

Your Pastor and You

Text: Eph. 4:11

Introduction:

1. There are only two offices in the New Testament Church, that of the Pastor and Deacon (Refer 1 Tim. 3 and Phil. 1:1).
2. Understanding the pastoral office and relating to it is an important aspect of one's Christian life.
3. In this message we will consider 4 themes pertaining to the Pastoral Office.

I. The Titles of the Pastoral Office (1 Tim. 3:1)

A. The interchangeability of the Titles

1. Titus 1:5-8 – Note the use of 'elder' and 'bishop' is used to describe the one office.
2. All three Greek words are used in Acts 20:17, 28
 - a. 'elder' = Πρεσβυτερος (presbuteros) (Vs. 17)
 - b. 'overseers' = επισκοπος (episkopos) (Vs. 28)
 - c. 'feed' = ποιμαίνω (poimaino) (Vs. 28)
3. All three words are again used in 1 Peter 5:1-2
 - a. 'elders' (Vs. 1)
 - b. 'feed' (Vs. 2)
 - c. 'oversight' (Vs. 3)

B. The Definition of the Titles

The three titles give us a good understanding of the primary functions of the pastor.

1. Elder = primary reference is to spiritual maturity. No specific age requirement for a pastor in the N.T. and Paul instructed Timothy not to allow people to despise his youth in the ministry (1 Tim. 4:12). In the qualifications it does state that a bishop is not to be "a novice" (1 Tim. 3:6) which refers to one "newly planted", that is a young, immature believer. A 'novice' is one who is "new in any business one unacquainted or unskilled; one in the rudiments; a beginner." (Webster) The word 'elder' points to the pastor's role as an example to the believers (1 Tim. 4:12).
2. Bishop = Means an overseer. The word is made up of epi (over) and skopos (sight). The word was used of a supervisor of a building construction. In modern terms, a foreman. The word points to the administrative aspect of the pastor's ministry. It also implies his authority in the assembly.
3. Pastor = means shepherd. The word points to his ministry of feeding, guiding, protecting and leading.

II. The Support of the Pastoral Office (1. Tim. 5:17-18)

A. The Qualifications for support (Vs. 17)

The pastor needs to be fulfilling 2 key responsibilities:

1. Ruling (Leadership)
 - a. 'rule' = literally means to stand before. Means to administrate, preside over, superintend & govern.
 - b. 'well' = finely & excellently. Speaks of the **quality** of his leadership. There is a striving for **excellence**.
2. Feeding (Shepherding)
 - a. 'labour' = to toil & work to the point of exhaustion and fatigue.
 - b. "word and doctrine" = preaching and teaching
 - c. Note: This part of the pastor's ministry involves much discipline, toil and labour. Both the preparation & delivery of the Word taxes the preachers resources (spiritual, mental, emotional & physical) Ecc. 12:2 "...*much study is a weariness of the flesh.*"

B. The Command to support (Vs. 17)

1. Respect (Attitudes)
 - a. "**counted worthy**" = to think worthy. Reveals an attitude and mindset. "An estimate reached by the thinking process." (Macarthur)
 - b. '**honour**' = basic meaning is that of esteem and respect. See 1 Thess. 5:12-13.
2. Remuneration (Actions)
 - a. '**honour**' = includes the concept of pay. E.g. honorarium
 - i. Example: Widows just discussed (Vs. 3-16).
 - ii. Word translated '**price**' elsewhere 8 times. For example, Acts 4:34-35 "...brought the **prices** (τιμη - honour) of the things that were sold, And laid them down at the apostles' feet..."
 - iii. Next verse (18) reveals the Apostle has this particular aspect of honour in mind.
 - iv. Note: Their high esteem and appreciation for the pastor's ministry is to be expressed in providing for his physical needs.
 - b. '**double**' = speaks of generosity. Unlikely Paul meant this to be taken in a strictly mathematical sense. Double in this context means much or greater in comparison with something else. (Fairbairn)

C. The Reasons for support (Vs. 18)

The Apostle reinforces his argument with two citations of Scripture; one from the O.T & one from the N.T.

