e. **FORM:** Form must exist to present music that is logical and understandable. A lack of variety in form is an element of tension. Repetition of melody, harmony, or rhythm must show creativity.
4. Guidelines for performance:
- a. The performance technique should draw attention to the message of the song being sung and not to the body of the singer.
  - b. Avoid unnecessary bodily movement that would detract from the message of the song. Simple, planned gestures of the hand should be used sparingly. Any bodily movement will either "add to" or "distract from" your communicative ability.
5. Many of the techniques and songs used by contemporary gospel musicians evolve from the philosophy that there are no absolutes in life and this includes music. We must not be influenced by the patterns and examples of gospel musicians who copy the world's performance techniques and song-forms. Music is not intended to entertain, but rather to speak to the heart in preparation for the message from God's Word, to bring people to the place of

decision. Ephesians 5, verses 10 through 17 gives us four Biblical principles for developing our philosophy of music:

- a. First, prove what is acceptable to the Lord (verse 10).
- b. Second, Have nothing to do with that which the Lord has nothing to do with (verse 11).
  - 1) Rock music is unfruitful.
  - 2) Rock music is the work of darkness.
- c. Thirdly, Be a discerning Christian (verses 14 & 15).
  - 1) A fool gets as far from God as he can get, and still feel comfortable.
  - 2). A wise man draws near to God, and stays there!
- d. Fourthly, Be interested in the Will of God (verse 17).

#### E. Summary of our Philosophy of Music.

1. The **MESSENGER** of our music is important (he or she must be Spirit filled) verse 18.
  - a. Not people oriented,
  - b. But God oriented.
2. The **MOVEMENT** of our music is important (verse 19).
  - a. Not outward to the people,
  - b. But upward to the Lord. NOTE: Nowhere in the Bible is music ever used for evangelism, or entertainment but always for worship
3. The **MOTIVE** of our music is important (verse 20).
  - a. Profit, fame, success, recognition, or,
  - b. Thanksgiving and praise.
4. The **MANNER** of our music is important (verse 21).

- a. Submitting ourselves one to another,
  - b. In the fear of God.
5. The **METICULOUSNESS** of our music is important (verse 20).
- a. Doctrine is of the utmost importance if our music is to be "unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."
  - b. Come now, let us reason together - Isaiah 1:18.
  - c. Come now, let us agree that God is right!

F. The Principles of Christian Music:

- 1. We must lift up our standard, which is the Word of God (Isaiah 49:22)
- 2. We must maintain a difference between the world and the church (Ezekiel 22:26; I Corinthians 14:7; Leviticus 10:10; 11:47).

X. The Church Must Operate and Minister with a Biblical Emphasis on Separation.

A. Personal separation.

- 1. It is a clear command from God. 2 Corinthians 6:14-18
- 2. It is proof of our love for God. Psalm 97:10
- 3. It protects us from false doctrine. 2 John 7-11
- 4. It helps us to guard our testimony. I Corinthians 10:21
- 5. It puts us in the place of God's blessing. Ephesians 5:6-8

B. Application of personal separation.

- 1. In our talk. I Corinthians 2:13-14
- 2. In our walk. Ephesians 5:11
  - a. In our demeanor. Matthew 5:16; I Corinthians 6:20

- b. In our dress. I Timothy 2:9; Deuteronomy 22:5; cf Isaiah 47:2-3 NOTE: Study the other scriptures where refers to someone as an abomination, and ask if you want to be identified with them. God's moral law is God's perfect standard for a perfect man. We are commanded to be "perfecting Holiness" (2 Corinthians 7:1). The law directs us to Christ for salvation (Galatians 3:24) and Christ directs us back to the law for regulation.
- C. Ecclesiastical separation. Romans 16:17; Titus 3:10; I Timothy 6:3-5; Jude 3-4
- D. The reason for ecclesiastical separation. 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 14-15

#### XI. The Church Facility Must Serve As a Positive Testimony for Jesus Christ.

- A. While the building is not the church; it should, however, display the heart and attitude of the people who attend there.
  1. The building should be clean.
  2. The building should be orderly.
  3. The building should be attractive.
  4. The building should be functional.
  5. The building should be well maintained.
- B. While the building is not the church, it should be treated with dignity and respect as it serves as the main worship center for the people of God belonging there.
  1. Treat God's property (buildings, equipment, etc.) more carefully than you would treat your own!
  2. Teach children to respect God's property, acknowledging the years of sacrificial giving that has made it all possible!

#### XII. The Church's Philosophy of Ministry Summarized.

- A. The church desires to turn spectators into servants!
- B. The church desires to be strategy-oriented rather than event-oriented.

- C. The church desires to place emphasis on ministry rather maintenance!
- D. The church desires to see Christ turn motion into meaning, and activity into spirituality!
- E. The church desires to have the Holy Spirit determine its structure!
- F. The church desires to be committed to people rather than programs!
- G. The church desires to honor the Word of God above the words of men!
- H. The church desires to be faithful to its mandate which is to defend truth, not offend people!
- I. The church desires to acknowledge that its message is fixed, but its methods are flexible!
- J. The church desires to be loving, not judging.

## **Appendix A: The Pastor's Authority and the Church Member's Responsibility**

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There are two things that we desire to cover in this article. First, we want to reinforce the scriptural authority of the pastorate and warn about the abuse of pastoral authority. Secondly, we want to remind church members of their responsibility to pastors.

### **THE PASTOR'S AUTHORITY**

#### *Some General Lesson Regarding Pastoral Authority*

Following are some Bible truths about pastoral authority:

**(1) THERE ARE CERTAIN MEN IN CHURCHES CALLED RULERS AND OVERSEERS** (Acts 20:28; 1 Th. 5:12; Ph. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:1; Tit. 1:7). These verses teach that God-called pastors (the same office is called elder and bishop) have authority over the assemblies. Other Christians are to submit to this authority. The pastors are over me in the Lord. When I honor and submit to them, I am not submitting merely to a man; I am submitting to the Lord and Chief Shepherd of the church. Many women could share with us horror stories of how their husbands abused their authority. The fact remains that God has given husbands authority in the home. When the wife submits to a husband, she is not submitting merely to a man, with his many sins and frailties; she is submitting to her Lord God (Eph. 5:22). Abuses of pastoral authority do not negate the fact that the Bible tells us that God has given authority to pastors and do not negate the fact that the Bible demands that we submit to God-called pastors. Even in cases in which a Christian has been under the influence of an abusive or unscriptural pastoral situation, he or she must maintain a proper spirit and attitude in regard to pastoral authority. He should leave such a church, if necessary, and find a spiritually healthy church which is led by God-called men and join it and submit to their God-given authority. A Christian must carefully guard his spirit so that he does not become bitter. He must examine himself before the Lord to be sure that he is not rebellious toward genuine God-given authority. Sometimes we think the problem is with those who have

the rule over us when in reality it is with our own stubborn spirits.

**(2) CHURCH LEADERS ARE CALLED BY THREE DIFFERENT TERMS** (pastor, elder, bishop), but the terms refer to different aspects of the same office; thus the hierarchical form of church government which places bishops over elders is not biblical.

**(3) EACH CHURCH IS TO HAVE ITS OWN LEADERS AND GOVERNMENT** (Tit. 1:5; Acts 14:23). Since this is clearly the N.T. pattern, any outside form of control over the churches is unbiblical and dangerous.

**(4) EVERY PASTOR IS TO BE GOD-CALLED, SCRIPTURALLY QUALIFIED, and ORDAINED** (Acts 14:23; 1 Tim. 3; Tit. 1). N.T. churches are not to be led by unordained men or by men who cannot do the whole work of a pastor. Every pastor is to be both a teacher and a ruler (Acts 20:28; 1 Tim. 3:2; Tit. 1:9-11; 1 Pet. 5:1,2).

**(5) THE BIBLE SPEAKS OF ELDERS AND PASTORS IN THE PLURAL, AND THE FIRST CHURCHES COMMONLY HAD MORE THAN ONE** (Acts 14:23; 15:2; 20:17; Phil. 1:1; Titus 1:5; James 5:14). How many pastors should there be? How do the pastors share their authority? Like many things pertaining to church polity and work, these are matters that each church must determine under the direction of the Holy Spirit, because they are not spelled out in Scripture. Only general guidelines are given. There are many advantages to a plurality of pastors. No one man has all of the spiritual gifts and wisdom and experience that is necessary to lead God's people. When men work together, as we see in the church at Antioch and as we see in Paul's missionary ministry, the work progresses quickly and wisely because there is a pooling of talents and experience (Ecc. 4:9-12). In a practical sense, when a church has a plurality of pastors it is normal for one to be the "senior pastor" and to have the final word in decisions. That is what we see in the church at Jerusalem. When they had a conference to discuss the issue of law and grace in Acts 15, many contributed their ideas and finally it was James who summarized the meeting and verbalized the final decision, though it was agreed upon by the other leaders and by the entire church (Acts 15:13-22). Some argue that it is not practical for a church to have more than one pastor because there cannot be more than one head, but they forget that the one Head is Christ and that a plurality of pastors must be practical because this is exactly what we see in the first churches!

**(6) DEACONS ARE NEVER REFERRED TO IN THE CAPACITY OF RULING OR OVERSEEING CHURCHES.** The deacon is a servant, not a ruler. Church rule by a deacon board is unscriptural and has caused great harm in many assemblies.

### *The Extent of the Pastor's Authority*

If responsibility implies a corresponding authority, which it does, we can get a clear

idea of the areas and extent of a pastor's authority by considering his God-given responsibilities in the church. There are three major areas of pastoral responsibility, with corresponding authority:

**(1) A PASTOR HAS THE RESPONSIBILITY AND AUTHORITY TO TEACH AND SHEPHERD THE CHURCH** (Acts 20:28; Eph. 4:11,12; 1 Th. 5:12; 1 Pet. 5:1-4). Pastors, therefore, have the authority to oversee all aspects of such ministry. They must have the final decision concerning what is taught and by whom, and must judge all things that are taught to make certain it is correct (1 Cor. 14:29).

**(2) A PASTOR HAS THE RESPONSIBILITY AND AUTHORITY TO PROTECT THE CHURCH FROM FALSE TEACHING** (Acts 20:28-31; 1 Co. 14:29; 1 Tim. 4:1-6; Tit. 1:9-13). Pastors have the God-given responsibility and authority to determine what is taught and by whom, as well as to forbid the Christians from getting involved with false things, such as Bible studies conducted by the wrong kind of teachers, meetings in which unbiblical doctrines or practices are promoted, etc. This includes oversight of the music ministry of the church, because music is a form of teaching (Eph. 5:19).

**(3) A PASTOR HAS THE RESPONSIBILITY AND AUTHORITY TO OVERSEE THE ENTIRE WORK OF THE CHURCH** (Acts 20:28; 1 Th. 5:12; 1 Pet. 5:1-2). The pastor's position of overseeing the church is similar to that of a supervisor or manager. The pastors are not to do all of the work of the ministry--every Christian must be busy in the work of Christ--but the pastors are to supervise the work of the ministry. There is widespread rebellion against and resistance to pastoral authority today. Such is the product of the fallen human nature. The "old man" hates authority; he will not have anyone rule over him. But pastoral authority is God-given, and the one who resists a God-called pastor in his work of leading the church according to the Word of God will answer to Jesus Christ for his stubbornness. Hear the Bible: "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that much give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you" (Heb. 13:17).

### *Spiritual Characteristics of the Pastor's Authority*

The authority exercised by a pastor, missionary, or other church leader is to be distinctly different from that exercised by leaders in the secular world (1 Pet. 5:3; Mk. 10:42-43).

**(1) IT IS A MINISTERING AUTHORITY--THE AUTHORITY OF A SHEPHERD** (Acts 20:28; 2 Co. 13:10; 1 Pet. 5:2). The authority of a pastor is for the purpose of building up and protecting God's people and work.

**(2) IT IS A SUBMISSIVE, HUMBLE AUTHORITY--THE AUTHORITY OF A**

**STEWARDS** (Mark 10:42-25; 1 Co. 3:9; 4:1; 12:7; Tit. 1:7; 1 Pet. 4:10; 5:3-5). The pastor is to rule under the direction of the Lord Jesus Christ, not by his own mind or will. The church is God's property; the people are God's people; the work is God's work. Pastors are merely stewards or caretakers. Contrast this with the ministry of proud, willful Diotrephes (3 Jn. 9-10).

**(3) IT IS A LOVING AUTHORITY--THE AUTHORITY OF A FATHER** (1 Th. 2:7-11). The pastor is to have a godly, loving, tender, sacrificial consideration for the welfare of the people. His rule is not to be an overbearing, self-serving type of rule. He rejoices when his children mature and stand on their own feet.

**(4) IT IS A LIBERATING AUTHORITY--THE AUTHORITY TO BUILD UP NOT HOLD DOWN.** "For though I should boast somewhat more of our authority, which the Lord hath given us for edification, and not for your destruction, I should not be ashamed" (2 Cor. 10:8). See also Ephesians 4:11-12.

### *The Difference Between Pastoring and Lording*

"The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock" (1 Peter 5:1-3)

Pastors have real authority in the church, but it is a different kind of authority than that exercised by worldly lords. Note some of the differences as follows:

Scriptural pastors love the flock and lead by compassion, but lords typically despise compassion; they don't encourage; they merely demand (1 Thess. 2:7-8).

Scriptural pastors lead by example, but lords merely make demands with little or no awareness that they must live what they demand (1 Pet. 5:3).

Scriptural pastors know that the flock is not their own, but lords feel that they own the people and thus can control them according to their own will (1 Pet. 5:2, 3 "flock of God" "God's heritage").

Scriptural pastors care more about the welfare of the saints than their own profit, but lords rule for personal gain and are not afraid to abuse the people (1 Pet. 5:2).

Scriptural pastors are humble and do not consider themselves greater than the flock, but lords exalt themselves high above the people (1 Pet. 5:2 "among you"; 1 Pet. 5:5).

Scriptural pastors aim to build up the people and free them to do God's will, but lords want to control the people and hold them down (Eph. 4:11-12; 2 Cor. 10:8). The Greek word translated "destruction" in 2 Cor. 10:8 is also translated "pulling down" (2 Cor. 10:4).

"But Jesus called them to him, and saith unto them, Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them. But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all. For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Mark 10:42-45).

### *Miscellaneous Suggestions for Pastors*

1. Never forget that the people are not yours and that you will give account for the way you treat them (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:1-4; James 3:1). A pastor can have his way in the church in this present world even if he is wrong and sinning, because there is no higher earthly ecclesiastical authority than the assembly; but he will stand before the Great Chief Shepherd and be judged for how he acted. He must not forget this.

2. Treat the people as you would want to be treated (Matt. 7:12). Think back to the time before you were a pastor. Are you treating the people now as you wanted your pastor to treat you then? Were there things the pastor did that discouraged you rather than built you up then, and are you repeating those same mistakes in your own ministry?

3. Treat the people with equality (1 Tim. 5:21). Be very careful about exercising favoritism. Treat the people with equality in regard to enforcing standards for workers. Don't let some of the standards slide with some because they are your pets. Treat the people with equality in regard to exercising church discipline. Don't let it be said that you were harsh toward some in the church and lenient with others over similar matters.

4. Aim to build up the people and then to give them liberty to do God's will (2 Cor. 10:8). A pastor should have the goal of treating church members as he does his own children, maturing them in Christ so that they can stand on their own feet and make good decisions and follow God's will, not wanting them to be perpetually dependant on his microscopic involvement and control. A wise parent even allows his children to make mistakes along the way, knowing that they must learn how to do things on their own and that they will not always get it right the first time. Should that not be the pastor's heart, as well?

5. Encourage the people to have a personal vision of God's will and to bring forth new ideas for the Lord's work (Eph. 4:11-12). The only thing the pastor should discourage is sin and false teaching. Don't let it be said that the pastor discouraged people to have a

vision and to exercise their gifts freely within the boundaries of Scripture.

6. Aim to produce many leaders who will work alongside of you to multiply the ministry (Acts 13:1; 20:4). Everywhere in the New Testament we see a plurality of workers and leaders, both in individual churches and in missionary work. Wise pastors will not fear sharing their authority and ministry with other godly men so that the Lord's work can make good progress.

7. Resist the temptation to be proud and to exalt yourself (Mark 10:42-45). The position of a shepherd is a lowly one. The pastor has authority but it is the authority of a servant under a master and not a lord in his own right. The pastor is a spiritual ruler and leader, a bishop, but he has a unique relationship with those whom he rules. He is a shepherd but at the same time he is one of the sheep! While the church members are likened at times to sheep and have some of the characteristics of sheep, they are not exactly like the animals by that name because they are not dumb beasts and they do not exist for the shepherd's profit and pleasure. Each church member is not only "a sheep" but is a child of Almighty God, a member of the "royal priesthood," and a free citizen of that "holy nation" (1 Pet. 2:9). Church members are not only likened to sheep but to members of a body, and the pastor must ever be mindful that their one true Head is not an earthly pastor but the Lord Jesus Christ (Eph. 1:22; Col. 1:18).

