

Responsibilities TO the Pastor

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Preacher: Terry Katsma

[0 : 00] Church, we rejoice with covenant as you look forward to welcoming your new pastor, Pastor Keith and his wife Renee in a couple of months.

! Today, I want to focus on instructions to the pastor as a minister of God's word, but more importantly, the duties of the congregation to the pastor.

So we're going to work through the form on page 992. That's in the back of the Gray Psalter hymnal. That's what we're going to kind of work through this morning.

So starting out, it talks about the introduction and from the beginning. The entire New Testament church was called to proclaim the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ to the whole world.

We read the Great Commission in Matthew 28. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them everything that I have commanded you.

[1 : 16] So it soon became apparent that the task committed to the church was extremely vast and complex.

Therefore, the church, under the guidance of the apostles, instituted distinct ministries to ensure that the work will be done well.

We read about that in Acts 6. Those that were engaged in these ministries were to function with Christ's power and authority, and a power and authority that was rooted in obedience to his word and expressed in loving service.

These ministries were distinct from the more general ones that are given by Christ to all believers. The office of the minister of the word is one of these distinct ministries.

So the scriptures portray the minister's duties in various ways. One, he is a servant of both Christ and the church.

[2 : 22] Two, he is a steward of the household of God. Three, he's a teacher to explain the mystery of the gospel.

Four, he's a shepherd of the flock. And five, he's an ambassador and a herald to the king, proclaiming the message of reconciliation.

So the preaching of the word is one of the minister's chief tasks. Such a proclamation must faithfully reflect the word of God and relate it to the needs of the listener.

So we're going to come back to that. What does that mean, relate to the needs of the listener? Paul stressed this when he wrote, Preach the word, be prepared in season and out of season, correct, rebuke, and encourage.

We read about that in 2 Timothy 4, verse 2. But because the sacraments are closely related to the preaching of the word, the minister has the privilege of administering holy baptism and the Lord's Supper.

[3 : 40] Since the minister has the responsibility to preach the word and administer the sacraments in public worship, it's his task to conduct the public worship service in such a manner that God receives the glory and the congregation is edified.

Jesus said to Peter, Feed my lambs. He entrusted the office bearers with special care for the young. The minister must then instruct and baptize members of the congregation in the way of salvation, and he must encourage and assist those who teach with him.

We read about that in 2 Timothy 2, verse 2. As a pastor, the minister visits the members of the congregation, He calls on the sick and the suffering, He comforts those who mourn, He admonishes those who stray, He counsels those in need of guidance, He holds in trust those matters that are confided to Him in counsel or confession, and He encourages the weak.

He rejoices with those who rejoice, and He weeps with those who weep. We read about that in Romans 12, verse 15. Yet the minister is called not only to serve those who are already members of the Church of Christ, but also to engage in and promote the work of evangelism.

As a true disciple of the Master, He must show that the Church exists also for the world, and that the missionary task of the Church forms an essential part of its calling.

[5 : 34] He's not just to sit in his office and read Bible commentaries. As a servant of Christ, the minister must help and encourage the people of God as they care for the hungry, the thirsty, the strangers, the naked, the sick, and those in prison.

We read about that in Matthew 15. In all his work, the minister proclaims, explains, and applies the Holy Scripture in order to gather in and build up the members of the Church of Jesus Christ.

For this work, the minister devotes himself to the ministry of prayer, joining all Christians in confession, intercession, thanksgiving, and praise.

Earlier, we talked about relating it to the needs of the listeners. What does that mean? Well, look around.

See the different age groups that we have in this congregation. I'm going to summarize each group by decade. So the first decade is ages 0 through 10.

[6 : 47] These are impressionable. We hope that our pastors can call each child by their name. He needs to know them individually.

They need to be part of the Church programs. Secondly, ages 10 through 20, adolescents, tough, difficult years of growing up and maturing.

We want them to know that the Church cares for them. Third group, ages 20 to 30, possible marriage, possible career, possible young children, possibly drifting away from the Church.

Fourth group, ages 30 to 40, possible marriage difficulties, busy raising a family, maybe working overtime, or a second job to keep up with growing family expenses.

Fifth group, ages 40 to 50, children may be a disappointment because they have left the faith. Frustration with job or career, may feel underemployed.

[8 : 02] Ages 6th group, ages 50 to 60, you may be dealing with aging parents, questioning retirement planning.

While rejoicing in the gift of grandchildren, you're also realizing your own aging process. Seventh group, ages 60 to 70, you're facing the uncertainty of retirement.

You may personally be experiencing the effects of aging. Eighth group, ages 70 to 80 years old, possibly widowed.

You're wondering how long your assets are going to last during retirement. Ninth group, ages 80, 80 to 90 years old, you're probably attending a lot of funerals for your friends and family that have passed, possibly selling your home and downsizing.

And finally, the 10th group, ages 90, possibly to 100. In Newsper, we're blessed with a number of people that are very alert and very high-functioning at that age.

[9 : 17] These saints that are in their 90s, what a blessing to achieve that milestone. So the pastor must faithfully reflect the word of God to 10 different decades of people, many with different needs and experiences.

So the word of God, the gospel is the good news that Jesus Christ died for your sins and arose again to offer forgiveness of sins and then to accept him as your Lord and Savior.

Sin, salvation, service, remember that. So the pastor has 20, 25, 30 minutes, once or twice a week, to deliver that gospel, the good news, to 10 different decades of people and make it relatable to the needs of the listener.

That's a big job. So our morning text comes from 2 Timothy 4, verses 1 and 5. In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead?

And in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this. This, of course, is Paul speaking to Timothy. I give you this charge.

[10 : 40] Preach the word. Be prepared in season and out of season. Correct, rebuke, and encourage with great patience and careful instruction.

For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear.

They will turn their hearts away from truth and turn aside to myths. But you keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry. So to summarize, the work of the pastor is one, to preach the word, two, to administer the sacraments, three, to care for the young, four, to visit members of the congregation, five, evangelism, six, help and encourage the people of God.

Well, what's not on this list? Should your pastor be your friend? You maybe heard this, oh, my pastor, he's just not very friendly to me, or, oh, my pastor is so disorganized.

[12:10] I tell him one thing and he never gets things straight. The pastor's responsibility is to preach the word, not to be your friend.

The pastor's responsibility is to preach the word, not primarily be an administrator. Think of other professionals in your life.

Your children's teachers. Should they be your friend and be friendly to you? Or do you expect them to responsibly educate your children?

Should your dentist be your friend and be friendly to you? Or professionally attend to your dental care? Should the professional who builds your house be your friend and be friendly to you?

Or should they professionally build a functioning, long-lasting structure? Should your tax preparer or your investment advisor be your friend and be friendly to you?

[13:17] Or do you want competent and useful advice? You may say, ah, Terry, those are not good examples. I see my pastor every week and he is in the business of salvation and life and death issues.

Well, that's the point. His calling is to preach the word, not be your friend. We just don't read that in the form. So now let's switch to the responsibilities to the pastor.

Again, we're back looking at this form that's in the Psalter hymnal. There's questions that go to the congregation. These may be questions that you're going to see in two months.

One says, do you, in the name of the Lord, welcome this brother as your minister and pastor? Two, do you promise to take to heart the word of God as he proclaims it?

And three, do you promise to pray for him, to share with him in the work of his ministry, to encourage him in the exercise of his tasks and to respond to his work with obedience, love, and respect?

[14:37] So we are to welcome this brother. We are to take to heart the word of God. We are to pray for him. And I think that means pray specifics.

Don't just randomly say, oh, I want to pray for the pastor. Pray for strength. Pray for him that he has insight on his studies. Pray that he may have success on his labors.

Pray for his spouse. Pray for his family. I was talking to a PK or a pastor's kid some time ago, and they talked about living in a glass house.

Their dad was never home at night. They're always at meetings. Maybe things have changed a little bit for the better. But share with him in the work of ministry.

The pastor doesn't need to do it all. Encourage him and respond to him with obedience, love, and respect. I want to cover what's seven responsibilities of church members as presented by a pastor by the name of Paul Tegos.

[15:54] And here we read, according to the New Testament, the members of the local church have at least seven ongoing responsibilities to their shepherds.

We find the first two in Paul's first letter to the Thessalonian church. Responsibility number one is to appreciate them.

Here we read in 1 Thessalonians 5, verse 12. We ask you, brothers, to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love because of their work.

Be at peace among yourselves. So the first responsibility of church members to their leaders is to know them. The word know, K-N-O-W, means to appreciate or respect them.

The Thessalonian believers were to appreciate that the diligently, those who diligently labored among them, thanking God for their willingness to expend themselves physically, mentally, and emotionally for the benefit of the flock.

[17:15] Paul refers to leaders as those who have charge over you. Some have trouble with this phrase because they think it conflicts with the priesthood of all believers.

But that's not the case. There's a certain God-given authority that leaders have in order to preside over, to lead, to direct, to protect, and to care for God's flock.

This is not a picture of tyranny, but rather of servant leadership. Leaders are those who give instruction, they admonish, they warn, they correct those in error for this faithful soul care they should be appreciated.

Responsibility number two is to esteem them. Again, this is found in 1 Thessalonians 5. Church members are also responsible to esteem their leaders.

The word esteem means to hold in high regard or to consider. Believers are to hold their leaders in high regard because of their work.

[18 : 29] The ministry is a high and holy work, and believers are here exhorted to place proper value on their leaders and to esteem them for their work's sake.

The next two responsibilities are found in the book of Hebrews. Responsibility number three is to obey them. Hebrews 13, verse 17, where we read, Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls as those who will have to give an account.

Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you. The third responsibility is that of obedience.

Obeys means to be persuaded or to listen to. It speaks of an obedience that is the result of confidence. It's not speaking of a weird, cultic allegiance to a man simply because of his position, but rather to obedience that stems from confidence in a man's ability to lead according to the Scriptures.

Leaders. Leaders are accountable to God and how they lead his sheep. To the extent that they love God and lead an exemplary life, they should be followed.

[19 : 56] Responsibility number four is to submit to them. Hebrews 13, verse 17, submission and obedience go hand in hand.

Full obedience requires submission of the heart. Submit means to yield under or to surrender. Believers are called to cheerfully rank themselves under their leaders because of the serious responsibility that the leaders have to watch over their souls.

To keep watch means to keep oneself awake. It implies that the leaders are watching and guarding at all times.

Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock. we read in Acts 20, verse 28. That was the apostles exhortation to the elders in Ephesus.

Leaders stand as a watchtower position always on the alert for the soul. Like the coast guard watches for storms or an air traffic controller for potential jet collisions, church leaders need to be aware of the subtle errors that can sneak into the church so they can warn God's people of potential danger.

[21 : 16] That type of watchfulness demands tireless effort. Church body is to submit to leadership for its own spiritual welfare. When this takes place, shepherding is a joy.

When it's not, joy disappears. The next responsibility is found in Paul's first letter to Timothy. Responsibility number five is to support them.

Find that in 1 Timothy 5 verse 17 where we read, Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those in preaching and teaching.

For the scripture says, you shall not muzzle an ox when it shreds out the grain and a laborer deserves his wages.

The apostle makes it crystal clear. The laborer is worthy of his wages. The double honor that teaching shepherds like a pastor are worthy includes honor or respect and financial remuneration.

[22 : 25] When a church does not adequately care for the material needs of its pastor and its family, his freedom to minister is most effectively hindered.

Like the ox that is not to be muzzled while it was threshing grain, so pastors must be free to get their living from the gospel. So the final two responsibilities of the church body to its leaders are again found in the book of Hebrews.

Responsibility six is to remember them. Again, Hebrews 13, 17. Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God.

Consider the outcome of their life and imitate their faith. Church members must remember their leaders. The word means to call to mind or to recollect or to be mindful.

fulfill. It means it's a command that the body is to constantly fulfill. Believers are to constantly call their leaders to mind.

[23 : 32] One of the best ways to fulfill this command is through prayer. Paul pleads with the believers at Thessalonica, pray for us, he says in 1 Thessalonians 5.

Perhaps there's no greater way for church members to love their leaders and to remember them as to keep them before God's throne of grace so that they may receive grace for their every need. Satan targets church leaders. If he can take down the shepherd, then he can scatter the sheep. Pray for your shepherds, but also be generous with words of affirmation, which are so beneficial for the health of a local church. Requires great self-sacrifice and courage to stand for sound doctrine and to faithfully preach the word of God week after week.

Year after year, decade after decade, believers need to remember their leaders by means of encouraging words and expressions of appreciation for their ministry.

[24 : 43] And responsibility number seven is to mimic them. again, Hebrews 13, verse seven. We're talking about following their faith.

This is why God's given qualifications in leadership. It's not that God does not want all believers to strive for these virtues. He does. However, leaders must fulfill these qualifications because people need visible role models.

be imitators of me just as I am of Christ, Paul says in 1 Corinthians 11. Paul was not being arrogant or bossy.

He was confident that he was doing his best to follow the Lord for his own life and could therefore tell others to follow him. When God's people imitate the lives of godly leaders, they become imitators of the gospel and its power is manifest before a watching world.