1. The Principle of the Ox (18a)
 - a. The quotation is from the law in Deut. 25:4.

- b. Deduction: If animals that laboured to provide physical food were to be fed, how much more a man of God who labours to provide spiritual food for God's people.
- c. Refer also 1 Cor. 9:7-14.
- 2. The Principle of the Labourer (18b)
 - a. The quotation is from Christ in Luke 10:7.
 - b. Deduction: If a hired labourer receives a due reward for his duties in secular life, how much more a faithful man of God who works hard in the ministry of the Word.

III. The Discipline of the Pastoral Office (Vs. 19-21)

A. The Accusation of a Pastor (Vs. 19)

- 1. Accusations that are to be rejected (19a)
 - a. A Pastor by the nature of his calling and office will attract much unwarranted slander and criticism. The Word of God puts a safeguard in place to protect the pastor against those who would seek to undermine his ministry through false accusation. At the same time it does not make him untouchable if he has disqualified himself. There is a Scriptural procedure in place for him to be dealt with.
 - b. 'receive' = to entertain or consider, to welcome with acceptance (Vs. 19)
- 2. Accusations that are to be considered (19b)
 - a. Note: The fact there are two or three witnesses does not automatically mean the pastor is guilty. It just means that examination of his character can proceed if there are sufficient witnesses.
 - b. The principle of two or three witnesses is well established in Scripture, going back to the O.T. law (Deut. 17:6, 19:15). Christ also reiterated this principle in Matthew 18.

B. The Conviction of a Pastor

- 1. The reason – Sin. "them that sin" = present tense indicating the habitual practice of sin
- 2. The rebuke – Public. "before all" = a public censure before the church
- 3. The result – Reverence. "others also may fear" = the by-product/result. A healthy fear (reverence/respect) of God is a deterrent to sin.

IV. The Relationship to the Pastoral Office (1 Thess. 5:12-13; Heb. 13:7, 17, 24)

Much attention, due to the high and holy nature of the office, tends to be given to analysing whether the pastor is ministering in a way that is in accordance with the commands of Scripture. However, it is also important that God's people take time to review and consider their own responsibilities towards the under-Shepherd (s) God has appointed over them. Consider 8 of these:

A. Know your Pastor (1 Thess. 5:12)

1. Who are you to Know?
 - a. Those who labour among you. The word labour literally means "to feel fatigue, to work to the point of exhaustion."
 - b. Those who are over you. The word "over you" literally means those who stand in front of you, your leaders in the Lord (Robertson).
 - c. Those who admonish you. The word means "to put in mind; to caution or reprove gently." (Strong's) It means "putting sense into the heads of people." (Robertson)
2. How are you to Know?
 - a. Adam Clark: "Act kindly towards them; acknowledge them as the messengers of Christ; and treat them with tenderness and respect."
 - b. Albert Barnes: "The word "know" seems to mean that they were not to make themselves strangers to them - to be cold and distant toward them - to be ignorant of their needs, or to be indifferent to them. While a people are not obtrusively to intermeddle with the business of a minister, any more than they are with that of any other man, yet there are things in regard to him with which they should be acquainted. They should seek to be personally acquainted with him, and make him their confidant and counsellor in their spiritual troubles. They should seek his friendship, and endeavour to maintain all proper contact with him. They should not regard him as a distant man, or as a stranger among them. They should so far understand his circumstances as to know what is requisite to make him comfortable, and should be on such terms that they may readily and cheerfully furnish what he needs. And they are to "know" or regard him as their spiritual teacher and ruler; not to be strangers to the place where he preaches the word of life, and not to listen to his admonitions and reproofs as those of a stranger, but as those of a pastor and friend."

B. Respect your Pastor (1 Thess. 5:13)

1. 'esteem' = to prize; to set a high value on; to regard with reverence, respect or friendship.
2. "very highly" = has the idea of super exceedingly.
3. "in love" = not a cold, formal respect but a respect coupled with warmth and affection.
4. "for their works sake" = the motivation for this loving esteem.
Consider your pastor's preaching ministry alone. If you faithfully attend church for the teaching and preaching, in a year you will have heard somewhere in the order of 100+ hours of instruction (e.g., Sunday AM, PM, Wed night messages, Bible classes, discipleship lessons, Sunday School etc...). Imagine where your Christian life would be without all that instruction in the truth! Add to that his prayers for you, counsel and practical helps and you begin to realize the phenomenal "works" involved in the pastor's role.
5. Matthew Henry: "What the duty of the people is towards their ministers. There is a mutual duty between ministers and people. If ministers should labour among the people, then, (1.) The people must know them. As the shepherd should know his flock, so the sheep must know their shepherd. They must know his person, hear his voice, acknowledge him for their pastor, and pay due regard to his teaching, ruling, and admonitions. (2.) They must esteem their ministers highly in love; they should greatly value the office of the ministry, honour and love the persons of their ministers, and show their esteem and affection in all proper ways, and this for their work's sake, because their business is to promote the honour of Christ and the welfare of men's souls."
6. "Be at peace" = Interesting that this command comes on the tail end of the exhortations concerning the pastor to church member relationship. It appears there is a link between church harmony/unity and the attitude of the people to their pastor.

C. Remember your Pastor (Heb. 13:7)

1. 'remember' = to be mindful of, to keep in mind. "See a like exhortation to respect and follow their leaders in (1 Thess. 5:12) Few lessons are harder for the average Christian to learn, viz., good following." (RWP)
2. "who have spoken unto you the Word of God" = remembrance of the Biblical instruction received.
3. Barnes: "The duty here enjoined is that of remembering them; that is, remembering their counsel; their instructions; their example."

D. Follow your Pastor (Heb. 13:7)

1. 'follow' = to imitate. Learn from your pastor. Have a teachable spirit.
2. 'considering' = to investigate, to observe.
3. 1 Cor. 4:15 "For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten

you through the gospel. Wherefore I beseech you, **be ye followers of me.**”

4. 1 Cor. 11:1 “**Be ye followers of me**, even as I also am **of Christ.**”

E. Obey your Pastor (Heb. 13:17)

1. ‘submit’ = to yield.
2. ‘grief’ = groaning, sighing (When your pastor thinks of you, does his heart fill with joy or does he sigh in grief?).
3. “watch for your souls” = indicates underlying motive in their ruling. They are motivated for the spiritual well-being of those under them
4. “give an account” = sobering for both pastor and people. For the pastor as he will be called to give an account for his oversight of the flock and for the people, as to the matter of their submissive and cooperative spirit towards the pastor’s leadership.
5. Barnes: “The reference here is to their religious teachers, and not to civil rulers. They were to show them proper respect, and to submit to their authority in the church, so far as it was administered in accordance with the precepts of the Saviour. The obligation to obedience does not, of course, extend to anything which is wrong in itself, or which would be a violation of conscience. The doctrine is, that subordination is necessary to the welfare of the church, and that there ought to be a disposition to yield all proper obedience to those who are set over us in the Lord;”
6. Matthew Henry: “The duty - to obey them, and submit themselves to them. It is not an implicit obedience, or absolute submission, that is here required, but only so far as is agreeable to the mind and will of God revealed in his word; and yet it is truly obedience and submission, and that not only to God, but to the authority of the ministerial office, which is of God as certainly, in all things belonging to that office, as the authority of parents or of civil magistrates in the things within their sphere. Christians must submit to be instructed by their ministers, and not think themselves too wise, too good, or too great, to learn from them; and, when they find that ministerial instructions are agreeable to the written Word, they must obey them.”
7. Qualifying questions
 - a. Is my pastor exercising his authority in accordance with the Scriptures, the sole authority for faith and practice?
 - b. Is my pastor exercising authority within his God given jurisdiction?

F. Greet your Pastor (Heb. 13:24)

1. The Bible speaks of this matter of acknowledging one another on more than one occasion. Romans 16:16 “**Salute** one another with an holy kiss. The churches of Christ salute you.” Php. 4:21 “**Salute** every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren which are with me **greet** you.”

2. The most basic of Christian courtesies is to greet one another!
Don't forget to do that with the pastor also.

G. Work with your Pastor (1 Cor. 3:9)

1. See the pastor as your co-laborer, friend and ally in the service of the local church. His involvement in your area of ministry is to be welcomed!
2. Remember that whatever ministry you labor in, according to God's authority structure for the local church, the pastor has the oversight of that ministry. No one owns a ministry!

H. Pray for your Pastor (2 Thess. 3:1-2)

1. Turn the qualifications of a pastor into a prayer list for your pastor.
2. Pray for protection over him and his family against the attacks of the wicked one.
3. Pray for unction and utterance for the pulpit ministry.
4. Pray for wisdom for him to lead the flock.

Conclusion: