



THE PASTOR'S
GUIDE TO
MINISTRY

THE PASTOR'S GUIDE TO MINISTRY

FEC

Fellowship of Evangelical Churches

INTRODUCTION

This handbook will be a valuable resource for each pastor, minister and credentialed worker. It addresses a variety of practical issues having to do with both the professional and the personal lives of those called to vocational Christian ministry.

In this handbook the word "pastor" is used to refer to men who are ordained or who have a Pastor's License. The word "minister" is used to refer to men or women who have a Ministry License. (Manual, pp. 41-45)

The **Pastor's Guide to Ministry** has been written primarily for FEC pastors. However, it will be valuable to all persons who hold a ministry or service license in FEC. In addition it will be of value to many individuals serving in positions of lay leadership and ministry in a congregation.

This publication constitutes Part One of the **Guide to Ministry**. Part Two, Helps for Pastoral Ministry, to be published later, will be a looseleaf notebook with forms and other data for various ministry functions.

All scripture references come from the NIV unless otherwise noted.

When **Manual** is used, it refers to the **FEC Manual of Faith, Practice and Organization**.

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PROLOGUE

AS YOU CONSIDER YOUR CALL

All Christians are called by God to a life of discipleship and service to Christ. (Rom. 11:1-2). He, however, calls some to serve in roles of vocational Christian ministry. One of these roles is pastoral ministry.

Throughout the Bible God called persons for specific roles of leadership in ministry. Examples include Moses, Samuel, Isaiah, Jeremiah, the apostles (including Paul), Timothy and Titus. Passages such as Eph. 4:11-12 and 1 Tim. 3:1-7 clearly show the special role of vocational Christian ministry.

An examination of Scripture clearly reveals God's call upon the lives of these biblical examples. He continues to call people into roles of vocational ministry. Though today God's call is not normally audible, there is still adequate basis by which the pastor can determine the veracity of his call.

First, there is the inescapable conviction that God has his hand upon the one called to pastoral ministry. The Apostle Paul expresses it this way: "...I am compelled to preach. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!" (1 Cor. 9:16). The man who is called by God has an inner conviction given by the Holy Spirit. Second, the life of the one called to pastoral ministry must have the personal qualifications and gifts as listed in 1 Timothy 3. There ought to be ability and skill in the work of shepherding. While every one called into pastoral ministry would acknowledge his own personal inadequacy, he must be willing to declare with conviction, "Our competence comes from God. He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant" (2 Cor. 3:5-6). Third, the body of Christ should confirm what God has impressed upon the one he calls. As the body enables its members to discover and exercise their spiritual gifts, the one called into vocational Christian ministry should be encouraged to cultivate and exercise his gifts under the care of the local congregation. Then the body which has observed and assisted the one called can confirm the divine commission of God that says: "Set this one apart for the work to which I have called him" (Acts 13:2)

The call to pastoral ministry is not merely an individual's choice in a smorgasbord of good things to do. God's call is born of the Holy Spirit's work in the believer's life and leads to the conviction that "This is the way, walk in it." (Isa. 30:21)

I. THE PASTOR AND HIS PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

A. Devotional Life

The devotional life of the pastor refers to the discipline of maintaining and developing one's relationship with God. Though almost everyone would verbally express some commitment to this discipline, it must not be assumed that all pastors would regularly experience it. Excuses and pressures that prevent this will have to be dealt with honestly. There is no substitute for this discipline in discharging all the duties of the pastoral ministry.

One of the essential ingredients of a pastor's devotional life is involvement with God's Word. Though it is evident that reading and studying God's Word is necessary in preparation for preaching and teaching, growth in one's relationship with God requires a more intimate encounter with His Word. Before one can do well at teaching and encouraging others, Paul exhorts, "*Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly*" (Colossians 3:16). For this to happen, there must be deliberate effort to let his word be at home in one's heart, implanted so deeply that its truth has full impact upon every thought, plan and decision. The process begins with reading and studying God's Word with sufficient depth to understand what it means. This is followed with meditation in which a Scripture passage is thought through and digested in one's mind and heart until it becomes a natural pattern of thinking. This can be enhanced through memorization of Scripture, through music and singing the songs of our faith, and through reading Christian classics, biographies and devotional materials. The climax of the process is choosing to personalize the truth as an expression of one's love for the Lord and to apply it in a way that is visible in attitudes and actions. This practice is a giant step toward spiritual maturity and effectual ministry.

A second ingredient of a pastor's devotional life is involvement in prayer. As God expresses his heart to man through the Bible, so man expresses his heart to God through prayer. Prayer is the completion of the cycle of communication between God and man that keeps the relationship vital and growing.

The Apostle Paul writes, "*Pray continually*" (1 Thessalonians 5:17). This implies that prayer is both an attitude and an activity. It requires the maintenance of a prayerful atmosphere moment by moment throughout the day as well as a daily program and period for prayer. Its content will include praise, confession, petition and intercession. The pastor in prayer should reflect the devotion of a son, the submission of a servant and the passion of an intercessor.

It is clear that there is no substitute for the disciplines of daily time with God in his word and in prayer. This is the path the Master trod for strength and perspective. This is the path which the pastor must take toward a sincere faith and a vital ministry. There are no shortcuts here. The demand for working on priorities and schedules remains constant. Even in this, the pastor does not work alone. The Lord is faithful to his servants, providing wisdom from above which enables the pastor to balance the ministry's demands while finding time for growth in spiritual strength and devotion.

B. Character

Character is the sum of a person's values, qualities and traits. It confers distinctiveness and serves as an index to that person's essential or intrinsic nature. A faulty inner heart may be covered for a time, but a faulty character cannot be hidden. It will cost the blessing of God and limit the effectiveness of ministry. In addition, faulty character may disqualify one for the pastoral vocation.

A pastor must strive to develop and model a life of highest character. The Apostle Paul calls this a "new life" (Romans 6:4), a "life worthy of the calling" (Ephesians 4:1), a "holy life" (2 Timothy 1:9), and a "godly life" (2 Timothy 3:12). It is "new" because it is characterized by all the qualities that are antithetical to the old nature. It is "worthy of the calling" because it is consistent with the designed vocation. It is "holy" because it is set apart unto purity. It is "godly" in that it is genuinely Christlike.

The pursuit of good character requires building from the inside out. It is God the Holy Spirit who provides the inner potential and produces the spiritual fruit. This process requires living in submission to the Holy Spirit, keeping in step with him, and being led by him (Galatians 5:18, 25). The delightful result of this is a distinctive character that manifests the beautiful qualities that please God and make a pastor fruitful in his work and witness (Galatians 5:22, 23).

Moving toward this goal will entail commitment and convictions. This commitment is to the Lord and his word. Who he is and what he says must have priority over every other person or idea. Living with that commitment will build the intensity of inner conviction that holds one steady in maintaining a noble character in times of discouragement, distractions, or temptation.

In view of Satan's pressure toward deceit, truthfulness in the inner man is indispensable. Honesty toward God, toward one's self and toward others is perhaps the most significant virtue for character building and maintenance. Denial of feelings or thoughts or actions that are not in harmony with God and his word will only perpetuate a life of hypocrisy and prevent the growth, the respect and the witness of a good character.

To maintain this quality of integrity and the benefit of a good reputation, accountability is of great importance. It is advisable for the pastor to seek out at least one other man with whom he can be completely vulnerable concerning his inner feelings, various relationships, and ministry activity. This practice will serve as a preventative to a downward slide in thought life and to an eventual breakdown in morality and character.

A ruined character cannot be restored easily or rapidly. It may also leave a lasting mark on the lives of many others. Therefore, each pastor must take heed about what is happening on the inside to avoid a breakdown in character and reputation that will cause the name of Jesus Christ to be blasphemed, damage the witness of the church in its community and destroy a valuable, personal ministry planned by God.

C. Family

The pastor must make every effort for him and his family to be an example to those he serves in his church, as well as those outside the church. In order for that to happen, the pastor who is married must consider his wife and children as critical and significant parts of his life and ministry. Very few pastors neglect family and home by design. The pastor's family fails when he neglects to work at and apply in his home and family some of the same management and administrative skills necessary for work in the local church. The pastor must realize that if he is failing at home with his wife and children, he has no right to be leading a local congregation. For "if anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?" (1 Timothy 3:5). If there is failure in the home because of inadequate or poor management, in time there will be failures in the church.

1. The Pastor and His Wife

The "one-flesh" relationship between the husband and wife is much more than physical; it is also spiritual, intellectual, and emotional. That one-flesh relationship ought to be a growing experience in all four of those areas. Because of society's moral ills and the unique hazards of ministry, the pastor must take active steps to maintain and guard the strength and purity of his marriage. This can be accomplished by regularly evaluating the relationship in those four areas:

a. Physical

A couple growing together in love ought to find that their sexual relationship is providing an increasing level of meaning and enjoyment. If there is dissatisfaction with the sexual relationship in the marriage, there is the potential for finding sexual satisfaction outside of the marriage.

b. Spiritual

Spiritual oneness is accomplished as the husband, who is both initiator and leader, shares with his wife in the spiritual disciplines of prayer, Bible study, and worship on a regular basis. As the spiritual disciplines are practiced together, the Spirit of God will unite attitudes and goals because there has been a common sharing of the things of God.

c. Intellectual

Intellectual capacities and abilities vary with every person. But in order for the pastor and his wife to share a oneness in intellectual areas, they should participate in some activities that will stretch and challenge both of them at the same time, e.g. the reading of some of the same books, taking a class together, etc.

d. Emotional

Emotional oneness comes when two people deliberately share the same world of time, interests, feelings, thoughts, goals, and ideals. Undistracted periods of time spent together on a regular basis, perhaps alone and away from the routines of home and the

church, are strongly recommended for the communication of experiences, dreams, fears and secrets couples would tell no one else. Talking in private about these matters builds emotional oneness as nothing else can.

Few things are as important as the health of the pastor's marriage. While certain periods of married life will produce greater levels of growth in different areas, growth in oneness in some areas ought to be occurring regularly. If not, the pastor must not allow the sin of pride to keep him from seeking counsel and help.

2. The Pastor, His Wife, and Their Children

In addition to the normal difficulties of growing up, there are other unique challenges facing the pastor's children. This can make growing up as a pastor's child difficult. But difficulties can be minimized if the pastor and his wife work diligently at the following:

a. Maintaining a Consistent Christian Walk

The private behavior of the pastor and his wife in the home should not be markedly different from their public image. When the public image is seriously out of line with their family life, they are bound to struggle and possibly fail with their children. Because children are quick to spot hypocrisy in their parents, serious discrepancies between public image and private family life will often result in family breakdown. When this happens, children often rebel against the Lord and dishonor their parents. The pastor's children should want to become Christians because of the consistent quality and character of their parents' lives, both in public and private.

b. Taking Time with Their Children

Each child needs time alone on a regular basis with each parent. At times this may not be easy to accomplish, but the pastor usually has the advantage of determining his own schedule. Therefore, the pastor and his wife must make it a priority, on a consistent basis, to plan for both scheduled and spontaneous times with their children. The children, though, must never see themselves as only an appointment on their parent's calendar. They should know that they have priority with and access to their parents at any time.

c. Leading Their Children in the Spiritual Disciplines

As the pastor has leadership responsibilities for the nurture and spiritual growth of his congregation, he must also take the leadership responsibility for the nurture and spiritual growth of their children. This means taking time with them for prayer, Bible study, and worship on a regular basis.

A man's call to the gospel ministry of a local church may change, but the call to be a husband and father does not. Therefore, he must maintain a constant vigil of sensitivity, discerning even the subtle signs of need both in his wife and children. Someday the pastor will stand before God, hoping to hear from him the words, "Well done, good and faithful servant" (Matthew 25:21). In order to hear those words, the pastor must have served faithfully both in

his home and the church. But the pastor's first priority must be to serve faithfully the ones God has placed closest to him--his wife and children.

3. The Pastor and His Extended Family

Any man is a son long before he becomes a husband or father. The quality of his relationships with his parents and siblings is a strong determinant in how well he functions as a husband and father in the family of his own making. The Bible instructs each person to keep honoring one's parents. This means that a pastor will continue to develop a caring relationship with each of his parents and will seek to be available to them in their times of need.

Generally, a pastor will function better, both personally and professionally, if he is the recipient of his parents' blessing. It is important for each adult to have parental acceptance and respect. In situations where this is lacking, the pastor is encouraged to be especially aware of God's acceptance and blessing.

For the pastor, warm and caring sibling relationships serve as a good balance to relationships with people in the congregation where he is serving. The ongoing quality of relationships within one's own extended family is important, too, in helping one to function well within the context of his extended family through marriage.

D. Time Management

It should go without saying that when God calls a person into ministry, he does not extend the length of the day in which the pastor must perform his duties. Because the pastor's time is limited and his duties can seem unlimited, being a wise manager of time is of paramount importance. Time management will help ensure the necessary balance between the demands of personal and professional life and among duties within the pastoral role. How well a person manages time within the pastoral role often determines the adequacy of time needed to conduct the affairs of personal life.

1. Managing Time Between Personal and Professional Life

Time management often boils down to matching the allotment of time with the relative importance of each activity falling into the personal and professional realms of life. One's personal life necessarily includes family, leisure and non-church interests and pursuits. Professional life includes the various responsibilities which accompany administering the church, sermon and lesson preparation, visitation, counseling, etc. The wise pastor pays close attention to and controls this allotment of time and energy apportioned to personal life and professional life.

It is good to establish an understanding with the employing church regarding the expected number of hours per week spent fulfilling the pastoral role. This provides a guideline both for the pastor and the church. Quantifying the approximate hours helps to maintain the pastor's integrity with his employing church and fulfills the church's need to reduce the risk of burnout and other problems which arise from "overworking." A general rule of

thumb may be 45 hours plus the weekly number of hours spent by such persons as deacons, elders, or teachers fulfilling their ministry in the church.

There is a balance to this matter of keeping track of hours, however. The pastor is called to faithfulness which demands hard work and hard work sometimes means long hours. Also, since there is no one who keeps track of the pastor's hours, there may be room (and temptation) for slothfulness. Kent Hughes provides a helpful warning in his book *Liberating the Church from the Success Syndrome*. Regarding the pastoral role, he says, "There are no clocks to punch or time cards to turn in. So if a man is not a self-starter, it is so easy to come in late and go home early. It is also very easy to let prayer and sermon preparation slip, and generally, to imagine that extraneous interests are 'ministry.'"

With that balance in mind, the importance of time off cannot be overlooked. Pastors who shun the idea of time off may appear more dedicated to the task, but in the long run this is costly to the church, the pastor and his family. A healthy family life necessitates concentrated time for "togetherness." A healthy marriage demands the same. In this case quality time is often quantity of time. The pastor who is concerned with building togetherness must not ignore the value of both quality and quantity of time.

Also, the pastor who neglects the pursuit of interests outside of "church" usually finds himself unfulfilled. Outside interests serve as bases for the formation and building of relationships. A parishioner appreciates a pastor who takes time off to become more well-rounded and balanced in this way. The wise use of time off and the cultivation of the marriage and family relationships will reap long-lasting rewards for both the employing church and the pastor.

2. Managing Time Within the Pastoral Role

As stated above, time management has to do with the allotment of time based on priorities. Priorities are established in connection with assigned responsibilities for each pastor. Every pastorate demands a different mix with respect to time allotment for each aspect of the ministry. For example, when a church is made up of predominantly younger people, the pastor generally will give more time to counseling and less to hospital visitation. A larger church with multiple staff will demand a senior pastor's time given to staff oversight. A smaller church may mean a pastor has little or no oversight responsibilities for staff.

Every pastor must give adequate time for the task of preparing to preach and teach the Word. This follows from Paul's exhortation to Timothy, the young pastor at Ephesus. *"Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth"* (2 Timothy 2:15).

The Bible indicates that prayer holds an equally important priority for a pastor's ministry. This is asserted in the example of the Twelve in Acts 6:1-4 who appointed deacons in order to *"give attention to prayer and the ministry of the Word"* (vs. 4).

