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THE PASTOR:

Pastor's Needs

The work of the pastor:

The pastor-teacher, the church's leading elder, is a man who has a very rewarding yet very difficult job to fulfill. In many churches the pastor has so many different responsibilities that he may not even understand what his main job really is at times. Not only do the members of his church expect him to be available for them 24 hours a day if a problem arises, but at times he may find himself being the church janitor, plumber, carpenter, doctor, chauffeur, delivery boy, counselor, treasurer, baby-sitter, etc., etc., etc. He is expected to have the wisdom of Solomon, the strength of Samson, the humility of Moses, the patience of Job, the skills of Noah, the heart of David, the knowledge of Paul, as well as the abilities of Jesus to do the miraculous. He is to be everything that everyone in the congregation wants him to be. On top of this, he usually has a family to care for and a job which he needs to support his family. Though it is impossible to find such a man -- one who is able to meet all the desires of his church members -- nonetheless this is often what the church expects. Not only that, they usually expect him to do it for little or no pay.



The pastor's needs:

One reason the pastor's job can be difficult is because the church fails to pay him an adequate salary; that is if they pay him one at all. This makes his life difficult, having to live modestly and always struggling to provide for his family and pay his bills. A church which treats its pastor poorly is not taking into account the importance of his role within the church of Jesus Christ. It is also not mindful that one day they will have to answer to Jesus for why they did not treat him better. Poor support (prayer or financial) on their part shows a lack of respect for him and his position as their pastor. Furthermore, such attitudes do not reflect the Scriptures and what they teach on this topic. In 1 Corinthians 9:1-14, the Apostle Paul made it clear that "the Lord directed those who proclaim the gospel to get their living from the gospel" (vs. 14). In these verses, Paul showed the Corinthians that they should have supported him and Barnabas (and their families if they had them), so they did not have to work outside the church (cf. vss. 5-6). They should have been able to reap material things as a result of having sown spiritual things in the lives of the Corinthian believers (vss. 4,7,10-11). But instead of doing the right thing, the Corinthians

were muzzling the ox (cf. vs. 9). Along these lines, Paul told Timothy: "The elders who rule well are to be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching. For the Scripture says, 'YOU SHALL NOT MUZZLE THE OX WHILE HE IS THRESHING,' and 'The laborer is worthy of his wages.'" (1 Timothy 5:17-18). Those elders who "rule well" and work hard at teaching and preaching are to receive "double honor;" in other words, receive greater pay for their service than those who do just the minimum required. Why? Because "the laborer is worthy of his wages." The pastor should be paid for his work; and if he is paid, this will enable him to devote more time and energy to the work of the Lord, accomplishing much more. The members of the church who do not give their money, possessions or time to support the work of the Lord (i.e., giving for their pastor's salary and to help pay the bills, support missions, etc.), show where their hearts lie in relationship to their faith and to their God (cf. 2 Cor. 9:12-14).

Another need of a pastor is time alone with his family. Sometimes church members expect their pastors to be available for them every time there is the slightest problem. They forget that their pastor needs time alone to rest and be with his family. This is of utmost importance. This relationship needs to be protected by the church so that their pastor and his family do not suffer from his constant service to others. The pastor needs to set time aside when the church members should not contact him, except in times of extreme emergency. The pastor should notify his church of these times and why they are important so the members will understand his need and learn to respect this time.

It is also essential that the pastor be prayed for by the members of his church. The pastor and his family are under great spiritual attack. Satan desires to destroy them (cf. 1 Pet. 5:8-9), therefore it is important that they be held up in prayer on a regular basis. The pastor needs to be open and willing to share his needs regularly with the congregation so they can effectively pray for him and his family. Some needs should be shared with other pastors rather than with his congregation. This is why the pastor should attend a pastors' fellowship which meets on a regular basis for the purpose of prayer and encouragement. This type of fellowship is recommended for the pastor's wife as well.

A final need of the pastor is addressed in 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13: "But we request of you, brethren, that you appreciate those who diligently labor among you, and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction, and that you esteem them very highly in love because of their work." The pastor, as well as the other elders who work diligently in the church, is to be appreciated and esteemed very highly in love because of his work. The pastor is to be treated well and respected. Paying him an adequate salary for his work will reflect in part the application of these instructions of Paul. Please note that those who receive such honor are those who deserve it because of their diligent work (1 Tim. 5:17-18; 1 Thes. 5:12).

APPLICATION QUESTIONS:



1. As a pastor, are you sharing your responsibilities of the ministry with your elders, or do you feel that you are to be in charge and do everything yourself? If you are not sharing your responsibilities, why not? How will you change this?
2. Are you receiving any kind of regular salary from your church? If so, is it sufficient to meet your needs? If you are receiving a salary which is not sufficient, or you are not receiving a salary at all, what can be done to change this? List some ideas below.
3. Have you or any of your elders ever preached a message on 1 Corinthians 9:1-14? Do the members of your church understand their responsibility to you?
4. Are you and your wife a part of a pastors' fellowship where you can be involved in prayer and fellowship with others in your position of ministry? If not, is there a way for you to join or start such a group?
5. Do the members of your church pray for you and your family on a regular basis? If not, how will you help them participate in this vital ministry for you?

6. Do the people of your church respect and love you as their pastor, as well as the other elders of the church? Do they respect your time alone with your family? If not, do you know why? How can this be changed?

SPECIFIC QUESTIONS FOR CROSS-CULTURAL MISSIONARIES AND CHURCH PLANTERS:

1. How well do you share authority with others? Will it be easy for you to share your authority with others in the church? If it is hard for you to do this, how can you become a person who does not have to be in charge of everything and able to share responsibility?
2. When will you start to receive a salary from your church? How will you determine when this should begin? How will you determine how much you should accept? How will you prepare the people of the church to understand that paying you a salary is biblical and anticipated?
3. How will you protect the time that you need alone with your family? What will you do to make sure that you do not burn out because of overwork and the demands of others?
4. Encourage your church to pray for you and your family. How will you communicate this vital need to the members of your church?
5. How can you develop a love and respect for your church's leaders by the members of your church?