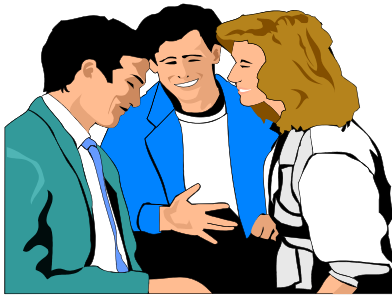


## THE PASTOR AND HIS PEOPLE



We are in the people business. Our main concern is not making money, building beautiful sanctuaries, delivering fiery sermons, or even amassing large numbers on our Sunday school registers. Our job is to persuade people to obey the plan of salvation and help them stay ready until they appear before Christ.

Noah preached to a congregation of seven who were all his kinsfolk. They believed him and were all saved. The rest of the world rejected his message and was lost. Was Noah's ministry a success? Yes!

Moses had a congregation of over 3 million. Because he had a large church, he dealt with a lot of people problems. Here's some advice gleaned from his experiences.

1. Moses' family was involved in leadership and became the focus of some of his problems. Aaron made a golden calf for the people to worship. Next, Aaron and Miriam spoke against their brother about his marriage to an Egyptian woman. Finally, his cousin Korah, along with 250 famous princes started a rebellion. Preachers, we must **watch out for trouble that can arise by using our family in leadership.**

2. Part of his church, a mixed multitude, had a spirit of lust that influenced others causing thousands to be killed by plagues. **People who are not where they should be in God are usually the ones responsible for stirring up unrest through criticism.** Beware of them.

3. Every man over 40 years old in his church died before they got to the Promise Land because of their doubting attitude. **Do not let negative people who lack faith get into influential positions.** It may cause the whole church to forfeit what God has for them.

4. Moses allowed the attitude of the people to rub off on him. Reacting to a problem instead of acting upon the problem cost him the privilege of seeing his dream come true. **We must control our emotional response to problems.** We must not become so involved in helping others solve their problems that we lose our own soul.

Moses may have been the meekest man on the face of the earth, but it seemed he pastored some of the meanest people. Their favorite pastime was complaining and backsliding. Every time a problem came up, they wanted to go back to Egypt. To compensate for all that, he was given a unique relationship with God. He spoke to God face to face.

Problems and privileges, that's pastoring.

If we want to be a preacher, we must love people and live so they will love us. We must love them whether they love us or not. It is a tough business. If we stay close to Jesus, we can do it. Without Him, we will have a physical and nervous breakdown. Keep in mind that our greatest rewards are out of this world.

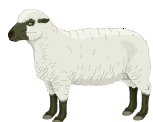
### His Church

The first time the word *church* is mentioned in the Bible we notice that Jesus calls it "**my church**" (Matthew 16:18). The reason it is His church is found in Acts 20:28 along with a warning:

*"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."*

Jesus bought this church with his blood. It is the pastor's job to take care of it and feed it. This is Jesus' church! We are just the managers. He owns it and tells us how to run it. The pastor is like Hegai who was in charge of keeping the women for king Ahasuerus in Esther chapter 2. Hegai's job was to give them such things as they needed for purification and prepare them to meet the king. Esther was chosen because she "required nothing but what Hegai, the king's chamberlain, appointed." Those who really want to please King Jesus will listen to and obey what the pastor tells them.

A wise pastor knows the difference between sheep and goats.



**A pastor is called to be a shepherd not a goat-herder.** Sheep have gentle natures and are easily led. Goats are identified by their natural habit of butting. They are always asking, "But why do I have to do this." A pastor needs to be on the lookout when goats are around. They are always trying to knock him down or horn into other people's business. Another characteristic of those with the goat spirit, is that they will eat anything. People who are swayed by every wind of doctrine and believe everything they hear are not sheep. A pastor needs to gently lead the sheep and allow the goats to go. We need to learn who is part of the church and who is not. Jesus brought salvation to affluent Zachaeus' house and let another rich man go away sorrowful. A wise pastor will allow Jesus to choose who belongs in His church. I have learned that the people I chased after the most are usually the ones who later cause the most trouble. Nevertheless, do not be too disappointed if you lose somebody. Even Jesus confessed he lost one that he had chosen, Judas. (See John 17:12.) Remember, it is His Church and their choice.

From the People's Viewpoint

What are people looking for in a pastor? Someone said, "**Give me love and purpose and I will follow you.**" Yes, people are looking for someone who is genuinely interested in them; not their pocketbook, nor their appearance, nor their abilities. People are looking for someone who sees potential in them. The greatest leader is the man who can bring out the best in someone else.

*People want someone who can give them a worthwhile goal and then develop them until they reach that goal.*

People want someone they can look up to and respect. A leader is a leader because he is ahead of the rest. His morals must be higher. His thoughts must be on a different plane. His enthusiasm is more contagious. His commitment is greater. People want someone who challenges them by their own example to be and to do better. We must never do anything that destroys their respect of us. We should never talk down to them when we are in the pulpit or in person. We must never lower ourselves by unmannerly conduct.

*People are looking for someone who excels, yet is still common.*

**A humble man sees himself as God sees him.** A proud man sees himself the way he wants others to see him. The reason Jesus' ministry was so well received is found in *Mark 12:37*, "*And the common people heard him gladly.*" Remember, the majority of people in His church will be ordinary, hard-working, blue collar, everyday people. There will not be many "*wise, mighty, or noble*" (*I Corinthians 1:26*). Why was Jesus born in a stinking, fly infested, feeding trough? Why did Jesus do manual labor, working with His hands, until finally at age 30 He began His ministry? Why did Jesus use stories from the common person's life when teaching about great spiritual truths? Jesus never got out of touch with the people to whom He was ministering. He was one of them, accepted by them, and yet there was something about Him that made even the centurion say, "*Truly this was the Son of God*" (*Matthew 27:54*).



**Remember,  
Your Boss Is  
a Jewish  
Carpenter!**

Later on when God blesses us, we must not lose the ability to relate to the common man. It is not a sin for a preacher to play ball or wear jeans at the Church picnic. A policeman does not wear his uniform to go fishing nor demand that everyone recognize who he is. A pastor should avoid exhibiting material blessings in front of the saints. Some of them just got in the Church and are struggling. They may not understand you are reaping after years of sowing. A good way to bridge this

gap is to allow them to share some of your blessing. Returning a saint's tithing when a financial emergency arises in their life is a kindness not soon forgotten.

*One of the pastors I had went to buy a new car. Instead, he bought a medium-priced rental car. He taught me that we should live within our means. Are we "lords over God's heritage" or "ensamples to the flock"? (See I Peter 5:3.)*

May our life be lived so that we can say as Paul, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ" (I Corinthians 11:1). People are looking for someone to follow who loves them and will help them be their best for God.

### **Maintaining Good Relationships with Our Saints**

My father who was a layman once said to me, "Son, remember we are just saints". God didn't call us, give us that burden or extra insight and anointing like he did you. Be gentle on us and understand our lesser role." He was right. We are not making preachers out of them, just saints.

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| <p><i>One of the hardest things for us to do is to preach high expectations, and learn to live with less until the saint grows into that new dimension.</i></p> |
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We must always be "*pressing for the mark*," yet realizing that we are *not* "*already perfect*" or "*had already attained*" (Philippians 3:12-15). We can discourage the people by too high "standards" and deceiving ourselves into thinking we are God's perfect gift to them. A pastor needs to remember that he was a saint before God called him to preach.

Another area that we must develop in order to maintain good relationships with our people is to **be accessible, confidential, and trustworthy when dealing with problems**. Do people feel comfortable coming to me with their needs or problems? People have problems. They want answers. They are willing to be corrected if done properly without damaging their feeling of self-worth. They do not want something they tell us to be repeated to someone else. They need someone they can talk to confidentially. They need someone who will not condemn; they know they have a problem. They are looking for someone with answers or at least someone willing to help. The problem is not the person but what is motivating them to do what they are doing. Can we separate fact from feeling; truth from prejudice; emotion from hurt? There are two sides to every conflict. The loudest and most demanding is usually wrong. When we are finished, does that saint leave feeling defeated or encouraged?