Worship planning, discipling, visitation, conference ministry--and the list of tasks which

calls for the pastor's time goes on. Therefore, a basic understanding of priorities and a disciplined approach to time management are two indispensable tools for every pastor.

E. Finances

1. A Twofold Obligation to Provide

There is a dual obligation for financial provision in the ministry. First, there is the obligation of the congregation to provide enough for the pastor to maintain a lifestyle commensurate with the lifestyle of the majority of those in the congregation and fitting with the standard of the people living in the surrounding community. This seems to be in keeping with the biblical teaching of 1 Timothy 5:17-18.

The other obligation is that of the pastor for his family. 1 Timothy 5:8 says *"If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever."* The pastor is not exempt from this mandate. It is incumbent upon the pastor to provide adequately in a material sense for his family. When this does not happen, tension mounts and the home life begins to adversely affect his ministry.

In some cases, where the church cannot provide adequately for the pastor, taking a part-time job may not be out of the question. Though circumstances will differ with each pastor and within each church, a mutually beneficial arrangement usually can be arrived at which will keep finances from being a point of derision or bad will. In more "extreme" cases, a pastor may have to resign, take a secular job, and wait until God provides him with a pastorate in a church that can meet the physical needs of his family. However, in all cases, the pastor must ensure that his decisions and actions do not dishonor the pastoral office and the ministry of the local church.

Finally, pastors must remember that God's call is to ministry, not salary. The Scripture calls every believer to contentment, not a seeking after more. Finally, a pastor's decisions about his ministry should finally maintain a proper balance of need, contentment, money management, and sacrifice for Christ.

2. The Pastor's Obligation to Manage Well

Whether or not a pastor and his family decide to live by a budget is optional. At the least, however, there must be a faithful managing of money which is entrusted to the pastor in the sight of God. "Managing well" means covering certain financial bases, such as:

a. The Tithe or Offering

The pastor is called upon to lead his flock in everything. This includes leadership in generosity and giving. The regular setting aside of a (generous) portion of that which God has entrusted is a "non-negotiable" part of managing well.

b. The Payment of Debt

Today's economic climate makes it difficult to live virtually debt free all the time. Though that is a worthy goal for most, if not all pastors, how the pastor handles the debt incurred is an even more important testimony to our ability to manage well. The none-use of credit for purchasing basic necessities seems most prudent. For some purchases, credit card use is reasonable as a means of delaying payment for the short term. But debt which necessitates extended payments with accrued interest charges is an unwise use of money. In light of this, a pastor should limit his use of debt to the purchase of a home and perhaps an automobile. But the bottom line is this: Always pay what is owed on time. This will guard the pastor's character and ministry from falling into disrepute. Finally, the pastor, as a rule, should never borrow from those within his congregation.

c. Insurance

It is not so much a sign of faith to live without insurance as it is a sign of personal financial mismanagement. Given the current environment of escalating medical costs and the increased likelihood of litigation and liability, no one can afford to be without basic insurance. This includes a major medical plan for the entire family, car insurance, home or renter's insurance, life insurance and, adequate disability insurance. For the pastor who has opted out of Social Security, it is especially important to have adequate disability insurance.

d. Retirement Planning

Pastors who are not in Social Security have an added responsibility for retirement planning. Pastors who are in Social Security should not think their retirement planning is completed. In fact, to even hope to maintain an approximate current lifestyle, a disciplined, regular setting aside of a portion of current income for retirement is encouraged. This may be done by the use of an IRA account, which offers the advantage of tax deferral of the portion of income set aside, subject to certain limitations. FEC offers a pension plan which is partly funded by the denomination, with the remaining amount contributed by the pastor or his church. Many other vehicles for retirement planning are available as well. It is best for a pastor, even with a small amount to set aside, to consult a trusted financial advisor. For the pastor who has never established equity in a home, additional planning is necessary to ensure a place to live upon retirement.

e. Savings

A regular, disciplined savings program continues to make sense, even for a pastor whose income is "limited" and in a day when the economic surroundings make finances tight. Savings may be attained through a withholding arrangement by the church by direct deposit or through any other type of arrangement which is convenient. Some financial advisors counsel that it is wise for any family to maintain savings equal to 3 months' of living expenses for possible periods of unemployment or emergency needs.

f. Estate Planning

A Christian's stewardship over personal wealth does not stop at death. It can continue through the careful pre-planning for the dispersal of one's estate after death through such instruments as will, trusts, etc. A professional who is well-versed in the law regarding estates and trusts should be contacted for help in estate planning. Even if one's estate seems monetarily insignificant, that person should make arrangements through a will for the care of dependents.

II. THE PASTOR AND HIS RELATIONSHIPS

A. Multiple Staff

When a church adds an additional person to the pastoral staff, an atmosphere is created that will necessitate the development of some new skills by the senior pastor. Three necessary skills are communication, delegation, and evaluation.

Communication. The senior pastor must verbalize to each staff person his objectives and goals for the church's ministry. It is not sufficient to assume that these will be picked up through observation. It is helpful for both the senior pastor and his staff to put objectives and goals into writing and to review these periodically.

Communication is a two-way street. Not only must the senior pastor articulate clearly, he must listen carefully. He needs to be aware of the achievements, the frustrations and the excitement of each staff person. The priority responsibility for good communications lies with the senior pastor.

Delegation. The senior pastor needs to assign responsibilities to each staff person. This can be difficult for some pastors for at least two reasons: 1) the staff person may not do the job as well as, or in the same way as, the senior pastor; 2) the senior pastor must share the credit for a job well done.

It is not enough to assume that a staff person will "catch" the areas to be delegated. These must be carefully spelled out in writing. Once agreed upon by the ministerial staff and, if necessary, approved by the church board, both the senior pastor and ministerial staff are expected to live by the arrangement.

Evaluation. The senior pastor needs to evaluate the job done by each staff person. Ultimately, in cooperation with the elected lay leadership, he is responsible for the total pastoral ministry of the congregation.

In the process of evaluating staff, the pastor must be able to give both affirmation and correction. It is important to remember that genuine affirmation will build a relationship between the senior pastor and his staff. His correction will be well received, only to the extent that a good relationship has been built.

I. Ministerial Staff

a. Senior Pastor Relating to Staff

The senior pastor must recognize that he leads the ministerial staff, both in commitment to the total ministry of the church and in having the most comprehensive perspective of that ministry.

He needs to build a personal relationship with each ministerial staff member, keeping in mind that the goals of that relationship are to develop the ministry of the staff member and to build the ministry of the church. The relationship is not for the purpose of having his own needs met.

He needs to keep each staff minister accountable to him. It is recommended that a senior pastor assume the primary responsibility in the supervision of a staff minister.

He needs to encourage each staff minister. Encouragement is facilitated by spending time together, praying together, planning together and playing together.

The attitude of the senior pastor toward his ministerial staff helps to influence the congregation's attitude toward the staff. A wise senior pastor looks for opportunities to compliment and thank his ministerial staff members.

b. Staff Relating to Senior Pastor

It is imperative that each ministerial staff member maintain genuine respect for the role of the senior pastor. The staff should always be clear about the objective and the goals of the senior pastor before developing their specific areas of ministry.

When a staff minister has a disagreement with the senior pastor, that person should talk first to the senior pastor. The staff is strengthened each time that a disagreement can be verbalized and processed.

One of the more common problems that occurs between a senior pastor and his ministerial staff centers on differing philosophies of work. It is important that each person articulate his own expectations about the number of hours on the job, the number of days off and other related issues.

c. Interstaff Relationships

The tenor of interstaff relationships is set by the senior pastor and by the relationship he has with each staff member. These are greatly facilitated by spending time together. There should be time for praying together, for planning together and for playing together. Many tensions will be avoided where staff members are encouraged to enjoy working together.

In a good staff relationship, each minister is secure about what is expected of every person on the staff. When any minister has experienced success, the entire staff should

rejoice. When any minister is experiencing difficulty, the entire staff should be supportive.

2. Other Staff

Support staff are beneficial to the ministries of both larger and growing churches. While not needing credentials, these persons can use their skills to accomplish essential tasks which need to be done but which do not require the time or expertise of a minister.

An effective pastor can help the staff by:

- ensuring a written job description and work contract
- taking the time and effort to personally express his appreciation for their work
- making them aware of any items that need attention or correction
- communicating to them how their work enhances the total ministry of the church
- publicly acknowledging their contributions to the church's ministry
- demonstrating occasionally that he is willing to help them with their work.

a. Secretarial Staff

A competent and caring secretary is of great benefit to a senior pastor, the ministerial staff and the active church.

When there is more work to be done than time in which to do it, the pastor is responsible to sort out priority work. He should keep the secretary informed about his own schedule, the schedule of the church and the needs of people within the congregation.

It is the responsibility of the pastor to set the parameters for his relationship with the secretary. The relationship must remain discreet, ethical and consistent at all times. Due to the professional nature of this relationship, the pastor must ensure that the secretary is able and willing to keep confidences.

b. Custodial Staff

The custodial staff is vital in providing a work and worship atmosphere that is clean, comfortable and attractive.

Custodians usually hear from those they serve only when they have not done their job. How pleased they are to hear words of commendation.

B. Lay Leaders

The church is a body. The Apostle Paul's instructions in 1 Corinthians 12 about the inter-relational functions of the different parts of the body call for a team spirit in their functioning. A team spirit among church leaders, both pastoral and lay, is fostered by communication, coordination, accountability and loyalty. (Manual, pp. 22-24.)

1. Communication

Understanding one another in leadership is vital to harmony and the accomplishment of common goals. For proper understanding, clear communication is essential. Effective leadership recognizes this communication to be a two-way street. As the team leader, the pastor must present his vision, plans and hopes as clearly as possible. At the same time he should encourage input from lay leaders as together they formulate effective programs for ministry.

2. Coordination

This handbook assumes that each church has written bylaws which indicate qualifications, responsibilities and selection procedures for lay leaders. Often additional job descriptions prove helpful.

Unless the church has provided otherwise, the pastor will be responsible to coordinate and administrate the total ministry of the church. He should function within the policies and guidelines of the bylaws and in cooperation with the constituted boards and committees of the church.

Times, events and circumstances change. These may call for revisions in bylaws, organization, etc. However, a pastor should never assume that he is authorized to make changes unilaterally in order to do things his way without due recourse to change procedures.

3. Accountability and Loyalty

Mutual accountability is essential to unity and effective ministry within the church. This accountability should exist between the pastor and lay leaders and among the lay leaders themselves. The pastor can effectively model accountability by faithfully fulfilling his assigned duties and by being honest and clear in his communication with lay leaders. He can encourage loyalty by respecting their ideas and observations, showing sincere concern for their responsibilities, expressing appreciation for their labors and always seeking the common good above his personal interests. When a pastor manifests his accountability and loyalty, he can rightfully expect the others to respond in like manner. With such a loyal band of lay and pastoral servants there will be much joy in serving together.

It may be helpful to have a written covenant or pledge among leadership relative to certain matters.

C. Congregational

1. Visitation

Sometimes visitation is an adventure and sometimes it's a drudgery. But in the final analysis, a ministry is deficient without some sort of ongoing personal contact between a pastor and his people. Three fundamentals to pastoral visitation are: spending time with parishioners, sharing in their life experiences and encouraging their faith. One advantage which accrues to a pastor who is faithful in visitation is a wider exposure to issues and questions faced by the laity. This exposure helps to shape a pastor's pulpit ministry. (Someone once referred to visitation as "kindling for the homiletic mind.") Another advantage is the atmosphere of comfort created through personal contact. Within this atmosphere, people of the church are more inclined to share with the pastor personal, marital, family or even church problems. Catching problems at an early stage will help avert more significant crises down the road and perhaps lighten the load of pastoral counseling.

a. Time is a Factor

The approach to visitation may vary depending upon the size of church and the expectations of the church people. As time goes by younger generations may not have had exposure to pastors visiting in their homes on a regular basis. Therefore, they may not place an expectation upon the pastor for such a visit – nor want it! Another factor will be the time available to the pastor, his staff or lay leadership.

Here are a few helpful suggestions to keep in mind when facing limited time for visitation.

(1) Make Use of the Telephone

Though the telephone has its limitations, the wise pastor will use it to communicate care for individuals when a personal visit is not feasible nor a priority. Even older people who may have higher expectations when it comes to pastoral visitation can appreciate a pastor's thoughtfulness to call when a visit cannot be made.

(2) Schedule Blocks of Time for Visitation

It is often helpful to block out a full day for visitation. This helps to keep consistency in a pastor's schedule. His people will soon realize that the pastor will be out of the office on visitation on certain days.

(3) Call Ahead and Limit the Time of a Visit

It is frustrating and a waste of time to drop in on a parishioner only to find them unable to visit or not at home. A quick phone call can prevent such wasted time. Also, in order not to offend or appear to be in a rush, the

pastor should share with the parishioner his intention to visit others as well. This will let him know that the pastor values his time and must distribute it among all the people of the church. However, the pastor must beware of watching the clock! Few things are more offensive than to appear ready to leave from the moment one arrives. If people need more time than the pastor can give on a visitation day, he should schedule another time to see them.

b. The Occasions of Visitation

(1) Hospital Visitation

To the sick person, a pastor can be a tremendous source of encouragement. Pastors who place a high priority on hospital visitation gain the trust of those who sense their personal concern. Often, the hospital provides a natural setting for sharing the gospel through counseling and encouraging the patient and family members alike.

(2) Shut In Visitation

A parishioner who is unable to get to church needs to see the pastor at least occasionally. Visitation to shut-ins communicates ongoing appreciation for them as part of the church and is an important ministry to their family members.

(3) Visitation in the Time of Crisis

When tragedy strikes or when a pastor becomes aware of personal hardship in the life of a parishioner, a personal visit is most appropriate. Examples of such occasions include times of loss and grief, extended illness, unemployment and relational problems.

(4) Newcomer Visitation

A pastor's visit to church newcomers can be an important way of communicating personal interest. It is also important for a pastor not to impose himself by showing up at the door hastily or unannounced. An inquiry as to the newcomer's desire for a visit is a good idea.

c. A Teamwork Approach

Visitation need not be the sole responsibility of the pastor. In fact, sharing the visitation ministry with key lay people is an important way to build a caring community while encouraging others in their ministries as well. Senior pastors may find it especially helpful to involve other staff pastors in this important ministry. When this is done, the senior pastor should not think that he can be any less involved. Most people still want to be visited by their senior pastor at some point in time.

2. Friendships

Since the pastor, spouse and family are social persons, friendships become an essential part of life and living. It is, of course, recognized that there are various levels of friendship. Each of these meet a specific need in the life of every human being. However, the pastor, being a public servant, must exercise discretion in managing his friendships at the different levels within the congregation.

a. Every-Member Friendships

At the most general level the pastor must consider every member a friend. This involves being amiable, interested and caring about their lives and families. Sharing with them will encompass important spiritual content along with general information about health, family, vocation and common interests. The depth of every-member friendships will depend upon the size of the congregation, the personality of the pastor, the varied needs of people and the time available to be in contact with them. Caution must be taken to maintain equality and to avoid partiality through any appearance of disinterest or lack of care.

b. Personal Friendships

A bit deeper dimension of friendship may be experienced through sharing personal time with others in common interests and activities. This level is something that must concern not only the pastor but also, if married, his wife and family. The pastor and his wife will always find some persons or couples with whom they are more compatible in developing mutually satisfying relationships and more meaningful experiences. This may be due to age level, shared interests, personality mix or a common level of spiritual commitment. These friendships should be cultivated in the more private or personal sectors of time and life in order to avoid what many may depict as exclusive or discriminatory.