8. Don't be afraid to lead but be sure that you are leading by the Bible and not by your own thinking and human tradition. If you don't have a "thus saith the Lord" for the things you are doing, you are on dangerous ground. Your authority is not your opinion or your word but the Word of God. The pastor is not to be "selfwilled" (Titus 1:7).

9. Don't give your authority to those who are not pastors, such as deacons, and don't allow strong women to control things from "behind the scenes."

10. Don't be afraid to allow the congregation to share in some decisions. In the book of Acts, the congregations participated with the pastors in three major decisions. The first was in the selection of deacons (Acts 6:5-6). The pastors set the standards, and the congregation chose the deacons based on those standards. The second was in the settling of the issue of justification. The congregation at Antioch sent Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem to take care of this issue (Acts 15:3) and the congregation at Jerusalem participated in the discussion and approved of it and joined with the apostles and elders in sending out letters of instruction to the other churches (Acts 15:22). The third was in the sending of missionaries (Acts 13:1-3). The Holy Spirit called the missionaries and the church leaders and the congregation recognized the call and sent them forth.

Godly pastors have the goal of maturing the flock so that they can participate in the work of the Lord to the fullest extent possible. They do not want to tie the saints down but to liberate them to their greatest potential in Christ. Too many pastors are so jealous of their authority that they hinder and cripple the work of God by turning the ministry

of the Lord into a “one man show,” and the people rise only to the level of his servants and never mature to the true liberty in Christ that we see in Scripture. Brethren, these things out not to be.

*The Member's Relationship to the Pastors*  
*General Responsibilities*

**1. RESPECT AND LOVE THEM** (1 Th. 5:12-13). “And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves”

**2. OBEY THEIR TEACHING AS THEY FOLLOW THE BIBLE AND AS THEY SEEK TO BUILD UP THE CHURCH FOR THE SERVICE OF THE LORD** (Eph. 4:11-12). “And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.”

**3. FOLLOW THEIR EXAMPLES.** “Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation” (Heb. 13:7). “Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock” (1 Pet. 5:3). This shows the importance of God's standards for pastors. If the church leaders do not lead godly lives and have godly homes, they cannot be an example to the flock and God's work becomes corrupted.

**4. SUBMIT TO THEIR OVERSIGHT** (Heb. 13:17). “Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.”

**5. PRAY FOR THEM.** “Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you” (2 Thess. 3:1). See also Heb. 13:18; Eph. 6:18-19; Col. 4:2-3.

**6. PROVIDE FOR THEIR PHYSICAL NEEDS** (1 Tim. 5:17,18). “Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine. For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his reward.” “A church that is penurious with a pastor violates the Scripture. Rarely does such a church manifest spiritual power or progress. The principles revealed in 2 Cor. 9:6-10 are worthy of consideration” (Paul Jackson, *The Doctrine and Administration of the Church*).

### *Miscellaneous Suggestions for Church Members*

#### **1. GIVE THE PASTORS THE BENEFIT OF THE DOUBT AND DO EVERYTHING YOU CAN TO BE A SUBMISSIVE, OBEDIENT CHURCH MEMBER.**

The Bible uses very strong language about the church's submission to pastoral authority. "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves..." (Heb. 13:17). Those are strong words. Unless the pastors are leading contrary to the Bible in a very clear and obvious manner, the church member must submit as unto God. It is like a wife unto a husband. "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord" (Eph. 5:22). Every wife knows that if she submits to her husband she is submitting to a very imperfect man, but she is not merely submitting to her husband, she is submitting to the Lord who gave her that husband. Likewise, the church member does not submit merely to a man; he submits to the Lord who has established the office of the pastorate and who has put that man into the office. Too many church members think it is their duty to advise and correct the pastor in all matters if they think he is not doing his job properly, even in matters that do not pertain to scriptural error. It is wise and scriptural to let the pastors be the pastors.

#### **2. BE SURE THAT YOU ARE FIGHTING FOR SCRIPTURAL TRUTHS AND NOT FOR YOUR OWN PREFERENCES.**

If I think that something is wrong in the church, I must ask myself, "Does the Bible plainly say that this is wrong or is this merely something that I personally do not like or agree with?" Many church problems arise because of personality conflicts and self-will and the attempt to exalt personal preference to the place of Scripture. Romans 14 speaks to this issue. In this chapter Paul is addressing those things about which the Bible does not speak in this dispensation. The two examples that he gives are dietary rules and holy days. These are things about which the New Testament faith is silent. Unlike during the Mosaic dispensation, there are no laws in the New Testament about what we are to eat (1 Tim. 4:4-5). Likewise, there are no laws in the New Testament about keeping the sabbath and about maintaining certain holy festivals and special days after the Old Testament fashion. Since the New Testament does not contain laws on these things, they are areas of Christian liberty. In such things, each believer is free to do as he pleases before the Lord, but he cannot push his preferences on others and judge others according to these things. The church member who has a problem with something in the church needs to ask himself if his thinking on the issue is based on clear Scripture or if it is based merely on his personal preference.

#### **3. GUARD YOUR HEART AND YOUR ATTITUDE.**

We are to speak the truth in love (Eph. 4:15). We should have a cool head and a warm heart, not a cool heart and a warm head! When we attempt to correct others we must guard our own hearts and do so in the spirit of meekness (Gal. 6:1). 2 Timothy 2:24-25 describes the spirit in which we are to seek to correct others: "And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves." The late evangelist Mel Rutter would say, "Be as firm as the rock in your

position but as sweet as the honey from the rock in your disposition." The difference between leaving a church over legitimate doctrinal concerns and leaving in rebellion toward pastoral authority will be evidenced in two ways, according to James 3:14-18. First, the difference will be evident in one's attitude. Contrast the "bitter envying and strife" of verse 14 with the godly attitude described in verse 17: "peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy." Second, the difference will be evident in the fruit that issues from the situation. Contrast the fruit of verse 16, which is "envying and strife ... confusion and every evil work," with the fruit described in verse 18, which is "the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace." The long term consequences will demonstrate the secrets of the heart. On the one hand, those who are seeking to strengthen the church and are opposed to things that are truly ungodly and unscriptural and who leave a church on that basis alone and not because of their own self will or carnality, will go on to serve Christ fruitfully in stronger churches. On the other hand, those who are merely striving for their own self will and who are causing trouble in a carnal manner usually hop from church to church, causing trouble everywhere they go, losing their testimony and usually their children, often going from a strong church to a weaker church. The fact that they move to a church that is weaker doctrinally and spiritually demonstrates that the issue was not actually about doctrine and righteousness, but was a personality conflict or something of that sort.

**4. GUARD AGAINST ALLOWING A CHURCH PROBLEM TO POISON YOUR ATTITUDE TOWARD THE CHURCH OVERALL.** This is similar to the previous point, but it deserves a separate paragraph. It is not uncommon that when you discover a serious and legitimate church problem, especially an error on the part of the pastors, you gradually become embittered against the church overall. Eventually you see nothing but problems and errors. Everything is wrong. We must be careful not to allow the devil to do this in our lives, and we resist this by counting the good things as well as the bad. Paul did this with the church at Corinth. In spite of its deeply serious errors, he thanked the Lord for them on many points (1 Cor. 1:4-9; 2 Cor. 1:11, 14).

**5. KEEP YOUR EYES FOCUSED ON CHRIST RATHER THAN ON MEN IN THIS WORLD.** "Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Heb. 12:2). Some believers are said to carry permanent "spiritual scars" because of being in churches that are led by pastors that abuse their authority. Others leave church altogether and use this as their excuse. The problem in such cases is that such folk have their eyes and their trust more on men than on Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus will never disappoint us, but men will always disappoint us in one way or the other. Pastors are only imperfect men at their best. They make mistakes. They sin. They can be selfish and partial and shortsighted.

**6. PRAY FOR YOUR PASTORS AND OTHER CHURCH LEADERS.** Prayer does two things. It brings change, because God answers and works through it; and it also helps

keep my heart tender toward those for whom I am interceding.

**7. DON'T FORGET THAT THERE IS NO PERFECT CHURCH.** Even the first churches established by the apostles were very imperfect. The church at Corinth was carnal and was characterized by division, fornication, lawsuits, drunkenness during the Lord's supper, misuse of spiritual gifts, and false teachers. Most of the seven churches mentioned in Revelation 2-3 had serious problems. In the church at Philippi, two women were at odds with each other and had to be corrected (Phil. 4:2). Peter's hypocrisy had to be rebuked publicly by Paul (Gal. 2:11-14). This is not an excuse to ignore problems and errors. Each of these matters was rebuked and corrected. I mention these things only to remind us that churches are not perfect, because they are made up of very imperfect sinners saved by grace; and we must keep this in mind as we deal with church problems. If you leave a church over doctrinal or moral issues, you should have a better church to move to, or you will only be moving "from the frying pan into the fire."

**8. LEARN TO EXERCISE KEEN SPIRITUAL DISCERNMENT, DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN THE IMPORTANT AND THE LESS IMPORTANT.** In Matthew 23:23, the Lord Jesus Christ taught that not all things in the Bible are of equal importance. "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone." Some biblical teachings are "weightier" than others. Everything in the Bible has some importance, but everything is not of equal importance. Not every issue is an issue of separation and not every issue is important enough to leave a church over. Knowing the difference between the two requires a thorough knowledge of God's Word and keen spiritual discernment. This is the lesson of the following verses: "And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another" (Romans 15:14). "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil" (Heb. 5:12-14). Such discernment requires spiritual maturity, which comes only through diligent study and through exercise of the senses to discern good and evil. Paul told the church at Rome that the reason they were able to admonish one another was because they were filled with goodness and knowledge (Rom. 15:14). As we mature in Christ and in our knowledge of the Scriptures and in godliness, we are able to correct others and to be a blessing to the church. It is a sad fact that many who attempt to "straighten out" perceived problems are weak in Bible knowledge and carnal in their Christian living, and as a result they cause more harm than good.

**9. IF YOU HAVE A PROBLEM OR QUESTION, GO DIRECTLY TO THE PASTORS**

**OR TO THE PEOPLE INVOLVED.** Oftentimes we discover that our perception of the matter is wrong or that the information we received was wrong or that we did not have all of the information. By discussing it directly with those concerned right at the beginning, we can avoid “making a mountain out of a molehill” and causing strife over nothing.

**10. REMEMBER THAT PASTORS HAVE GREATER AUTHORITY AND GREATER RESPONSIBILITY IN THE CHURCH.** This means that they must make decisions that the average church member does not make and that they will answer to God for those decisions. There is a time to leave a church over things that are seriously wrong, but we must also learn to put many things into the hands of the Lord and do what He has told us to do, which is to submit to the church leadership and be a blessing and be fruitful. Don't confuse your job with that of the pastor. You don't have the authority of the pastor, nor do you have the work of the pastor (visiting the sick, burying dead, being on call for any need, watching for souls). You also do not have the responsibility of the pastor. He will give account for more (James 3:1). This has helped me many times when I have not agreed with some decision that the pastors have made. I have laid the matter before the Lord and told the Lord that though I do not agree with this decision, it is not my decision to make and I will leave the matter in His hands and do my part to submit and be a blessing to His church.

**11. DON'T LET ANYTHING DRIVE YOU AWAY FROM THE CHURCH.** There are occasions when we are forced to leave a certain church over serious doctrinal and moral issues, but we must not allow anything to keep us out of church altogether. Jesus Christ established the church (Matt. 16:18), and there are more than 100 references to the church in the New Testament. Most of the New Testament was written directly to churches, such as the church at Ephesus and the church at Philippi. The book of Revelation is written to seven churches in Asia Minor (Rev. 2-3). The book of Acts is the story of the planting and multiplication of the first churches. The Pastoral Epistles are about church work. Even those epistles which are not written directly to churches always have the assembly in mind. The book of Hebrews, for example, contains strong statements about the church (Heb. 10:25; 13:7, 17). The book of James mentions the church elders (Jam. 5:14). The epistle of 1 Peter addresses the elders (1 Pet. 5:1-4). This demonstrates the importance of the church in the eyes of God, and each believer must be diligent to have the same zeal for the assembly in his own Christian life. It is easy to criticize a church, but I need to ask, “What am I doing to make the church successful and fruitful for the Lord's glory?” I should also ask, “If the whole church were like me, what would the church be?” Some people criticize everything but they do not add anything of significance on the positive side. That is wrong and destructive to the work of the Lord.