How do you deal with all the different personality types of people?

• 1 Thessalonians 5:14 “Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men.”

Deal with them like God does.

• Psalms 18:25-27 “With the merciful thou wilt show thyself merciful; with an upright man thou wilt show thyself upright; With the pure thou wilt show thyself pure; and with the froward thou wilt show thyself froward. For thou wilt save the afflicted people; but wilt bring down high looks.”

Here are some scriptures we should remember when dealing with people who have problems.

• 2 Timothy 2:24-26 “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; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.”



Satan snares people and they will not even know it! It is our job to reveal to them what is happening to them.



• Galatians 6:1 “Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such as one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.”

Consider these aspects when dealing with a problem:

1. Am I acting to solve the problem or reacting to the problem?
2. What is the motive, the spirit, or cause behind this problem?
3. Do they want to solve the problem or dump it on me?
4. Am I showing kindness and humility to the person who has the problem?

There are two reasons why people do business with a particular company:

- (1) It makes them feel good.
  - (2) It meets their needs or solves their problem.
- If we can do this for the people we pastor, they will not want to leave.

Another area we should consider is that of building meaningful relationships through time set aside for personal interaction between our saints and ourselves. Pastors of small churches have to avoid becoming too familiar with their people. Familiarity can breed contempt. On the other hand, pastors of large churches can become so busy managing from a position that the average church attendee does not feel comfortable approaching him. Our people need to know us better than just a figure behind the pulpit or someone they visit when they have a problem. They want to share some of their “good times” with us also. One way we can do this is to have a monthly social event that involves eating together. Notice how many

miracles Jesus did and the people he saved around food. Here are some other ideas to consider. Have a new convert supper at the pastor's house. How about having a Wednesday night supper in a dining facility with the pastor giving a informal talk afterward? Maybe the church could rent a park facility on Saturday to barbecue and have some recreation. Pastors should especially spend time with their leaders as Jesus did with those He had chosen. The time we invest in others is time well spent.

### Conclusion

*If we will build bridges between ourselves, when problems come, they will help us cross the barriers separating us.*

People are looking for a pastor who is humble, kind, understanding and patient. He must be able to identify with his people as Jesus did in Hebrews 2:17-18. He must lead but not be cocky. He must excel but not be too demanding. He must be able to deal with their problems without damaging their self-image. He must be able to build them up, decrease himself, and lift up Christ.

The greatest pastor is sometimes not the most sought-after preacher. He has concentrated on leading and feeding the flock to which he was assigned, not on being the most eloquent speaker. In heaven, the pastor's greatest reward will be the percentage of souls that made it from his congregation, not the cheap laurels of man's praise left behind in the world below.

One final scripture for your consideration:

*●II Corinthians 6:3-10 "Giving no offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed: But in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, In stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings; By pureness, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, By the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left; By honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report: as deceivers, and yet true; As unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and, behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed; As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things."*

### **The Perfect Preacher**

A recent article in the Christian Beacon announces that the perfect preacher has been found!

After hundreds of years, a model preacher has been found to suit everybody! He preaches 20 minutes, and then sits down. He condemns sin, but never hurts anyone's feelings.

He works from 8 AM to 10 PM in every type of work, from preaching to custodial service. He makes \$60.00 a week, wears good clothes, buys good books regularly, has a nice family, drives a good car, and gives \$30.00 a week to the church. He also stands ready to contribute to every good work that comes along.

He is 26 years old and has been preaching for 30 years. He is tall and short, thin and heavy-set, handsome. He has one brown eye and one blue; hair parted in the middle—left side dark and straight, the right side brown and wavy.

He has a burning desire to work with teenagers, and spends all his time with older folks. He smiles all the time with a straight face because he has a sense of humor that keeps him seriously dedicated to his work.

He makes 15 calls a day on church members, spends all his time evangelizing the unchurched, and is never out of his office.

From the *Wesleyan Advocate*

Further Recommended Reading:

*Dear Pastor: If the Sheep Could Speak*

Author, Ralph V. Reynolds

Available through Pentecostal Publishing House



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