The pastor must also be on the alert concerning those who could exploit these personal friendships. At first their motives may not be recognized. It would seem that they are only being helpful in meeting some need in the pastor's life. However, it eventually becomes obvious that their interests are selfish, their demands are monopolizing, their expectations are manipulative and the relationship becomes harmful. For the sake of time, emotional energy and total ministry, this kind of involvement should be avoided or, if already begun, tactfully terminated.

c. Accountable Friendships

This is a necessary and more intimate level of friendship where persons can share their inmost feelings and thoughts without fear of losing respect, acceptance or love and with the assurance of receiving support, encouragement and prayer. The nature of a pastor's public life and image makes him vulnerable to secrecy about any unchristlike or negative inner feelings and thoughts. The failure to be totally honest and open can destroy a life, a home and a ministry. This kind of friendship demands a mutual commitment to integrity, confidentiality and love. Accountability of this

nature will serve as a guard concerning what goes into one's mind, what comes out of one's mouth and what is acted out in one's life. Accountability friendship may spare a pastor the serious consequences of succumbing to temptation and sinful inclinations. The pastor should seek such a friend in a trusted colleague, a Christian in the community or a person in the congregation.

D. Community

Because the church in which the pastor serves is a part of a community, and some of the people within the community will be a part of the church, there is by necessity the need for the pastor to be aware of and at times involved in the activities or associations of the community, taking into consideration his church's feelings about the extent of such involvement. The pastor should be an example to his congregation of one who is himself "salt and light" to the community and world (Matthew 5:13-16).

1. Local Religious Associations

The extent to which the pastor becomes involved in local religious associations will depend in part upon his attitude toward the association's statement of faith and purpose for existence. If the pastor can participate in such associations without compromising his theological integrity, then it may be to his benefit to become involved so as to be aware of and to develop relationships within the broader religious community.

2. Civic Groups

Pastors should consider becoming involved in the local civic groups, as long as their Christian integrity and witness are not compromised, and as long as they do not become entangled by their involvement or association with such organizations or activities so as to detract from their pastoral responsibilities. Civic groups can become good avenues of contact with and input into the lives of people for the sake of the Kingdom.

3. Community-Wide Religious Services

The pastor's involvement in community-wide religious inter-church services ought to be determined by the purpose of the service. If that purpose is compatible with his local church's purpose and it does not compromise the church or the pastor's theological integrity, then participation should be considered.

4. Community Meetings

The community meeting may be of a nonreligious nature, such as school board meetings, public forums, etc. The pastor must realize in such settings that even though he has the right and sometimes the obligation to voice his convictions or opinions, the convictions and opinions may be perceived as those of the church. Certainly when the issues concern the church and other matters of morality or ethics, the pastor should voice his convictions and opinions, perhaps after consulting with his church leadership.

E. FEC Denomination

The Fellowship of Evangelical Churches is a conference of congregations that identify with each other for the purposes of mutual fellowship and ministry.

Historically, these churches related to each other because of family ties and a common heritage. Out of their commonality they learned the importance of doing together those ministries that no one congregation would or could do alone.

As some churches become more affluent and able to secure more pastoral staff, they begin to do alone some ministries that have been done cooperatively. It is then more difficult for that congregation to keep its level of enthusiasm for cooperative ministry.

Currently, the FEC congregations relate to each other for those and other reasons. These relationships are maintained and enhanced through the following:

1. Convention

A convention is held each year for the purpose of fellowship, inspiration and business. These conventions are planned by a committee under the leadership of the FEC President.

A part of each convention is the meeting of the Convention Delegate Body. The composition and responsibilities of this delegate body are listed in the Manual, Part IV, Article 1, B.

2. Ministers and Wives Meetings

Two such meetings are held each year. These are for the purpose of fellowship, instruction and inspiration among ministers and spouses. Attendance at these meetings is expected of all pastors.

The FEC President and Board of Elders are responsible for the planning of these.

3. Boards and Committees

The cooperative ministry of the FEC conference is carried out through a system of boards, task forces and committees.

a. Boards

There are two denominational boards. These are the Board of Elders and the General Board. In addition, Executive Council functions on behalf of General Board between its quarterly meetings.

The composition and responsibilities of the Board of Elders, the General Board and Executive Council are listed in the Manual, Part IV, Article 1, E and F.

b. Committees

The Nominating Committee is the only standing committee. The Manual provides for special committees to be appointed to perform any necessary functions. (Manual, Part IV, Article 1, H)

4. Promotion of Events, Needs and Ministries

The pastor finds himself on both ends of the issue when considering the promotion of events, needs and ministries within FEC. He is to be informed and he is to inform. He is the most significant link between denominational leadership and the people in the congregation.

The pastor needs to develop eyes for seeing, recording, and sharing information about denominational opportunities. He should carefully read letters from the FEC Resource Center, publicity and informational folders. He should also pay attention when talking to fellow denominational leaders.

The pastor needs to understand the importance of sharing this information provided to him with his congregation. Rather than seeing this as interruptive, the pastor should sense the importance of these cooperative opportunities for his people. He should make good use of weekly mailers, Sunday bulletins and public service announcements. He can also creatively weave some of these ministries into meaningful sermon illustrations.

A pastor makes a strong statement of support by promoting these, participating in some of them, and inviting his people to become involved.

5. FEC Ministers' Association

This association has as its purpose "to foster fellowship, offer consultation opportunities and provide reporting accountability for Fellowship of Evangelical Churches ministers."

There is a written set of bylaws for the association. These are given on pages 67-68 of the Manual.

III. THE PASTOR AND THE CHURCH

A. Administration of the Church

1. FEC Manual of Faith, Practice and Organization

The current Manual was approved by the 2003 Convention Delegate Body, and was implemented as of Convention 2003.

The Manual contains the following invaluable information about the denomination:

- A Brief History of FEC pp. 1-5
- Constitution p. 6

- Articles of Faith pp. 7-27
- Articles of Practice pp. 28-32
- Articles of Organization pp. 33-65
- Appendix pp. 66-68

Each pastor is expected to be familiar with the contents of the Manual and to have one readily accessible for reference. Copies are available for distribution within the congregation.

2. Church Bylaws

Each congregation is encouraged to write a set of bylaws to describe its administrative functioning.

Each set of bylaws needs to be submitted to the conference for review and approval.

3. Church Boards

Each congregation is to develop its own administrative network to facilitate the functioning of the local church. There is no one right way to do this. However, each congregation is encouraged to develop its administration along the lines of that which is used by the conference.

4. Church Discipline

The FEC statement on church discipline is given on page 53 of the Manual.

It is important to recognize that discipline is for disobedient believers, not for unbelievers. Specifically, discipline is for disobedient church members. Discipline is not to be equated with punishment.

Discipline has a two-fold purpose: 1) to restore the erring believer to a life of obedience and fellowship; and 2) to help to ensure the purity of the church.

The Bible is clear in teaching the steps of discipline. These are:

- Step 1 confrontation on a one to one basis;
- Step 2 confrontation by two or more only after the first step has failed to bring the desired results;
- Step 3 confrontation by the church;
- Step 4 expulsion from the church, including termination of church membership.

5. Church Membership

Formal membership in the local church is not commanded in Scripture nor is it a means of salvation. In most FEC congregations church membership is not synonymous with

believer's baptism. However, membership is highly recommended. Benefits of church membership are:

- a. to underscore the importance of belonging to and participating in the local body of believers
- b. to enable one to serve in a position of elected leadership
- c. to give one an official voice in the major decisions that any congregation must make (Manual, p. 50)

In a North American culture where joining and belonging are so important, church membership helps both the church and the person to recognize the significance of the church's ministry.

B. Services of the Church

I. Worship Services

a. Purpose and Philosophy of the Worship Service

The Manual states that "the purpose of the Church is to glorify God. The Church glorifies God through worship." (Manual, p. 20) Worship is communion with God, celebrating in praise, prayer, thanksgiving and the offering of one's self for obedient service. The worship service is an important setting for the Christian community to give visible, verbal, personal and collective glory to God.

It may be of help for a pastor, in concert with the church family, to work through a clear statement of worship philosophy. This statement would speak to the particular church's format of worship while bringing intentionality into worship planning. The desired result is a service which not only gives glory to God but also provides a sense of meaning and satisfaction for the worshipers. A philosophy statement of worship is also helpful for the church with a statement of mission and vision which provides direction for its ministry.

A few examples of such worship philosophy statements are as follows:

ABC Church is committed to providing a Sunday morning worship experience in which the expositional preaching of the Bible will take place, hymns will be sung and corporate prayer will be emphasized.

BCD Church desires that worship be celebration and will seek to enhance celebration through contemporary worship forms. This will include praise choruses and other music led by worship teams, a variety of instrumentation, drama and a Bible-centered message relevant to and aimed at unchurched people.

CAB Church emphasizes a balance between the contemporary and traditional modes of worship. Each service will seek to blend music--the great hymns of the faith and

contemporary hymns and choruses. The service will employ a variety of methods--drama, dramatic reading, poetry, testimony--as well as a focused time of prayer for personal needs. An expositional approach to Bible teaching will be consistently featured during each service.

DCB Church gives emphasis to the systematic preaching through books of the Bible during the morning worship hour. The music, prayer, and other worship elements will take on a specific worship theme each week, not necessarily tied to the theme of the morning message. The Lord's Supper will be observed in morning worship during the last Sunday of every other month.

b. Planning the Worship Service

Pastors with varying degrees of experience face common challenges in planning the worship service. Some of the more common ones are as follows:

Developing a theme idea which will permeate all parts of the service so that there will be a sense of unity throughout. Seek to avoid the perception of jumping from one thing to another.

Introducing significant changes in the order of the service without causing a feeling of alienation or discomfort among the people. Whatever changes are made, they should be measured for worship quality, not for seeking to be more entertaining. Worship is to call attention to the Lord, not to personal or group performances.

Seeking the confirmation of the Holy Spirit, the sense that "this is the way; walk in it." This allows for proper spontaneity within the service.

Keeping a proper balance between new forms in the worship services and that which has been the more traditional practice.

c. Participation of the Worshipers

The service should be designed to lead persons to a personal encounter with God. The John 4 conversation of Jesus with the Samaritan woman points out that worship in spirit and truth relate to a person, not to a form or place. A pastor should seek to motivate and lead the congregation to that kind of an experience in communion with God. Aids for this include providing an atmosphere for interacting with God, considering God's character and work of redemption, listening for his voice through his Word and Holy Spirit, and acknowledging his rightful claims on their lives.

2. Other Regular Services

Other regular services should be scheduled in a way that meets the needs of the body. They could include times for Bible study, prayer fellowship, handling church business, social events, etc. This would permit flexibility and could still provide guidelines for meeting the particular situations and needs of a given church.

a. Sunday School

This provides opportunity for Bible study, discussion, pursuit of special interest groups, instruction in Christian growth, fellowship, evangelism, service involvement, all within the context of similar age groups or other compatible relationships. The Sunday School merits high priority in a church's planning and work.

b. Sunday Evening or Afternoon

This service can be characterized by much greater flexibility and variety than the morning service. Group participation, discussions, films/videos, fellowship activities, handling church business, special events with visiting resource persons, more congregational singing and other musical presentations may be some of the productive variations from the morning service format. Some churches may include group or departmental meetings.

c. Midweek

This service has often been listed as Bible Study and Prayer Meeting. These emphasize very important dimensions and needs in church life for spiritual growth. Every church should be careful not to eliminate special time for prayer and Bible study. Along with these there can be sharing of concerns and needs, fellowship and problem solving. While this type of service may be highly appropriate for adults and older youth, more appropriate involvement for children could include Pioneer or Awana type programs, Bible quiz team study and practice, or other activities that contribute to the Christian maturing process.

d. Other Regular Services

Other regular services might include Children's Church and other specialized events programmed as regular ongoing functions.

3. Special Services

a. Weddings

When a man and woman come to the pastor requesting to be married in the church, there are a few guiding principles which help build the relationship between the couple and the pastor as they move forward toward the wedding day.

First, there is need for clear, honest communication through the planning and counseling process. The pastor needs to communicate biblical views of the marriage relationship and expectations with respect to the wedding. Biblical guidelines for marriage, the requirement for marriage counseling, and guidance in planning the wedding service are three important aspects of pastor-to-couple communication. The couple is encouraged to share their own desires and expectations regarding the

wedding service with the pastor. By working together, the service can be tailored for the couple while maintaining credibility as a Christian service of worship.

Second, the basic elements of a Christian wedding service should be worked out. The exchange of vows, the Scripture readings, the pastor's message, the musical selections and the pronouncement of marriage must come together with the other elements to give the service of worship its spiritual, Christ-centered focus. This is true even in the case of non-Christians who seek to have a church wedding. The pastor must give them a clear reminder that marriage is instituted by God, and that those who enter marriage do so under God's authority and witness.

Third, the pastor must take responsibility for the wedding rehearsal. From greeting the wedding party with appropriate introductions, to talking through the wedding service and rehearsing, the pastor must take charge. This will engender confidence in the pastor while putting the wedding party at ease. The calming influence of a well-run rehearsal by an organized pastor is hard to overestimate. Humanly speaking, one of the pastor's greatest gifts to the couple is his gift of a meaningful and beautiful ceremony.

Please refer to Part Two for examples of wedding orders of service.

b. Funerals

The pastor's ministry at the time of death is a ministry long valued and remembered as he serves the bereaved family in humility and with sensitivity. At the same time, bereavement offers the pastor opportunity to speak the Word of God to a unique gathering of family and friends at a time when some are particularly open to the message of hope and salvation. Funerals should not therefore, be looked upon only as necessary interruptions but as opportunities for significant, life-changing ministry.

Now for a few helpful suggestions about funeral preparation and planning:

First, the survivors are of primary importance to the pastor as he approaches funeral planning. Some families will take little or no role in the preparation of a funeral service, while others will become intimately involved. As a general rule, the pastor should make an initial visit to the family within a few hours after hearing of the death. At this visit it is usually best not to press for funeral details. However, setting up another meeting for a later time, perhaps with the funeral director, and offering to assist the family with arrangements is usually appropriate in the initial visit.

Second, when the pastor does meet with the family for funeral service planning, the wishes of the family should be a primary guide within the framework of Christian acceptability and reverence for the occasion. The pastor must keep in mind that the funeral service is a service of worship and therefore must be honoring to God, as well as comforting to family and friends. While a funeral service is a great opportunity for the proclamation of the gospel, sensitivity to the

family should help guide the pastor when determining the manner and extent of evangelistic appeal.

Third, the funeral message should at least contain a blend of personal remembrances and comments about the deceased person, along with encouragement, comfort and challenge from Scripture. Care should be taken to avoid giving false assurance in the eulogizing of non-Christians. For those funerals in which the person was unknown to the pastor, extra work is required to gain some information which may be shared appropriately in the funeral service. Messages which stress hope, God's comfort and presence, Christ's provision for salvation, his identification with suffering and the Christian's assurance of heaven are a few funeral message topics about which the Bible has much to say.

Please refer to Part Two for examples of funeral service orders of worship.

c. Installations

Installations focus attention on particular emphases in church life. Installation events can be included within the regular schedule of services or can be separate special services.

Installations may be for a new pastor or other staff person, lay officers who are newly elected, Sunday School teachers, youth workers, etc. The act of public installation adds a sense of importance to the position and the corresponding assignment. It helps both the congregation and the one installed to understand the sacredness of the position being filled and the biblical expectation for ministry within the church.

d. Dedications

Dedication implies setting apart a person or thing for God's glory and work. The act of dedication brings a sense of sanctification and divine ownership. The Bible provides numerous examples of dedications: Samuel as a very young child (1 Sam. 1); children (Mark 10:14-16); the house of God/temple (2 Chron. 2:4, 7:50); contents of the temple (2 Sam. 8:11, 1 Kings 7:51); the wall of Jerusalem (Neh. 12:27); church building sites (Ps. 89:11).

e. Church Anniversaries

An anniversary celebration is a time for remembering the past and looking ahead to the future. It may be important for the congregation to recall the life of the church in written form, taking care to set down records which may be of interest to future leaders.

C. Ordinances of the Church

"An ordinance is an outward symbol of a spiritual truth or experience which was instituted by Christ for perpetual use by the Church...it becomes a source of spiritual inspiration and strength as one is obedient to the Lord's command" (Manual, p. 24-25). Additionally, ordinances are a source of significant spiritual inspiration and strength for the local congregation. FEC believes the Christian ordinances to be believer's baptism and the Lord's Supper. It is important that these be given continual emphasis through the teaching and practice of the church.

1. Believer's Baptism

a. Preparation

Baptismal classes should be provided for those wishing to be baptized. The class should cover such items as:

- the theology of baptism ("Questions About Baptism Answered" in Part Two)
- the preparation of a personal testimony for the baptismal service; the appropriate dress for the service; the service format; a tour of the baptismal site
- the procedure for actual baptism

Baptismal candidates should be encouraged to invite family and friends to the service. A certificate of baptism should be given to each participant following the service.

b. Baptismal Service

Because of the special nature of a baptismal service, where non-churched family and friends may be in attendance, it would be appropriate that the service be evangelistic in nature. The service should include personal testimonies of the baptismal candidates and their public response to the four questions stated in the Manual (p. 66). A fellowship time following the service would be an appropriate way for the church to extend hospitality to the participants, their families and friends.

2. The Lord's Supper

a. Preparation

Participation in the Lord's Supper by the church is not optional; it is the Lord's command, "Do this in remembrance of me!" (1 Cor. 11:24). We are assigned by God to do it regularly. The frequency and timing of the Lord's Supper as determined by the leadership of the local congregation should be often enough so that the congregation does not forget its significance. In order to maintain meaning, creativity in its observance is encouraged, and excessive repetition is discouraged. The pastor should be familiar with and supportive of the FEC position on the Lord's Supper as stated in the Manual, (p. 25).

b. Lord's Supper Service

The service is a memorial or remembrance, rich in symbolism, yet beautiful in simplicity. The service must not be treated lightly or viewed as of little importance. Therefore, certain elements should be considered when planning the service:

(1) Public Explanation

Before the distribution of the elements, the pastor should explain that the Lord's Supper is open to all those who have by faith entered into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. An explanation of the procedure or steps the congregation is to follow for the service would be helpful, especially if visitors are present or if the format has been changed since the last service.

(2) Personal Preparation

Scripture insists that believers must examine their own hearts before participating in the Lord's Supper to determine to the best of their ability if there is anything between them and their Lord. A strong warning is attached to the instruction:

Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself (1 Cor. 11:27-29).

The pastor should allow the people enough time to evaluate and examine their lives and their relationship to the Lord. There should be time for individuals to personally make things right with their Lord before receiving the elements of the Lord's Supper.

(3) Pattern of the Service

To help preserve its meaning, the pattern of the service should be consistent with what Jesus Christ did at the Last Supper (Matt 26:26-29). Creativity is encouraged, as long as several important components remain a part of the service:

- The pastor is to give leadership and direction for the service.
- The elements are the cup and the bread. It is important to emphasize the significance of each element. Of less concern is the exact substance or amount of each element.
- The distribution of the bread should precede the passing of the cup.
- The service should have an atmosphere of worship and thankfulness.

D. Other Ministries of the Church

1. Pastoral Counseling

a. The Necessity of Pastoral Counseling

Because the pastor is a shepherd, pastoral counseling has been and always will be a necessary part of Christian ministry. The amount of formal counseling done by an individual pastor will normally depend upon his spiritual gifts, size and needs of the congregation, staff job analysis and the amount of time available while he also carries out other essential responsibilities. Keeping one's balance and refusing to be fragmented in one's various areas of ministry will require constant vigil in order to be an effective pastor.

b. The Goal of Pastoral Counseling

The pastor must recognize that radical and lasting change will come only through conversion and the process of sanctification. With that in mind, pastoral counseling which is effective seeks to partner with the Spirit to effect change in thought, leading to change in behavior and feelings. Wholeness is brought about as the lordship of Christ permeates the counselee's life and relationships. Whereas these may seem to be lofty goals, such are in line with the biblical description of the normal Christian life.

c. The Resources for Pastoral Counseling

At the heart of pastoral counseling is the Word of God. The pastor is to be God's submissive instrument to communicate the principles of the Word in a loving attitude and kind way. Linked with the Word is the power of the Holy Spirit. It is unreasonable to think that true and lasting change will be brought about apart from the work of the Spirit. Jesus pointed at this when he said, "Apart from me, you can do nothing" (John 15:6). Then, as Jesus prepared to go away he promised that God the Father would send the "divine counselor" in the person of the Holy Spirit (John 14:26). A third and no less vital resource is prayer. The pastor should ask if he might pray with the counselee. Prayer not only changes things but also people!

Pastoral counseling seeks to draw together resources which are both spiritual and secular in nature. Linked together with the spiritual resources are the learned approaches to counseling which may help to shed light on the cause(s) of the problem and potential therapies which are in line with the stated goals. Therapeutic techniques which coincide with the spiritual resources are worth a pastor's time to investigate and understand in order to provide the best possible help for counselees. Such learning will add to a pastor's insight into problems of spiritual, mental and behavioral disorders. Also, the pastor will be better able to know when to make a referral to a medical doctor or professional therapist.

d. The Process of Pastoral Counseling

The process of pastoral counseling may be thought of in terms of three stages:

exploration, understanding and action.

The exploration stage involves listening to the counselee. In line with this, a pastor should demonstrate good relational attitudes, friendly expressions and interactive listening toward the counselee. This brings about a safe environment in which the counselee can freely talk. The pastoral counselor should develop a sympathetic manner which communicates care and interest. Friendliness and the ability to smile are vital to the communication process as well. Often a pastor will need to shed a natural tendency to talk and exhibit knowledge in order to become a good listener.

The second stage in the process of pastoral counseling is the understanding stage. This is where the pastor processes with the counselee what he is hearing. In doing this the pastor draws from his experience, his understanding of human psychology, his knowledge of the Bible and sensitivity to the leading of the Holy Spirit. The end result is to bring both the pastor and counselee to a more accurate understanding of the counselee's life and situation.

The final stage in the pastoral counseling process is the action stage. It is vital for a counselor and counselee to cooperate in developing a plan by which the counselee might work on the situation or problem. This stage is not always arrived at quickly or easily. It may take several sessions before true progress is seen in the action stage. However, each session of pastoral counseling should be concluded by conveying a sense of hope and forward movement. This is vital for a counselee to continue the counseling relationship until the goal is reached.

e. The Pitfalls in Pastoral Counseling

No pastor should seek to do counseling without carefully considering the potential pitfalls involved. Too many pastors have entered into a counseling relationship only to have the relationship lead to a shipwrecked ministry and personal life.

The first potential pitfall involves the emotional and sexual entanglement of the pastor with the counselee. A pastor must set clear boundaries for himself. Such boundaries include physical ones (e.g. having windows in the office, trying not to be alone with a counselee in the church, refraining from inappropriate touching, etc.), relational ones (e.g. ongoing marital openness with spouse, involvement in an accountability relationship, etc.) and psychological ones (e.g. the pastor knowing his own limitations, refraining from asking about areas which may lead him into dangerous or vulnerable territory, etc.).

The second potential pitfall centers on power. There is a sense in which the pastor's knowledge of certain information about a counselee places him in a position of power over the person. A pastor must exercise humility and restraint in order to handle such power in a way which honors the Lord and respects the professional nature of the counselor-counselee relationships. A pastor should not use information as leverage in the counseling relationship. Certainly, confidentiality must be maintained in order to avoid the power pitfall. To the extent the pastor shares with his wife, such confidentiality must extend to her as well.

The last pitfall to be covered here involves dependency. It is easy for a pastor to manipulate a counselee toward an unhealthy dependency. Such dependency may simply stroke a pastor's ego or could possibly lead to a more serious and dangerous end. Suffice it to say that effective counseling discourages such unhealthy dependence and encourages a growing dependence upon God.

2. Anointing

Prayer by a sick person and others should be the first priority for the Christian and is always appropriate for any kind of affliction. However, prayer alone should not be considered as the only remedy for human affliction. God has healed and does heal through the means of doctors and medicine. Even so, a special service of anointing is presented in the scriptures where the Lord's people are privileged to honor Him and experience the for carrying blessing of grace that comes from following His guidance (Manual, pp. 32). Procedure for carrying out this ministry is indicated most specifically in James 5:13-15.

- a. The initiative for having this service is to be taken by the sick one. "He should call the elders of the church" (v. 14). Also, the text seems to indicate that this ministry is designed primarily for serious kinds of illness. The word translated "sick" (v. 14) literally means "without strength." Furthermore, a bedfast condition is implied by the phrase, "The Lord will raise him up" (v. 15). Given this condition, the afflicted Christian may appropriately call for the elders of the local church to conduct a service of anointing.
- b. "Confess your sins to each other" (v. 16). There may or may not be a definite relationship between sin and a given sickness, but confession of sin is always a necessary ingredient for a positive response from God.
- c. Though oil was a common medicine of biblical times, James seems to recognize that its use here was not just medicinal. Its effectual application also involved an exercise of faith and obedience in calling the right persons, the elders; in acknowledging the power of prayer; and in recognizing the authority of the Lord's name for divine intervention (vv. 14, 15).

The act of anointing may be preceded with a declaration.

Upon your request and upon the authority of the Word of God to provide for the strengthening of your faith, for the forgiveness of sin, and for the healing of your body according to God's plan, I anoint you with oil in the name of the Lord.

A bit of oil, possibly olive oil, may then be placed on the sick person's forehead with the tip of the fingers.

- d. The most significant focus of the service is on the prayer of faith. Just encouragement to pray offers assurance that answers to prayer are within the reach of any believer. This prayer of faith is made with a submissive trust in the sovereign God to heal in His way and at the right time. The answer could come immediately or when certain goals are accomplished through the ailment or when the sick one is taken to be with the Lord.

"The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective" (v. 16).

3. Small Groups

Participation in a small group adds a dimension to personal and congregational life that cannot be duplicated in a larger setting. A small group provides an atmosphere in which one can build loving and trusting relationships. These relationships allow for both vulnerability and accountability.

Small groups exist for a number of reasons. Some of these are Bible study and prayer, sharing of common interests, accountability, mutual support, evangelistic outreach, ministry tasks and personal recovery.

For a small group ministry to be successful it is very important that both the leadership of the church and the group itself clearly understand the purpose of the group. It is also important to have decided how group leadership will be determined. The small group, irrespective of its origin, structure and purpose, needs to periodically report to the leadership of the church.

While small groups are a very productive part of church life, these also have the potential to become destructive. Two reasons why this may happen are 1) the group takes a direction that is in conflict with the theology or the overall ministry goals of the church; and 2) the group becomes ingrown and chokes on itself.

4. Recovery Groups

A recovery group is a small group that exists for the purpose of helping persons to achieve some success in overcoming dysfunctional patterns of living.

Some of the more popular groups deal with overcoming addictions, coping with illness and grief, and learning how to establish long-term caring and committed relationships.

One of the reasons why such groups are successful is that these provide a sense of community for those struggling with issues that tend to isolate them from the mainstream of life.

Individuals who have experienced one or more of these issues in their own living, and who have achieved a degree of recovery, often are those who feel called to lead such a group. Frequently they become very effective and productive group leaders.

Recovery groups can be used effectively by a caring church seeking to help those who struggle. However, there are significant risks involved in providing such groups. Some of these are:

- members of the group may use others to meet their own neurotic needs
- the leader may become too personally identified with the group and lose necessary objectivity

- the group may begin to operate quite apart from the wider atmosphere and ministry of total congregational life
- the emphasis in the group may suggest that one's problem can be solved quite apart from God, simply by making use of a set of techniques

With or without recovery groups, the caring church needs to reach out to the hurting in its community, to offer to these persons the love of God, the salvation that only Christ can give, and the healing that comes through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit.

5. Special Needs

The congregation that is effective in ministering to the whole person discovers that people have a wide variety of needs. In attempting to meet these, the congregation may want to make some modifications to its building and give consideration to developing some additional ministries. These are:

a. Physical-Mental

The church needs to make its building as user friendly as possible for people with physical handicaps or limitations. A good place to begin, if there are stairs, is to consider building a ramp or installing an elevator. It is important that restrooms be easily accessible and usable by persons with physical handicaps. Each church should have a wheelchair which can be used in case of need.

A congregation may choose to develop programs that are designed for people with physical or mental handicaps. Such programs can help individuals learn to accept their conditions and find productive lifestyles. In addition, these can provide a means for meeting others with similar challenges. Such programs may be shared by several churches in a given community.

b. Emotional - Relational

Beyond a counseling ministry and the possible use of recovery groups, a caring church may want to find other ways in which to help people struggling with emotional and relational difficulties.

A ministry which is based upon biblical principles, makes use of effective therapeutic techniques, and provides troubled individuals an atmosphere in which to share with others, can be very beneficial in helping people to find some healing of their pain and some growth in their Christian lives.

A special challenge for any church is developing a ministry to those who are suffering from AIDS. Forming such a ministry can be challenging and even controversial. However, this may prove an effective way in which to share the love of God with people who otherwise may be neglected by the church and society.

c. Financial - Legal

Many individuals and families need help in managing their finances. In addition to understanding the biblical principles of money management, people need help in learning to live within their financial limitations. In addition to regular stewardship training, a church may want to implement ministries dealing with budgeting, getting out of debt, saving for the future and basic estate planning.

In communities where there is economic hardship, the church may choose to develop ministries that provide food, shelter and basic medical care.

d. Other

Creative and effective churches will continue to be aware of areas of needs that can and should be addressed. Where programs cannot be developed and implemented locally, it may be advisable to consider doing these cooperatively with several other churches.

In developing its ministries, the church must always strive to keep its balance between its first priority, preaching and teaching the Word, and its secondary priority, ministering to the whole person.

EPILOGUE

BEFORE YOU CANCEL YOUR CALL

Two certainties in the life of every pastor should be his call and his commitment to that call. In the grind, however, it is very easy to lose one's certainty of either or both of these. In those moments the pastor faces an almost overwhelming temptation to quit. In such a situation quitting is usually both premature and unwise.

There are at least four primary reasons why many pastors decide to bail out. These are pressure, criticism, finances and moral failure.

Pressure

Ministry expectations seem to be on the increase. People seem to be looking to the pastor to do more jobs better. Two of these are serving as counselor and leading as manager.

The marriage of modern psychology and evangelical Christianity has been fairly well established. Many in the church are looking to have every problem solved for them through some kind of counseling procedure. Most of us feel it is our birthright to be happy, and unless we are happy we are not fulfilled.

There is little doubt that corporate America primarily sets the pace in our culture by which we measure efficiency and productivity. Now the church and the pastor are subjected to similar scrutiny by which the casual onlooker can judge the quality of the "Lord's operation."

Criticism

One certainty in the life of every pastor is criticism. This criticism can be both constructive and destructive. However, to the pastor it all sounds the same: "I have messed up!"

Criticism is potentially devastating to the pastoral psyche. It brings discouragement and introspective preoccupation. It often results in a chronic discouragement that motivates one to leave his calling.

There is some element of truth in every bit of critical comment. However, often the criticism may have little to do with the pastor, but may provide valuable insights into the life of the person who makes the criticism.

A pastor must learn to deal constructively with criticism if he is to remain faithful to his call.

For most pastors, most of the time, it is "too soon to quit!"

Finances

Pastoring has never been a profession connected with high monetary compensation. Frequently the pay has been on the lower end of the spectrum. Many pastoral families have budgeted carefully, delayed purchases and learned to do without, all in an effort to balance their financial budget.

Today's pastoral family is less likely to tolerate perceived financial limitations. When the pressures of living on their income grow too great, both the pastor and his spouse may be tempted to rationalize a premature exit from pastoral ministry.

Moral Collapse

Moral absolutes seem to be giving way, even in the evangelical Christian community. Pastors are not immune from becoming involved in adultery, divorce and remarriage. Some are guilty even of incest and child sexual abuse. When these moral and sexual indiscretions become known, the pastor is frequently forced out of the pastoral ministry.

Because of many factors, some of which the pastor may not recognize, he is especially vulnerable for an eventual moral failure. It is imperative that a pastor maintain a high standard of morality while working diligently, along with his wife, to protect and improve the marriage relationship.

We trust that the faithfulness and grace of God will provide strength and stability to the pastor, especially in his moment of greatest temptation. It is our prayer that each pastor will honor God's calling upon his life, finish the race and receive the trophy that God has in store.

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