So let us appreciate, esteem, obey, submit to, support, discipline, remember, and imitate our church leaders so that the glory of God may be manifest in our church.

[25 : 59] So I just want to cover seven ways to care for your pastor. This is from another pastor. His name is Sean Wilhite. He says, first of all, pray for him and with him.

This is probably most obvious. Pastors need prayer every day. Not only are they bombarded with menial administrative tasks that steal their time, they're assaulted with temptations to pride, laziness, lust, among other things.

we ought to pray for their perseverance in remaining qualified, which includes being above reproach. Second of all, pray with your pastors.

Seek them out. Their hearts are as heavy as yours, and there's no greater joy than knowing the people of God are praying for you. Secondly, how about this one?

Talk to him about his sermon. On average, a pastor will spend anywhere from 10 to 20 hours of sermon prep. He preaches two or three messages a week.

[27 : 14] That means he spent 20 to 45 hours on sermon prep alone. If your pastor is an expository preacher, come prepare to hear God's word.

If he's preaching on a topical series, contact the office to figure out what topics or passages are coming up. Study the text before coming to church and ponder some thoughtful questions for him. A faithful shepherd finds great joy in explaining the word of God. Ask what he learned from his study. Ask a question that you had while reading about it.

Ask what theological issues the passage relates to and how. Begin a conversation about the sermon. After 20 plus hours of preparation, you have a good source of wisdom before you.

Three, tell him how God is growing you. The author writes, when I was a pastor, one of my greatest joys was hearing the sheep tell me how they are being refined.

[28 : 26] It's so encouraging to hear what they were learning and how the Lord was growing them. Notice Paul's response to hearing from a previous congregation.

Paul writes in 1 Thessalonians, but now that Timothy has come to us from you and has brought us the good news of your faith and love and reported that you always remember us kindly and long to see us as we long to see you for this reason.

brothers, in all our distress and affliction, we have been comforted about you and about your faith. This report brought great comfort and strength to Paul.

It put wind in his sails and it will rejuvenate your pastor when he hears about your growth in the Lord. Fourthly, care for him financially.

I see you were taking this offering for down payment assistance. That's one way of doing that. Pastors typically aren't making a lot of money. It's true he ought not to be shepherding the flock for personal gain, but if your pastor isn't paid generously, his mind and his heart are literally divided. [29 : 41] Let the elders who, this comes from 1 Timothy 5, let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of a double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching.

For the scripture says, you shall not muzzle an ox. This is the second time I've read this. We ought to make sure our pastors are financially stable. The local body combines their financial resources they give to the pastor to free him, the shepherd without concern for his poverty. You might want to consider watching his kids, although I think his kids are pretty much grown now. The suggestion is watch his kids so that he and his wife can have a date night out. Provide them with a family outing on your dime, maybe anonymously, and be creative, generous with your financial care. How about this one?

Number five, care for his wife. This pastor says that the pastor's wife has a difficult role.

[30 : 51] As a pastor, this author said it always discouraged me when I heard about a problem in church from my wife. He said, how did you hear that?

He'd ask. Well, someone in the church told her. Caring for your pastor means helping him protect his wife from much secret and ugly stuff that's happening in the church.

I promise you, she doesn't need to know everything. Moreover, have realistic expectations in her role. She's exactly like you, a servant of Christ, a wife trying to honor her husband.

She's exactly like you, a struggling and discouraged mother. She's exactly like you, a woman trying to honor the Lord with her life. She's exactly like you, an ordinary church member.

Love and serve her and then you would do others likewise in the body. Finally, seven, follow his leadership.

[32 : 03] Submitting to your pastor may be difficult, but you'll bring joy to his heart and to yours if you fall under his godly leadership. Obey your leaders and submit to them for they are keeping watch over your souls as those who will have to give an account.

Let them do this with joy and not with groaning for that would be of no advantage to you. A direct correlation exists between your obedience and your pastor's joy.

Work hard to submit gladly, not begrudgingly to their leadership. It's your savior's means of providing spiritual oversight to your Lord.

So on your way out, remember, one, the preaching of the word is one of the minister's chief tasks. And two, as a congregation, we are to welcome our pastor and to take the heart, the word of God as they proclaim it.

Amen. Please join me in prayer. O Lord, our God, you have given to us the glorious gospel of our risen savior and master.

[33 : 32] Grant that as we joyfully receive the good news for ourselves, so we may gratefully share it with others and ever give glory to you by whose grace alone we are what we are, through the same Lord Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen.