

## The Preacher and His Work

### **Purpose of this Course:**

To educate and prepare students for the work they will do as ministers outside the pulpit.

### **Requirements:**

Students will be required to fulfill school policy of class attendance. Three unexcused absences will cause the student to fail this course. Work, illness, weather and church events are valid reasons for an excused absence. Two exams will be given: the sixth week and twelfth week of class. These exams are open-note and take-home. Exams will be graded during the last period. Students are required to read Thomas Holland's book, *The Work of the Preacher is Working*, in its entirety. Reading Assignments are due *before* the class period (except for the first class).

### **Textbook:**

Thomas Holland, *The Work of the Preacher is Working*, 2001, 297 pages.

### **Class Schedule:**

### **Reading Assignment**

8-24	Introduction to the Course Ministers and their Spiritual Lives	pp. 55-70
8-31	Ministerial Ethics	pp. 153-170
9-7	Using Your Time Wisely	pp. 121-132
9-14	Building Your Library	pp. 282-285
9-21	Weddings	pp. 286-288 115-116
9-28	Visiting the Hospitals and shut-ins (Exam)	
10-5	Deaths and funerals	pp. 107-115
10-12	Writing and Bulletins	pp. 105-107
10-19	Outreach	pp. 189-206
10-26	Counseling	pp. 133-152
11-2	Relationships	pp. 171-188
11-9	Conflict Take Home Final Exam	pp. 207-224
11-16	Strengths and Weaknesses	

**Books You Should Read:**

Thomas Holland, *Help and Healing for People Who Hurt*, 1998.

Ira North, *Balance*, Gospel Advocate.

Cleon Lyles, *Bigger Men for Better Churches*, 1971.

Bill Flatt, *Growing Through Grief*, Gospel Advocate, 1987.

Bill Flatt, *Personal Counseling*.

MSOP Alumni, *Rejoice and Weep*, Wedding and Funeral Sermons.

E. W. McMillan, *The Minister's Spiritual Life*, Firm Foundation, 1959.

J. A. McNutt, *Let's Go Visiting*, n.d. (Available at GA)

**Other Valuable Books:**

Steve Clapp, *Positioning Ministry for Success*, 1986.

Kenneth W. Oosting, *The Christian's Guide to Effective Personal Management*.

Kenn Filkins, *A Comforting Word*, College Press, 1994.

Candy Lightner & Nancy Hathaway, *Giving Sorrow Words*, Warner Books, 1990.

Norman Wright, *Crisis Counseling*, Regal, 1993.

Eugene Peterson, et. al., *Weddings, Funerals and Special Events*, Word, 1987.

James L. Christensen, *The Complete Funeral Manual*, Revell, 1967.

Resource for Weddings:

<http://www.bible.org/docs/pastor/weddings/wedtoc.htm>

Resource for Funerals

<http://www.bible.org/docs/pastor/funerals/funtoc.htm>

Resource for Premarital Counseling

<http://www.bible.org/docs/pastor/weddings/premarriage/toc.htm>

As with all resources, preachers must learn to eat the fish and throw the bones away.

## Ministers and Their Spiritual Lives

Gospel preachers have a responsibility to live the life they preach and to maintain wholehearted dedication to the Lord Jesus Christ. Those who challenge others to take up the cross of Christ daily ought themselves to live devotedly to His cause. Romans 2:21-23 should speak to every person who determines to preach the gospel.

*You, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself?*

*You who preach that one should not steal, do you steal?*

*You who say that one should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery?*

*You who abhor idols, do you rob temples?*

*You who boast in the Law, through your breaking the Law, do you dishonor God?*

James warns, “Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we shall incur a stricter judgment” (James 3:1).

### Problems Preachers Face:

1. *Financial difficulties.* Preachers who do not know how to manage their financial affairs and who make inadequate salaries, often find themselves in serious financial trouble. Unpaid bills, late payments, and unscrupulous dealings can ruin the reputation of a preacher and the churches he serves. Preachers would do well to learn money management skills and to seek accounting help in paying their taxes.
2. *Laziness.* Some preachers simply do not know how to manage themselves or their time. Preachers may easily fall into the traps of time wasting or of inactivity at those times when they should be busy. Those who pay preachers expect their preachers to be worthy of their hire. Preachers, who fail to study, continually use rerun sermons, and neglect visitation and evangelism, will be looking for employment over and over.
3. *Procrastination.* Sometimes a preacher falls into the habit of thinking that he can do tomorrow what he should do today. A preacher that habitually fails to do his work in a timely fashion does not appreciate the urgency of the gospel. “We must work the works of Him who sent Me, as long as it is day; night is coming, when no man can work” (John 9:4).
4. *Burnout.* Other preachers become workaholics. They feel they must be busy working all of the time. Because they fail to take days off and balance their lives, they soon begin to despise what they are called to do.
5. *Persistent Guilt.* The work of preaching requires many skills and many tasks. Very often preachers, no matter what they are doing, feel as if they should be pursuing some other aspect of their ministry. This anxiety leads to a feeling a failure regardless of what they accomplish.
6. *Family problems.* Preachers must learn to do their work efficiently without alienating their families. Divorce and family breaks are tragic under any circumstances, but they are doubly so in the life of a church leader. As the spiritual leader and head of his home preachers should keep their marriages strong and rear their children with love and discipline.
7. *Sexual temptations.* Because they are men in responsible and visible roles and often come in contact with women, preachers may face serious sexual challenges. Giving in to such

temptation could ruin a minister's career. Preachers must use extra caution never to place themselves in compromising situations.

8. *Criticism.* Some criticisms are just, while others are unfair. In either case, a few loud critics can destroy the effectiveness and reputation of a preacher. Preachers would do well to tape sermons, document hours and visits, and keep records. While some criticisms are unfair, others merit attention. When someone criticizes a preacher, there is usually a reason. Prompt response or apology can often avert more serious problems. Critics are often the preacher's most helpful teachers—especially when the critics are other congregational leaders.
9. *Confidentiality.* Because ministers counsel others and a part of a congregation's leadership, they will have access to privileged information. Ministers who reveal secrets, gossip about others, and embarrass others needlessly will soon lose the trust of the congregation and their usefulness. Preachers must guard their credibility; without credibility a preacher is unable to be effective.
10. *Loneliness.* Preachers often find it hard to develop close, personal friendships in congregations. Because he must be everyone's preacher, he often feels unable to draw especially close to men in their own age group. Continual study and professional role often lead to relational barriers for preachers. Many preachers find their best friends in other preachers. Wise preachers find friends among men's groups.
11. *Frustration.* Churches move notoriously slow, and brethren can often take their faith and their responsibilities for granted. Sometimes preachers expect change and growth in congregations before the congregation is ready. Attitudes and behavior patterns that took many years to form will not easily be changed. It is foolish to think longstanding patterns can be changed with a sermon or two. Preachers must learn patience with weak and struggling brethren.
12. *Anger.* Brethren can be cruel and selfish, and we must learn to love them anyway and not grow bitter. Churches that treat their preachers like "hired hands" rather than brethren can poison their spirits. Preachers must learn to confront those who abuse them and to forgive those who repent.

### **Some Suggestions for Building Your Spiritual Life:**

1. Do not let the urgent keep you from the important. Read, study and meditate on God's word daily. Discipline yourself to spend 30 minutes to an hour per day in reading for your own spiritual well being. Preachers too need spiritual food. Make your relationship with God a daily priority (1 Tim. 4:7-8). One can read through the entire New Testament in less than 13 hours. There are only 260 chapters in the New Testament; and by reading three chapters per day, one may read the New Testament four times within a year.
2. Great preachers are always men of fervent and frequent prayer. If Jesus needed to pray each day to keep close to God and to keep his task in focus, certainly we need to do the same. Study the prayer life of Jesus Christ and imitate Him.
3. Never allow complaining, cynicism, or bitterness to ruin your spirit (Phil. 4:8; Heb. 12:14-15). Seek out people who will keep you enthused and focused.
4. Read good and helpful books. In your reading, be careful not to eliminate devotional and character-building books. Read faith-building periodicals that encourage and uplift.
5. Concentrate on building a virtue each year. Study love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, self-control, goodness, and godliness. Grow in virtue. (2 Cor. 13:5)

6. Get away two or three times a year to lectureships, retreats and seminars. Hear great men speak on vital topics that will build faith, hope and love.
7. Take a day off and rest now and then. Do some things for the fun of doing them. Jesus told his disciples, “‘Come away by yourselves to a lonely place and rest a while.’ (For there were many people coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat.)” (Mark 6:31). The Lord values his servants.
8. Take time for your family. Sing and pray with them. Play with them. Love them. It is sad for a man to serve the Lord his entire life with such vigor that he has no time left for family. "For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his family?" Set a family night once a week and keep it a priority. Preachers must learn to say “No,” rather than neglect their families.
9. Exercise! Get physically fit and stay that way. A run-down preacher will often fail to do what he is expected, because he does not feel up to it. The stress level of preaching can sometimes be quite high; exercise is an effective way to work through stress and keep the body fit.
10. Get involved in doing good for others. It is more blessed to give than to receive. Learn to give and serve others with joy and love.
11. Continue to educate yourself as long as you live. Continue to study and grow in your thinking. Develop new skills that will enhance your ministry.

### **Guard Your Credibility**

Aristotle viewed credibility (ethos) as a combination of good character, good will, and high intelligence.

1. Watch your language; never say things that are off-color, cynical or abusive. Do not embarrass others as a means of humor. Show great respect to your family.
2. Do not lie or tell a misleading half-truth.
3. Keep your promises, even when they cost you greatly. Don't make promises you can't keep.
4. Never reveal confidential information.
5. Pay your debts on time (Rom. 13:8).
6. Never use the good news of our salvation to abuse others. Do not rub salt in other's wounds. Love does not rejoice in unrighteousness.
7. Pursue continuing education through courses and challenging reading. Develop a good library for researching of Biblical questions.
8. Learn proper grammar and use it. Be sure to edit whatever you write.
9. When you write, cite sources. Give credit wherever credit is due. Do not plagiarize.
10. People don't care how much you know, until they know how much you care. Develop an affection for the people you serve. Get involved in their lives.

## Ministerial Ethics

### Setting Up Safeguards

*Developing a personal ministry code of ethics*

by Archibald D. Hart

To function with optimum effectiveness, preachers must set up strategies to safeguard themselves against such personal pitfalls as wasting time, abusing authority, satisfying a hungry ego, giving in morally, or even becoming a workaholic. Each preacher needs to develop a personal code of behavior or ministry ethics.

### An Essential Ethic

Paul says it well in Ephesians 5:15: "So be careful how you act; these are difficult days" (*The Living Bible*). We all face temptation regularly, and should not expect to determine our proper responses anew each time we encounter a potential pitfall. We need some guidelines to help us uphold our ethics as we work with people daily.

Preachers can benefit from taking into consideration three important principles as they develop this professional code of behavior:

- *Accountability.* We must all be accountable to someone. Those who fall almost invariably develop attitudes of arrogance and isolation; they unwisely choose to go it alone. Accountability demands that every leader have a regular meeting with a board or group of peers—for the sole purpose of honestly sharing feelings, revealing temptations, and identifying problem areas in personal and spiritual growth. Such practical accountability forces us to see how vulnerable we are and how easily we can be deluded into thinking we are above temptation.
- *Responsibility.* All preachers should maintain the highest standards of professional behavior. The truly healthy leader is able to balance this quest for professional excellence with a broader sense of responsibility that encompasses personal roles and relationships. The preacher must learn to balance the demands of church leadership with the demands of family and personal life. A lack of this broader sense of responsibility leads to an unbalanced life.
- *Integrity.* Foremost is the issue of how we use our power as preachers. Do we share our power? Do we use it with compassion? Is our use of our power ego motivated? Second to power is the issue of honesty. True integrity requires not just uprightness with regard to finances, but also justice in the application of authority, graciousness in what we take credit for, and compassion in how we gain and use privileged information.

### Ethics in Action

How do these principles translate into daily action? Here is a leader's safeguard checklist that can help preachers do daily ethics evaluations. Test yourself at the end of each day and then make whatever changes your answers suggest.

- Have I been totally honest in all my dealings with people this today?
- Have I acted appropriately toward members of the opposite sex?

- Have I indulged any unsavory thoughts or sexual images, or fostered any uncharitable feelings toward others?
- Have I been totally above reproach in all my financial dealings?
- Have I fulfilled all my obligations without compromise and with a willing spirit?
- Have I worked too long or too hard without evaluating my true motives?
- Have I spent sufficient time with my family today?
- Have I taken care of my family's spiritual needs?
- Have I attended to my own emotional and spiritual needs and integrated them into my daily walk with God?
- Have I harbored any unconfessed sin or unforgiven hurts?

**Archibald D. Hart**; *Leadership Handbooks of Practical Theology, Volume 3, Leadership and Administration; Setting Up Safeguards*; pp 166-167. Used by permission of Baker Books, a division of Baker Book House Company, copyright © 1994.

### **Maintaining Moral Purity in Ministry**

No matter how many times I hear it, it still shocks me: A minister announces his resignation because of adultery. Often it's with someone within his congregation, sometimes even someone actively involved in ministry, such as a Sunday school teacher.

As Christian leaders, we need to be above reproach. Paul wrote, "Don't be so naive and self-confident. You're not exempt. You could fall flat on your face as easily as anyone else. Forget about self-confidence; it's useless. Cultivate God-confidence." (1 Cor. 10:12, Msg)

Here are some standards for maintaining moral integrity with people other than your spouse:

- Thou shalt not go to lunch alone with the opposite sex.
- Thou shalt not have the opposite sex pick you up or drive you places when it is just the two of you.
- Thou shalt not kiss any attender of the opposite sex or show affection that could be questioned.
- Thou shalt not visit the opposite sex alone at home.
- Thou shalt not counsel the opposite sex alone at the office, and thou shalt not counsel the opposite sex more than once without that person's mate. Refer them.
- Thou shalt not discuss detailed sexual problems with the opposite sex in counseling. Refer them.
- Thou shalt not discuss your marriage problems with an attender of the opposite sex.
- Thou shalt be careful in answering emails, instant messages, chatrooms, cards, or letters from the opposite sex.
- Thou shalt make your secretary your protective ally.
- Thou shalt pray for the integrity of other staff members.

“But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God’s holy people.” Eph. 5:3 (NIV)

### **Reasons To Maintain Moral Purity**

The following is adapted from a list developed by a minister\* who would review it whenever he felt vulnerable to sexual temptation. He cited the following as reminders of the negative consequences a wrong moral choice could produce.

- Grieving the Lord who redeemed me.
- Dragging His sacred name into the mud.
- One day having to look Jesus, the Righteous Judge, in the face and give an account for my actions.
- Following in the footsteps of those whose immorality forfeited or crippled their ministries.
- Inflicting untold hurt on my best friend, my wife.
- Losing my wife's respect and trust.
- Hurting my beloved children.
- Destroying my example and credibility with my children, and nullifying both present and future efforts to teach them to obey God (*"Why listen to a man who betrayed Mom and us?"*).
- If my blindness should continue or my wife be unable to forgive, perhaps losing my wife and my children forever.
- Causing shame to my family (*"Why isn't Daddy a preacher any more?"*).
- Losing self-respect.
- Creating a form of guilt awfully hard to shake. Even though God would forgive me, would I forgive myself?
- Forming memories and flashbacks that could plague future intimacy with my wife.
- Wasting years of ministry training and experience for a long time, maybe permanently.
- Forfeiting the effect of years of witnessing to other family members and reinforcing their distrust for ministers. Perhaps contributing to the hardening of their hearts.
- Undermining the faithful example and hard work of other Christians in our community.
- Bringing great pleasure to Satan, the enemy of God and all that is good
- Heaping judgment and endless difficulty on the person with whom I committed adultery.
- Possibly bearing the physical consequences of such diseases as gonorrhea, syphilis, Chlamydia, herpes, and AIDS; perhaps infecting my wife, or in the case of AIDS, even causing her death.
- Possibly causing pregnancy, with the personal and financial implications, including a lifelong reminder of my sin.
- Bringing hurt to my fellow ministers.
- Bringing hurt to my friends, especially those I've led to Christ and disciplined.
- Invoking shame and lifelong embarrassment upon myself.

\* Randy Alcorn, "Strategies to Keep From Falling" *Leadership*, Winter 1988.

## **Using Your Time Wisely Ephesians 5:16**

### **A Gospel Preacher**

A gospel preacher realizes that his life and purpose is to serve the living God and to tell the story of Jesus again and again. As a Christian, a preacher belongs to the Lord who bought him with His precious blood. A gospel preacher is a man who prays and studies God's Word in the morning, ministers to the hurting and lost during the day, studies with both the erring and the saints in the evening, and meditates on God in the night. He speaks the truth in love and will not compromise his faith or his lifestyle. He weeps over the lost and rejoices at conversion. He shares himself that he might touch the most intimate places in the hearts and spirits of those who hear him.

His foundation is truth, his life is faith, his love is people, and his hope is heaven. There is a fire in bones, which pushes him to speak when others remain silent. There is urgency in his message, passion in his voice, and zeal in his heart. God is his passion, his source, his energy, his rock, his friend, and his life. He never forgets Jesus Christ and him crucified. He realizes God has entrusted him with the power of God unto salvation. A gospel preacher must reveal the unsurpassed love and grace of God, while he exposes the ugliness and tragedy of sin. His work demands fearless conviction, undoubting faith, unchanging love, and inspiring hope.

The work of preaching the gospel may be the hardest and most needed task on earth. Nothing else can change the lives of sinners into saints or melt hardened hearts. Gospel preaching demands great prayer, great wisdom, great commitment, and great love. Weak men need not apply. The Lord Jesus who bore the cross in Golgotha asks faithful men to deny themselves and bear a cross daily for Him. Gospel preachers take up their crosses to find a crown for themselves and for all that will listen to them.

### **What Churches Expect from Fulltime Preachers**

- Two sermons each Sunday and a devotional on Wednesdays
- Classes Sunday morning and Wednesday evening plus a ladies class
- Bulletin articles each week, webpage
- Visitation to sick, hospitalized, grieving
- Evangelistic Bible studies with lost and visits to restore the fallen
- Newslines, radio, or newspaper articles
- Office administration

The challenge of ministry is to use your time wisely and to bring balance to your lifestyle. Studying, visiting, soul-winning, family, private devotions and recreations all have a place in the life of a preacher.

### **Other Tasks Preachers Are Sometimes Asked to Do**

- Weddings, funerals
- Emergencies, deaths, fires, tornadoes, etc.
- Counseling, advice seekers
- Dealing with transients and salesmen
- Speaking engagements, gospel meetings, seminars, retreats, lectureships, workshops
- Church correspondence
- Building maintenance and repair

- Civic and school involvement
- Letters of recommendation and witness in court
- Raise funds for church or a Christian work
- Church camp and VBS
- Writer, editor, printer
- Answer any Bible question at any time

### **Time Problems Young Preachers Face:**

#### *1. Compulsion*

Some fall into the trap of compulsive working, feeling they must be busy all the time. There is little relation between the amount of time and effort they give and the effectiveness of their work. When a compulsive worker wears down, his ministry really suffers. He works harder and gets less done. What he does, he does poorly, because he is weary and inefficient. Work-aholics usually have poor relationships at home and at church.

#### *2. Procrastination*

Some wait until the last minute, thinking they work better under pressure. Often last minute, throw-together plans and sermons provide very poor performance.

#### *3. Confusion*

Many young preachers do not know what they are supposed to do. They often waste time trying to figure out their ministry. With little supervision, no job description, working alone, many young ministers fail to satisfy the brethren who hired them. Frequently, young ministers have fuzzy lines between responsibilities to work, family and community. Wise elders and leaders will help young men to understand exactly what they should be doing.

#### *4. Boredom*

Some preachers in smaller churches do not see the work that is before them and assume they do not have enough challenge or work to do. Many get caught up in time-wasting activities that do not further the gospel of Christ.

No preacher is a superman. Two-talent men are not expected to perform like five-talent man, yet both can produce and please the Lord. Do your best with your God-given talents and skills. Do not browbeat yourself that you are not equipped like someone else. Do what you do best. Each member of the body has his own work of service.

### **How to Use Your Time Wisely**

*“Father, this is your day. I am your servant.  
Lead me. Use me. Glorify yourself through me this day.”*

1. Use the early morning or late hours for devotional or reading time. Discipline yourself to meditate on God’s Word.
2. When you get tired or sleepy in the afternoons, wash your face, get out of your chair and walk around the building, or do a physical task. Once you are awake, get to work at a harder pace. Exercise will help keep your metabolism up.

3. Use travel time wisely. Listen to tapes of sermons or lectures. Pray or sing as you drive.
4. Plan and order your day the first thing in the morning. Outline and organize what you plan to do each day and how you will use your time. Priorities matter.
  - What I must do
  - What I should do
  - What I want to do
5. When crises and emergencies arise, rearrange your schedule on the particular day to allow for the time required. As quickly as possible, get back on schedule.
6. If you have a secretary, ask her to do repetitious tasks. Train personal workers who can help you in your evangelistic efforts. The more you involve others, the more they will feel a part of the work of the Lord.
7. Use form letters whenever possible.
8. Restrict your exposure to people who abuse your time, because they have nothing else to do. When you fellowship, fellowship with a purpose.
9. Don't linger over unimportant details or decisions.
10. Use the phone whenever possible to make contacts, to find information, and to schedule visits and appointments.
11. If you must wait for any reason, take along a book or other reading material. Use small segments of time to the best advantage.
12. Do two things at once, whenever possible.
13. Learn to handle interruptions (phone calls, questions, and guests). Learn how to pick up a thought or an idea and continue after the interruption. Finish a thought before you visit.
14. Do take breaks between tasks, so that your mind will be fresher when you start again. If you are weary, a ten-minute power nap can be quite helpful. (Since preachers often have late nights, a short rest in the early afternoon can be refreshing. Eat foods that build energy.)
15. The busier we are the more we need to pray first for strength, wisdom, and a right heart. For 60 years an older preacher gave the first hour of his day to God. He first read the Bible for 30 minutes (aloud). Then he prayed for 30 minutes. By meeting with God first, he often solved his problems before he encountered them.

### **Why You Will Never Be Able to "Find" Time**

Time only needs "managing" because we don't seem to have enough time to do everything we want and need to do. In particular, we never seem able to "find time" for those important but not urgent activities. *Stop looking. You'll never find time. It isn't lost. You're living it.* You have to consciously decide to live it in certain ways and not others. You have to make time by taking it away from one activity and giving it to another.

### **Some Things Take Time**

It takes time to grow a soul. The planted seed does not bear fruit in a day. Souls mature when by exercise of time, study and experience they come to discern between good and evil (Heb. 5:12-14). Soul winning often takes many months of fellowship, teaching, and thinking. Cultivating souls for the Lord is not wasted time.

It takes time to grow and ripen a good sermon. Many preachers plan their sermons a month to six months in advance, so that they can collect materials for preparation. Do not spend more time scrounging for a subject than preparing to preach. Some ideas and understanding develops only after much study and meditation. Thinking through a passage of Scripture is never wasted time.

It takes time to make changes. Be patient with yourself and with others in major matters.

### ***A Weekly Schedule***

#### *Monday:*

Morning: quiet time, mail, bulletin article, periodicals, letters and errands, sermon planning  
Afternoon: visits to sick and shut-in; counseling, continued planning of lessons  
Evening: follow-up of Sunday guests, newcomers (usually by phone)

#### *Tuesday:*

Morning: quiet time, mail, bulletin, Bible study  
Afternoon: visits to hospital, grieving, or newcomers; Bible study  
Evening: Nashville School of Preaching classes

#### *Wednesday:*

Morning: quiet time, mail, pre-school class, bulletin preparation, Bible study for Wednesday Bible class  
Afternoon: hospital visits, office visits, class preparation, special reading  
Evening: Wednesday night Bible class and devotional

#### *Thursday:*

Morning: quiet time, mail, Sunday AM sermon preparation  
Afternoon: hospital visits, counseling, reading and study for Sunday AM class  
Evening: family time, free time

#### *Friday:*

Morning: quiet time, mail, Sunday PM sermon preparation  
Afternoon: visits, finish all preparations for Sunday, often leave early

#### *Saturday:*

Day off when possible

### Building Your Ministerial Library

**Suggestions for Selecting Books:**

1. Consider the topic of the book. Will it help me in my ministry? Will I learn something of God, the Bible, the church, or the world in which we live?
2. Consider the author(s) and publisher. Have I found this author teaches the gospel truth? Can I trust the information to be accurate, relevant, and scholarly? Will this book edify me? Who has endorsed this book?
3. Will I read and use this book? Buying a book you will not use is a waste of your resources.
4. Sometimes reading a book with which you disagree can help you understand why people reason the way they do and where they have gone astray.

#### Suggested and Sample Books for Your Library

Note: This is a sample list of books and is incomplete. Inclusion or exclusion from this list does not necessarily imply acceptance or rejection of a book. Bible students must learn to “eat the fish, and throw the bones away.”

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Reference</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Nave’s Topical Bible                  An Exhaustive Concordance                  New Bible Dictionary                  Holman Bible Dictionary                  New ISBE                  Eerdman’s Bible Handbook                  Manners and Customs of the Bible                  Treasury of Scripture Knowledge                  Essential IVP Reference Works                  Richards, The Bible Reader’s Companion                  Packer, Dictionary of Bible Themes</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>English Bibles</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">KJV, NKJV                  ASV,                  NASu (1995)                  English Standard Version                  NIV, NRSV, ESV, CEV                  God’s Word Translation                  Tanakh (OT)                  McCord’s FHV                  Littrell, English Study Bible (NT)</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>OT Commentaries</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Coffman Commentaries (OT)                  Sweet Commentaries (5-6 vols.)                  Bible Study Textbook Series (College)                  DeHoff’s Bible Commentaries                  New International Commentary OT                  Expositor’s Bible Commentary                  Keil &amp; Delitzch, OT Commentary (10 vols.)                  Pulpit Commentary Series                  College Press NIV series</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>NT Commentaries</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Coffman Commentaries (NT)                  Gospel Advocate Commentaries                  Sweet Commentaries (19 vols.)                  McGarvey’s Commentaries                  New International Commentary NT                  Bible Study Textbook Series (College)                  Pulpit Commentary Series                  Johnson, People’s NT Commentary                  Barclay, Daily Study Bible Series (liberal)                  College Press NIV series                  Expositor’s Bible Commentary</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Apologetics</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Baxter, I Believe Because                  Any book from Apologetics Press                  McCord, From Heaven or From Men?                  McGarvey, Evidences of Christianity</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Language Helps</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">An English Collegiate Dictionary                  An Unabridged English Dictionary                  Turabian, Manual for Writers                  Strunk &amp; White, Elements of Style</p>

<p>Stanley Sayers, For This Cause  Habermas, The Historical Jesus  McDowell, New Evidence that Demands a Verdict  Archer, Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties  Geisler, When Critics Ask  Geisler, When Skeptics Ask</p>	<p>Vine's Expository Dictionary of Bible Words  Louw &amp; Nida, Greek-English Lexicon  Harris, Theological Wordbook of the OT  Richards, Expository Dict. Of Bible Words  Dictionary of NT Theology  Robertson, Word Pictures in the NT</p>
<p><b>Preaching</b>  Holland, Steps into the Pulpit  Holland, Sermon Design and Delivery  Holland, Essential Elements of Expository Preaching  Holland, Preaching: Principles and Practice  North, Preaching: Man and Method  Robinson, Biblical Preaching  Stott, Between Two Worlds  Chapel, Christ-Centered Preaching  Little, 10,000 Illustrations from the Bible  Pentz, The Complete Book of Zingers</p>	<p><b>Evangelism and Church Growth</b>  Yeakley, Why Churches Grow  Pepper, Church Growth Today  Gatewood, You Can Do Personal Work  Sanders, Evangelism Handbook  Ellas, Clear Choices for Churches  Ellas, Measuring Church Growth  Green, Evangelism in the Early Church  Hadaway, Church Growth Principles  Rainer, The Book of Church Growth  Towns, Practical Encyclopedia Of Evangelism and Church Growth  Towns, Complete Book of Church Growth  Macchia, Becoming a Healthy Church</p>
<p><b>Restoration History</b>  Search for the Ancient Order (5 vols.)  Campbell, The Christian Baptist  Shepherd, The Church, Falling Away, and Restoration  Crawford, The Restoration Plea</p>	<p><b>Church History</b>  Schaff, History of the Christian Church (8)  Latourette, A History of Christianity (2 vols.)  Cambridge History of the Bible  Schaff, The Creeds of Christendom</p>
<p><b>Church</b>  Ferguson, The Church of Christ  Wharton, The Church of Christ  Cogdill, The NT Church  Campbell, The Christian System  Brewer, The Model Church  Brownlow, Why I Am a Member of the Church of Christ</p>	<p><b>Early Church History</b>  Lightfoot, The Apostolic Fathers  Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History  Ferguson, Early Christians Speak  Ferguson, Encyclopedia of Early Christianity  Ferguson, Backgrounds of Early Christianity  The Works of Josephus  Bercot, Dict. Of Early Christian Beliefs</p>
<p><b>Salvation</b>  Bretners, Gospel Plan of Salvation  Milligan, Scheme of Redemption  Olbricht: Baptism: A Response of Faith  Campbell, Christian Baptism  Beasley-Murray, Baptism in the NT  Debate Books on the subject</p>	<p><b>Worship</b>  Jividen, More Than a Feeling  Jividen, Worship in Song  Chambers, Showtime  Bales, Instrumental Music and NT Worship  Wallace, Instrumental Music Question  Ferguson, A Cappella Music</p>

	Debate Books on the subject
<p><b>Parenting</b></p> <p>Faulkner, Achieving Success without Losing Your Family</p> <p>Wilmeth, The Christian Home</p> <p>Any book by James Dobson</p> <p>Yorkey, Growing a Healthy Family</p> <p>Drescher, Seven Things Children Need</p> <p>Curan, Traits of a Healthy Family</p> <p>Meier, Child-Rearing</p>	<p><b>Marriage</b></p> <p>Harley, His Needs, Her Needs</p> <p>Harley, Love Busters</p> <p>Wright, Communication: Key to Your Marriage</p> <p>LaHaye, The Act of Marriage</p> <p>Waite, The Case for Marriage</p> <p>Wheat, Intended for Pleasure</p> <p>Wright, Pre-Marital Counseling</p> <p>Wright, Marital Counseling</p>
<p><b>Hermeneutics</b></p> <p>Dungan, Biblical Hermeneutics</p> <p>Lockhart, Principles of Interpretation</p> <p>Kearley, ed., Biblical Interpretation</p> <p>Warren, When is An Example Binding?</p> <p>Ramm, Protestant Biblical Interpretation</p> <p>Terry, Biblical Hermeneutics</p> <p>Sanders, Let All the Earth Keep Silence</p> <p>Kaiser &amp; Silva, An Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics</p>	<p><b>Today's Culture</b></p> <p>Sanders, Adrift: Postmodernism in the Church</p> <p>Carson, The Gagging of God</p> <p>Veith, Postmodern Times</p> <p>McCallum, The Death of Truth</p> <p>MacArthur, Ashamed of God</p> <p>Any book by George Barna</p> <p>Gallup, The Next American Spirituality</p> <p>Lapin, America's Real War</p> <p>"Current Thoughts and Trends"</p>
<p><b>Counseling</b></p> <p>Bill Flatt, Personal Counseling</p> <p>Narramore, The Psychology of Counseling</p> <p>Adams, Competent to Counsel</p> <p>Adams, The Christian Counselor's Manual</p> <p>Wright, Crisis Counseling</p> <p>Moorehead, Counsel Yourself and Others from the Bible</p>	<p><b>Suffering</b></p> <p>Myers, Evil and Suffering</p> <p>Hicks, Yet Will I Trust Him</p> <p>Wiersbe, Why Us?</p> <p>Yancey, Where Is God When It Hurts?</p>

### Suggestions:

Lectureship Books from various Universities, Colleges, and Schools of Preaching follow valuable themes and provide helpful information.

Watch for new books and check libraries. I shop several different religious bookstores, because buyers often gather materials I cannot find elsewhere.

Include money for books in your budget. These are your tools and sources.

Books on CD-Rom are often less expensive than in hardcover and easier to transport. You can often buy a large collection for far less than the printed form.

### Other Ways to Build Your Library

#### Subscribe to helpful periodicals. (Samples)

- Gospel Advocate

- Firm Foundation
- Spiritual Sword
- Reason and Revelation
- Church & Family (Harding University)
- Journal of Biblical Interpretation and Application
- The Christian Chronicle
- Time or Newsweek
- US News & World Report
- Current Thoughts and Trends
- Biblical Archeological Review
- Daily Newspaper

#### *Build Files*

- *Purchase a good file cabinet and plenty of file folders*
- Collect and sort articles, bulletins and papers—keep only what is valuable
- Arrange your folders where you can find your information

#### *Audio and Video Tapes*

Lectureships, seminars and workshops, as well as sermons can be extremely valuable resources.

#### *Bible and Related Software*

- Buy software that is compatible with new products as they are developed and will allow you to download your most used books on your hard drive.
- Read reviews of software before you buy. Some software is expensive and may not include what you use most.
- Package software often contains many books at very reasonable prices. This can be helpful if these are books you use.

#### *Illustration/Poem Files*

- Purchase blank 5x8 inch cards. These fit well into your Bible.
- Type illustrations on the card or paste copies of illustrations from books and periodicals. Your daily newspaper is an excellent source of information.
- Draw illustrations from your life experiences and record them.
- Assign a topic to each illustration.
- Arrange in a box in alphabetical order according to topic.

## Wedding Planning Guide

### **General:**

1. Have you reviewed the marriage laws for your state?
2. What is the exact location of the wedding?
3. What is the time of the ceremony?

### **Rehearsal:**

1. What time do you wish the rehearsal to begin? ("It will take about [45] minutes.")
2. What is the time and location of the rehearsal dinner?
3. Is the minister's wife invited to the rehearsal dinner?
4. Remind bride and groom to bring the license with them to rehearsal (if not before).

### **Ceremony:**

1. What time are pictures to be taken? (before/after)
2. How many guests are expected?
3. Is a bulletin desired? Who will print it?
4. What names are to be used in the ceremony? (full given/nicknames/middle names)
5. Have they selected the sons and their placement in the ceremony? Do they meet with your approval?
6. Have the musicians been selected and contacted?
7. Will this be a double ring ceremony?
8. Do they object to "the kiss"?
9. Do the bride and groom wish to use standard vows or to modify or write their own? (vows must be approved)
10. Will the bride be given away? By whom?
11. Is there a particular Scripture they wish read?
12. Go over the processional.
13. Will a unity candle be used?
14. Will the bride or groom sing?
15. Will flowers be handed to parents?
16. Will the ceremony be taped or a video made? Who is in charge?
17. Is a "kneeler" needed for prayer?
18. Will another minister be involved? What part will he have?
19. Go over the ceremony step by step.
20. Go over the recessional.
21. Who will be in the receiving line? Where is it located?
22. Will the ushers usher each row out individually after the ceremony or only family members?
23. Is the reception at the church? Do they understand church policies?
24. Explain clean-up procedures and rearrangement of the church for Sunday services. Establish who is responsible (if not a custodian).
25. Explain "no smoking" and "no alcoholic beverages" in the church.
26. Discuss picture taking during the ceremony.
27. Explain rental costs if any.
28. Give bride and groom a copy of the marriage and ring vows.

## **Etiquette 101 - Weddings** **by Jessica Walker**

A wedding ceremony is a celebration of love, tradition and community. A Christian wedding is also a worship service. Thus, observing traditional wedding etiquette is not merely attention to form but a means of respecting the symbolic meanings behind those forms. Since etiquette will probably not be the first thing on your mind when planing a wedding, use these guidelines to help get you started in giving proper attention to this essential element:

### **Who Pays?:**

- The groom and his family traditionally pay for the bride's engagement and wedding rings, the rehearsal dinner, marriage license, clergy fees, corsages, boutonnieres, bride's bouquet, honeymoon, wine and music. The bride and her family are traditionally expected to cover all other costs.

### **Rehearsal Dinner:**

- Hosted by the groom's family the night before the wedding, the rehearsal dinner should include immediate family, attendants, spouses of married attendants, parents of children in the wedding, the minister and his spouse.

### **Wedding Party:**

- **Attendants:** In formal ceremonies, the couple typically have between 4-10 attendants each; 2-6 in a semiformal wedding; 1-3 in an informal wedding.
  - It is thoughtful to ask at least one of the groom's sisters to be a bridesmaid and one of the bride's brothers to be a groomsman.
  - It is not necessary to have an equal number of male and female attendants in the wedding party, as they do not need to walk up and down the aisle in pairs. Similarly, the bride may have two honor attendants and split the duties between the two.
- **Ushers:** Approximately one usher is needed for every fifty guests.
- **Junior Attendants:** Usually sisters or cousins of the couple, junior attendants are between the ages of 9 and 14.
- **Child Attendants:** Serving as train bearers, ring bearers and flower girls, child attendants are between the ages of 4 and 8.

### **Ceremony:**

- **Seating:** Unless there is a disparity in the number of guests invited by the bride and the groom, the bride's friends and family should sit on the left side of the altar. The first row of both sides should be reserved for parents, the second for grandparents and siblings.
- **Order:** The typical order of a Christian wedding ceremony is as follows: call to worship, charge to couple, giving away, vows, exchange of rings and pronouncement.

### **Reception:**

- **Receiving Line:** Those in the receiving line should be, in the following order, the mother of the bride, father of the bride, mother of the groom, father of the groom, bride, groom, bride's honor attendant and bridesmaids.
- **Order:** A typical reception lasts about three or four hours and consists of the following elements: mingling and music, dinner announcement and seating of wedding party, toast given by best man and followed by thanks of bride and groom, couple dance and other traditional dances, cutting of the cake, bouquet and garter throw and send-off.

- **Cutting the Cake:** The groom places his right hand over the bride's and together they cut the bottom layer of the cake. After sharing the first piece with her new husband, the bride then gives the next two pieces to her new in-laws; the groom then follows suit with the following two pieces. The top layer of the cake is traditionally saved by the couple for their enjoyment on their first wedding anniversary.

**Gifts:**

- It is not proper to include registry information with the wedding invitation. The only time when registry information should be mentioned is on a bridal shower invitation or by word of mouth.
- Personal thank-you notes are a must. In general, a gift received before the wedding should be acknowledged within two weeks and within a month for anything that arrives on the wedding day or after.
- For the guests, it is both traditional and wise to send gifts to the bride at her home address before or after the wedding ceremony.

**Audience Seating**

Bride's Side		Groom's Side	
Bride's Mother and Father		Groom's Mother and Father	
Grandparents		Grandparents	
Other Family		Other Family	
Friends		Friends	
Friends		Friends	

**Seating of the Parents:**

At the beginning of the ceremony, the seating of the parents should be done in this order:

- Seating of groom's grandparents
- Seating of bride's grandparents
- Seating of groom's parents
- Seating of bride's mother (assuming the father brings in the bride)

While the usher traditionally escorts parents, any party member or family may fill this role.

**Traditional Processional**

After the parents are seated, the minister, groom, best man and groomsmen come out followed by:

- Bridesmaids
- Maid or matron of honor
- Ring bearer
- Flower girl
- Father and Bride

**Traditional Recessional**

The party goes out in reverse order (except the father of the bride goes out with the mother).

## Wedding Ceremony

June 29, 2001

Who gives this woman to this man in marriage?

Dear friends, we are gathered here today with joy in our hearts, because \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ have chosen to enter a lifelong marriage covenant with each other. God knew that it was not good for man to be alone, so He Himself made her a helper suitable for him. Marriage was God's plan for the male and female, whom He made in His image and for whom He made the whole world. He Himself established the first marriage to bless Adam and Eve with a mate for life. Each would enjoy the love and blessing of the other.

In marriage God unites two people so that they become one. Marriage for this reason is sacred and holy. It is the making of a new family. Like no other relationship, husband and wife become one flesh.

Marriage before God is the making of a covenant with vows, wherein a man and a woman agree to love, honor and cherish each other. Their relationship is unique and the most intimate of any on earth. A man is to leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife. The breaking of this covenant is a very serious matter. "What God has joined together, let not man put asunder."

The blessing of marriage is the reassurance that throughout life each of you has the committed yourself to the other. This commitment will give you strength to endure the many hard challenges ahead of you. These vows you make are not to be taken lightly. They are solemn and should only be entered with great forethought and willingness. In marriage, love demonstrates itself in its highest and purest form.

### **Reading: 1 Cor. 13:4-8.**

I say to both of you, commit yourselves to each other for the rest of your lives. Like the beautiful Ruth, \_\_\_\_\_, be in subjection to your husband \_\_\_\_\_. Tell him: "Don't urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people, and your God will be my God. Where you die I will die, and there I will be buried. May the Lord deal with me, be it ever so severely, if anything but death separates you and me." (Ruth 1:16,17)

To you, \_\_\_\_\_, Paul admonishes you to love your wife even as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her. He who loves his wife loves himself; for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church. Love her, listen to her, make her the queen of your life always.

Put the Lord first in your home, make each other second, and keep yourselves last. Never let anyone or anything pull you apart or build a wall between you. Every day demonstrate your love for each other. Never let the sun go down on your anger, but quickly reconcile and quickly forgive. Your home will be what you make it. If you do these things, you will have home full of love and happiness--all that you have dreamed about. That is what God wishes and what we all wish for you.

Today, God is making your new home, joining your hands and hearts. May He give you enough tears to keep you tender, enough hurts to keep you compassionate, enough failure to keep your hands clenched tightly in His, and enough success to make you sure you walk with Him. God wants you to be together as long as you live. "What God has joined together, let not man put asunder."

**Will you join hands** and take these vows before God and these witnesses:

I, \_\_\_\_\_ take you \_\_\_\_\_ to be my lawful wedded (husband/wife), to live together after

the teaching of God, to love, honor, cherish, and (protect/respect) in sickness and in health, for better or for worse, for richer or for poorer, and to give myself to you and you alone until death do us part?

**May I have the ring?** (bride's then groom's)

This ring is an unending circle that reminds us of the eternal love you are to show to each other. As often as you see this token of love, as often as you feel it upon your finger, let it remind you of the vows you are taking here today.

**With this ring I thee wed  
and pledge my faith and love  
until death do us part.**

**Prayer:**

Heavenly Father, we are grateful today for the privilege of witnessing these vows of love \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ have made to each other. We pray that their new home will be filled with joy and love. May you, Father, always be the center of their home. Help them through the changes and challenges ahead of them. Give them the wisdom and patience they will need as they adjust to a new life. Help them to keep the warmth of their love alive all the days of their lives.

As the years go by, Father, may their lives prosper. And if children be added to this home someday, may they be healthy and happy. Father, we are grateful that this is a Christian home, and we pray that you will always keep it secure in the hollow of your hand. Now,  
The Lord bless you and keep you; The Lord make His face to shine upon you;  
And be gracious unto you. The Lord lift up His countenance upon you  
And give you peace. (Num. 6:24-26) In Jesus' name, Amen.

By the authority vested in me as a minister of the Gospel of Christ and by this state, since you have made these vows and fulfilled the lawful requirements, I now pronounce you husband and wife.

**For Whom Shall I Perform a Wedding?**

Christian ministers have an obligation before God not to participate in a union that violates the Biblical teaching. No man of God wants to participate and support another's evil. It is helpful to decide on a policy before these issues arise. Some have no right to marry before God, and others would foolishly enter such a union. You as a minister may be the only roadblock to a decision, which could ruin lives or cost participants their souls.

*1. I will not perform a wedding ceremony for those who have no right to marry.*

Matthew 19:9 and 1 Corinthians 7:10-11 teach that some who are divorced commit adultery upon their remarriage and thereby have no right to remarry. Those who have divorced because of mate's fornication do have a right to remarry. Divorce for other reasons gives no such right. 1 Corinthians 7:15 says that the brother or sister is free in the case where a non-believer has deserted him or her. Some have held the "Pauline privilege" with the understanding that the non-believer will likely divorce to go out and find another mate.

1 Corinthians 7:39 says that widows may marry “only in the Lord.” There is a question whether this passage means “only a Christian” or “as the Lord directs” (cf. Eph. 6:1).

2 Corinthian 6:14 teaches “Do not be bound together [unequally yoked] with unbelievers.” Some have suggested that Christians may not under any circumstances, while others believe one should not marry a non-Christian whose convictions will unfairly hinder one’s faith. No Christian minister should marry a Christian woman to a Moslem man, for instance.

It is not an uncommon practice for people to lie at times. Some people will lie about the reason for their prior divorce. If I find that people have lied to me, I will refuse to marry them.

2. *I will not perform a wedding ceremony for those who are marrying foolishly.*
- People too immature for marriage, even if they have parental consent.
  - People who do not understand marriage is a commitment “till death do us part.”
  - People who marry just to escape a terrible life at the parents’ home.
  - People who marry for financial security but without love.
  - People who marry simply because all of their friends are marrying.
  - People who marry solely on the basis of physical attraction.
  - People who marry out of desperation to avoid the single life.

When I agree to perform a wedding ceremony, I expect a couple to have undergone some form of premarital counseling or classroom training. Preachers should have some plan for premarital counseling.

## Visiting the Hospital and the Shut-Ins

### Some Golden Rules for Showing Love (Matt. 7:12)

1. Go. Don't equate avoidance with caregiving.
2. Go as God's man. Go to say a prayer or read a Scripture. Remind them that God knows and understands.
3. Keep the visit *short* unless the patient desires otherwise. The sick tire easily. Patients who are on liquids need frequent trips to the bathroom. Observe visiting hours.
4. If the patient already has visitors, make your visit only a prayer.
5. Be friendly, cheerful and optimistic in your approach. Avoid belly-laughs with surgery patients.
6. Let the patient have the freedom to set the tone of the conversation. On such occasions, patients may need you to listen more and speak less.
7. Remember a patient is a person, one who happens to be ill.
8. Never ask a patient what is wrong; he will tell you if he wants you to know.
9. Don't compare your past operations or ailments with the patient's present illness except to sympathize.
10. Avoid discussions, which disturb or depress a patient.
11. Be considerate of other patients in wards or in semi-private rooms. Never be loud, since the sick are sensitive to noise.
12. When a patient is having surgery, it is nice to pray with them before the surgery or to wait with the family during the surgery. Patients usually are not suitable for company immediately after a surgery.
13. Medication and the illness may cause a patient to be emotionally charged. Be prepared and patient with those who are suffering.
14. When you approach the room, check to see if the "HELP" light is on. If it is, wait until the need is filled before you enter.
15. Always knock and wait for an answer before entering. Never barge in.
16. Respect "NO VISITORS" and "ISOLATION" signs. Ask the family or the nurse for instructions.
17. Stand or sit where it is convenient for the patient to see you. Avoid sitting on the bed.
18. Don't shake the bed. Be careful what you touch (infectious germs).
19. Wash your hands frequently before and after visiting.
20. Leave quickly if meals or medical personnel arrive.
21. If a patient is out for tests or treatments, leave a note or card to let them know you care.

### How long should I stay?

Short visits are always best. Let the patient dictate the length of a stay. If he is restless, needs a nap, fatigued, or needs to use the rest room, he needs you to leave. If it is hard for the patient to talk, don't continue a conversation.

Some rehabilitating patients enjoy longer visits. They want company and need it. Stay only a little longer if you can bless their lives by listening to them. They may wish to talk about important spiritual matters. Give them that opportunity.

**When a Patient is near Death**

Ministers have an opportunity not only to minister to the ill patient but also to the family. Your show of love and concern can make a difference in the lives of others. Prayer and assurance are important to anyone who is near death. This may also be an opportune time to speak to family members who may not be right with the Lord.

Sometimes modern technological capabilities can render services to sustain life, when additional life is neither wanted nor beneficial. Patients need to obtain *and sign* a living will, if they prefer not to have measures that will prolong their lives. The implementation of these heroic measures may only sustain life for a short time. We must remember that disease is what kills patients, not our choices. Patients and their families need to decide whether they desire to use them to delay the inevitable. There are things worse than dying for the faithful Christian. Few people, if any, wish to remain alive unaware of their surroundings. Ministers need to be available for families who must make hard decisions pertaining to a dying loved one.

People in shock at the death of a loved one may need someone to guide them through what must be done step by step. Help people when you can. Sudden deaths, when the family is at the emergency room, may call for many different needs.

The best thing any minister can do in tragic circumstances is to listen and to pray with and for the family. If you cannot solve their problems, give them comfort and assurance.

## **Funeral Etiquette for Ministers**

### **Overview**

1. The funeral as a service
2. The funeral as a testimony and/or witness
3. The biblical teaching concerning death (Involves your application of that toward the believer, non-believer, infant, youth, suicide, accident victim, murder victim, etc.)

### **When Death Comes**

#### **Be Prompt**

1. Go wherever necessary to be with the family
2. Express your sympathy to the family
3. Encourage the family to talk about it. ("Can you tell me what happened?")

#### **Be Helpful**

1. Without going into great detail, help them to think through the next steps: funeral home, permission for autopsy, contacting relatives, etc.
2. Offer and be willing to provide help. Offer to go with them to meet with the mortician.

#### **Be Brief**

1. Read scripture with them and pray.
2. Stay with them until things are under control.

### **The Day Following**

1. Assist where possible in preliminaries with the family and the mortician.
2. Use the funeral planning sheet.
3. Help them think through the type, cost and location of the service.
4. If appropriate, help them plan the time, participants (ushers, musicians, pallbearers)
5. Pray with the family (and mortician).

### **The Viewing**

1. Find out when the body can be viewed for the first time and be there one-half hour before so you can be with the family.
2. Take your wife if at all possible.
3. The evening prior to the funeral is a good opportunity to minister, often at an additional or final viewing.

### **The Funeral or Memorial Service**

Arrive at the church or mortuary 15-20 minutes early in order to prepare your own soul and to complete details of the service (singers, mortician, etc.). Meet family as they are seated in the family room. Be ready on time! Either walk in with the family or from a side door as the funeral begins. Usually the funeral director will inform you where you need to be and when. The customs and practices of funeral differ from state to state and from funeral home to funeral home. When in doubt, ask the funeral director what they generally do.

Bring appropriate remarks. Perhaps start with a Scripture reading. Read the Obituary and make some kind remarks (eulogy). Close your remarks with a prayer. Frequently, funerals will have more than one speaker. Coordinate with the other speakers so that you do not monopolize the available time or repeat what others have said.

At the close of the service, be available at the casket. The funeral director will come to the front, and the minister will lead slowly the pallbearers and the casket to the door of the hearse.

### **Committal Service at the Graveside**

- At the cemetery, the minister again slowly leads the procession from the hearse to the burial site.
- Stand at the head of the casket (ask the funeral director where the head faces before arrival at the cemetery.)
- Brief remarks, short scripture, word of thanks to mortician for the family.
- Committal prayer
- Go to the family and express your concern and availability.
- The funeral director will then try to get the family to return to their cars.

### **Social Time with Family and Friends**

Depending upon the time of the service, the distance the family travels, and other factors, this might include time before, after, or both before and after the funeral service. Church women may or may not be involved.

### **Post Funeral Contact**

1. Do not forget the bereaved after the funeral
2. Take a devotional pamphlet on death to the grieving.

### **Questions to Ask the Family for a Better Eulogy**

Explain that you are trying to gain a better feel for what that person was like, so you can be more personal.

- What one adjective would you use to describe him?
- Did he have any particular loves or hobbies?
- Did he enjoy any particular songs? poems? or Scriptures?
- If you could name one value or lesson he most wanted to teach the next generation, what would it be?
- What one achievement or accomplishment would make his eyes light up when you mentioned it?
- What were some of his favorite phrases or sayings?
- Did he ever put anything up on the wall - a picture or motto that expresses who he was?
- Did he like his first name? Did he have any nicknames?
- Was there a cause or a movement that he felt deeply about and supported with his time and resources?
- If he could have me say one thing during the funeral, what do you think it would be?
- Why do you think this world is a little different because of him?

(Taken from *Leadership 100*, March-April 1982, p. 26.)

**Some Helpful Books for Crisis Counseling and Grief:**

Bill Flatt, *Growing Through Grief*, Gospel Advocate, 1987.

Kenn Filkins, *A Comforting Word*, College Press, 1994.

H. Norman Wright, *Crisis Counseling*, Regal Books, 1993.

*Accepting Bereavement*, 21<sup>st</sup> Century Christian, 1999.

Virgil M. Fry, *Disrupted: Finding God in Illness and Loss*, 21<sup>st</sup> Century Christian, 1999.

Candy Lightner & Nancy Hathaway, *Giving Sorrow Words*, Warner Books, 1990.

Joseph A Krebs, *How to Comfort the Sick and Dying*, Roman Catholic Books, 1898.

## Writing and Bulletins

Most churches expect preachers to publish a weekly bulletin, containing news items, spiritual helps and reports of church activities. The bulletin serves not only as a means of information but also as an historical record of the ministry and life of the congregation. Bulletin articles can often explain and enlighten members and non-members in ways that the spoken word cannot do. A good church bulletin is a great benefit to a congregation. What people read, they will become.

Once an article or bulletin is published, however; it cannot be changed. This is why accuracy, style and grammatical correctness matter. Those who edit bulletins need to check and re-check their work before they commit to printing copies for release. There is no such thing as good writing, only good re-writing.

### Tips for better church bulletins:

1. *Learn to write succinctly.* Say more in fewer words. Use words everyone can easily understand. Authors can say much even in a limited space, if they delete redundant and unneeded words. Many times people say far more in announcements than is really necessary. Do not be repetitious.
2. *Spell every name and word correctly.* One bulletin listed a child named “Bart” as “brat.” You can imagine the reaction of the parents and the congregation. Purchase an updated collegiate-level dictionary. Writers are often their own “worst editor.” They often need someone else to read over their material to correct mistakes.
3. *Get to the point.* You only have so much space. Avoid “warm-up” material that gives little information. If one word will do, use it instead of two.
4. *Check out your information before you release it.* Make sure you have your times, locations, people and events correct. Once information goes out, it is twice as hard to correct.
5. *Get your facts together.* Put everything on the same subject in the same place.
6. *Use readable fonts.* Since most bulletins are done on computer, choose a font that is large enough and clear enough to be read easily.
7. *Whenever possible write in the active voice; avoid passive verbs.*
8. *Use specific words.* Rather than saying something is colorful, tell the specific color(s). Don’t say “car”; tell me what kind of car. The written image becomes more vivid when the writer is specific. Use concrete verbs and nouns rather than abstract ideas.
9. *Be fresh.* Take an old cliché and reword it. “If I should die before I wake,” can change into “If I should wake before I die.”
10. *Speak in positives and courageously.* If you have something to say, find the courage to say it forthrightly. Saying things tentatively or half-heartedly fosters doubt and confusion.
11. *Keep moving.* Keeping the reader’s attention means that you do not dwell on what he already knows. You keep pointing him to additional information and move him from point to point. Keep the reader in mind.
12. *Write in simple words. Don’t use complicated words when simple ones will do.* Use ordinary, everyday language. Words with one or two syllables are better than words with four or more syllables.

#### ***Don't Use---Use***

accomplish---do

attempt---try

utilize---use

construct---build

deficiency---lack  
 equitable---fair  
 infrequent---rare

occurrence---event  
 terminate---end  
 requisite---required

7. *Avoid common grammatical errors:*

- Don't use no double negatives.
- Make each pronoun agree with their antecedent.
- Join clauses good, like a conjunction should.
- When dangling, watch your participles.
- Verbs has to agree with their subjects.
- Don't use commas, which aren't necessary.
- Try not to ever split infinitives.
- Its important to use your apostrophe's correctly.
- Don't write runon sentences they are hard to read.
- It behooves the writer to avoid archaic expressions.
- Don't use hyperbole; not one writer in a million can use it effectively.
- Avoid cliches like the plague.
- Mixed metaphors are a pain in the neck and should be thrown in the lake.
- A truly good writer is always especially careful to practically eliminate the too-frequent use of adverbs.
- Placing a comma between subject and predicate, is not correct.
- Parenthetical words however should be enclosed in commas.
- Corect spellin is esential.
- Always proofread your copy to see if you any words out.
- Don't use contractions in formal papers.
- Don't use "quotation marks" for emphasis.
- "Quotation marks" may be used if the word is being used in a different way than its usual meaning, but only use them the first time the word is used. Don't use "quotation marks" every time the word appears.
- "Punctuation", says a sage, "should go inside the quotation marks".
- A writer should choose one set of pronouns and stick with it. He or she should not use both genders or he or she will lose his or her readers. Nor should s/he attempt to use a combined form of the pronouns. Nor should they substitute a plural form of the pronoun. The best solution is often to rewrite the sentence so you don't need to specify a gender.
- Unnecessary use of the word "that" is a mistake that many people make.

Many of the tips above came from:

[http://www.uiowa.edu/~c030162/Common/Writing\\_Tips/tips.html](http://www.uiowa.edu/~c030162/Common/Writing_Tips/tips.html)

Every preacher and editor would do well to purchase this brief but authoritative book: Strunk, William, Jr. and White, E.B. 1979. *The Elements of Style*, 3rd ed. New York: MacMillan.

### **Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is "the appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and thoughts of another author, and representation of them as one's original work" (The Random House College Dictionary, rev. ed.). It is theft. When you quote someone, cite your source. It shows you respect

the source enough to quote him/her. Quoting others also shows you have done your homework. The internet has an abundance of sources, but not all sources are worth quoting. Is your source credible? Is your information correct?

### **Writing for Publications:**

Writing for publications is an important way to expand your ministry. People nationwide can come to know you through your writings. Name recognition can be helpful to open doors for many ministry efforts. Writing is hard work; but it is necessary to teach, to inform, to warn, and to encourage others in the Lord's work. Here are some suggestions:

1. *Find out and observe writers' guidelines.* Publications often offer a free copy of their writers' guidelines. These guidelines reveal the length and format the publisher desires. Authors should respect the publisher enough to submit their articles in a form that suits the publication.
2. *Submit your article only after you have edited it.* Publishers are more likely to print a well-written article than one filled with mistakes. Mistakes in your manuscript mean that an editor must take the time to correct them.
3. *Organize your thoughts.* Read your work a day or two after you have written it. Ask some questions about your article:
  - Is it well organized?
  - Are your points clearly made?
  - Does it flow well from point to point?
  - Does it have an introduction and conclusion?
4. *Know your audience.* Write to the people who will be reading your article. Write what they need and what is helpful. Keep them in mind as you word your sentences. Never assume your readers know the meanings of your words. Define any word that is odd or rare.
5. *If you are critical of others, is this article fair and kind?* Some publications make it their business to police the brotherhood. There is a time and place for rebuking and correcting others; but there is little room in Christianity for dishonesty, rudeness, or hatefulness. Never write in anger (Eph. 4:26-27). Some authors/editors seem to think they must be judge and jury for every error everywhere. It is one thing to speak out against error; it is another to look for error under every rock and in every corner. Preachers should *never* use the pulpit or the pen to take personal vengeance on others. (Note my article "Dealing with a Brother," in the section on conflict.)
6. *Get in the habit of writing.* Practice does make perfect, and people who write regularly grow in their skill. Writing an article one per quarter for a major publication is not too often.
7. *Do not get discouraged if you are not published quickly.* Many publishers plan their issues well in advance. You may send your article in and not be published for several months. This is usually what happens. Even good articles are sometimes not usable by the publisher for a variety of reasons. The article may be too long or too short. The publisher may have recently published an article like it. It may not fit into his plan.

## Counseling

Most preachers are not equipped to be psychologists. There are some problems that are best left to those who have been trained to handle them. Ministers are spiritual counselors, and secular counselors cannot do what ministers do.

Christian counseling includes reading the Bible and praying, striving to help a person to overcome a sin problem, a difficulty, or a loss, so that they can be spiritually healthy. Christian counseling hold strong Christian values. Christian counselors must have the Lord and Scripture in their hearts. Some people do not know what to do; some do not know what is right and wrong; and some know what is right but lack the courage to do it. Many people who come to you are aware of the teaching of Scripture and are looking for a loophole. Scripture and prayer are most effective when applied appropriately to the problem. Your Bible is very often a statement of where you stand. Prayer must first be in your heart.

It is often difficult for a preacher to fulfill both the role of preaching and counseling. There is opportunity for one role to compromise the other. Preaching can sometimes appear to compromise confidentiality. The goal of counseling is to overcome the problem or difficulty while keeping a right relationship with God. Proclaiming God's will must deal with public problems, not individual ones. Counselees must never come to think that you are preaching straight to them and about them.

As a minister and counselor, see yourself as the first line of defense and refer counselees to competent counselors when they need long-term counseling. Preachers need to determine who are competent counselors, practicing within an easy drive of where they live. If you refer a client to a counselor, be sure that you can approve of that counselor. Would you send a family member to him? Does he/she have Biblical values? Does this counselor have specialties?

### **When to seek counseling** --Lynn McMillon

Listed below is a group of symptoms which suggest the need for counseling. In looking at the list, it is important to identify several symptoms as an indication for counseling, since most people will display one or two of the symptoms at different times but not need counseling.

1. Loss of interest in family members and family activities.
2. Loss of interest in caring for the house.
3. Chronic and unresolved conflicts.
4. A sense of "drifting apart."
5. Poor interpersonal relations at home and other places.
6. Lower than usual achievement levels.
7. Marked changes in behavior.
8. Defensiveness and overprotection.
9. Low level of control over emotions.
10. Undue suspicion.
11. Chronic depression.
12. Over reaction to situations.
13. Extremes in behavior.
14. Distorted and confused communications.

## Seven Biblical Steps in Christian Counseling

1. *Be Kind.* Prov. 19:22 says that kindness in a man is desirable. Those seeking to help others must show gentleness (1 Thess. 2:7).
2. *Focus on Behavior.* What has happened and is happening? How has the person acted or responded to behavior show toward him? Although feelings are important and should be noticed, most individuals have very little control over changing their feelings. They can, however, change their behavior. People tend to follow a cycle where feelings follow behavior and behavior follows feelings. To interrupt the present circumstances and take control, focus on behavior. Start by having counselees make a specific behavior plan involving daily quiet time, weekly exercise programs, daily social contact, and avoiding specific sinful behaviors.
3. *Help the Counselee Gain Insight.* See Psalm 139:23-24. A person cannot change if he does not know his problem. Knowing how the past affects the present and creates sinful or inappropriate defense mechanisms that turn into inappropriate behavior is an invaluable tool.
4. *Help with the Resolution of Feelings.* Feelings are important as Heb. 4:16 shows. Counselees need to be honest and to come to grips with their feelings. To deny feelings does not make them go away. God knows and understands our feelings. Feelings are recorded in biochemical pathways of the brain, and they cannot be simply erased. They can be resolved by using kindness and by reprogramming them through the Scriptures (Ps. 119:9-11) and through the influence of Christ in our lives. Allow people to share their feelings and to be understood; this is only common sense and kind. Help them to understand how their past may be influencing their present. Insight is helpful, but it is imperative that people move on in life and not remain in the past as depressed people are prone to do.
5. *Help Them Reprogram Their Thinking.* What happens to us in life is not the only important thing; it is also what we believe about what happens to us that matters. A Christian should not view death as a non-believer would. Our beliefs color our responses. 2 Cor. 4:16-18 and Romans 12:2 encourage us to be transformed by renewing our minds. Phil. 4:8 alerts us to be aware of our way of thinking. Sometimes Christians come to believe things about their lives that are simply not true. People can believe nearly anything if they tell themselves a lie often enough.
6. *Use a Comprehensive and Balanced Approach Along with Common Sense.* Some problems are the result of medical problems: a chemical imbalance in the brain, a brain tumor, or a disease. Medical disease should be ruled out first; counselors should ask counselees to get a good physical. A significant part of psychiatry is medical. Man is one being—body, soul, and spirit. What affects one part invariably will affect the others. Some counselors ignore the spiritual aspect and forget the every soul will have to spend eternity somewhere.
7. *Remember the Importance of the Spiritual.* Walking with God and going to heaven must be first and foremost in the mind of every Christian counselor and his counselees. To help someone with an earthly problem and then ignore where he would spend eternity is useless.

### Jesus As Counselor<sup>1</sup>

Jesus wasted little time and often went to the very heart of a matter (Luke 9:57-62). He used four main techniques in counseling.

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<sup>1</sup> This section comes from Allan Isom, "Jesus As Counselor," *Personal Counseling*, ed. Bill Flatt, pp. 29-35.

1. Jesus framed questions and answers that caused the hearer to have to make a decision. One could not be indifferent to Jesus (Luke 12:13-15).
2. Jesus told parables to get the hearer to apply Jesus' teaching.
3. Confrontation and evaluation responses were designed to cause the listener to think about his relationship with God. Jesus' approach gave more attention to man's thinking than to his feelings (Matt. 21:38).
4. Jesus emphasized instruction, belief, and correct decisions as with Nicodemus (John 3). His focus was more on the inner man than the outer.

Jesus' goal in counseling was to lead an individual to faith in God (2 Cor. 3:3). A secondary goal was to help people learn how to live happy lives (cf. Luke 10:41-42; Mark 6:30-35).

### **Some Principles of Christian Counseling:**

1. The counselor must be a loving person who has compassion for those who need his help (Col. 3:12). They have sought your assistance for help.
2. The counselor should truly attempt to understand his counselee's burden.
3. The counselor must understand that he may not be able to provide instant or easy solutions to serious or complex problems.
4. When a distressed person confides in you about his perplexing problem, do not be shocked or self-righteous. Remember that we are all human, made of flesh (Psalm 78:38-39). We are all subject to common temptations and to failure (1 Cor. 10:12-13).
5. Keep your emotions under control. You cannot help others if you yourself are out of control. It is important to empathize with others in deep emotional pain (Rom. 12:15), but you cannot help others if you have fallen to pieces. Hurting people are often confused; be patient with them. In their frustration they may say untrue things, angry things, or lash out at you. The best thing you can do is listen patiently and refrain from a heated response. There is no place in counseling for a short-fused person.
6. When you counsel those whose problems are sin-induced, do not be afraid to use the Bible as the answer to their problems. God always gives the best answers. Press upon them the necessity of repentance. Be firm yet kind. Jesus was neither crude nor compromising (Cf. Matt. 12:20; Luke 7:36ff.).
7. When a problem is beyond your competence, do not be too proud to ask for assistance or to refer this problem to a more qualified counselor. Do not be offended if the counselee asks for additional help. Your task is to help them, not build a reputation.<sup>2</sup> Ethics demand that counselors refer to others when they do not feel comfortable or are prejudiced against the sin problems of a person, *e.g.*, homosexuality, alcoholism, incest, *et. al.*
8. Always pray for wisdom (James 1:5).
9. Learn how to listen actively. The most valuable skill of a counselor is listening. Hear are some tips on how to listen:
  - Focus on the person who is speaking. Do not allow any distractions to take your attention from him.
  - If you do not understand what he is saying, ask for clarification. "Did I understand you to mean ...?" "Are you saying....?" "Help me; I am not sure I understand. Do you feel....?"

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<sup>2</sup> Wayne Jackson, *Christian Courier*, n.d.

- Listen to his tone of voice. Watch his body language. Notice how he is speaking as well as what he is saying.
  - Listen for what he is hinting at. He is likely reluctant to tell you what is really on his mind. The reason for talking and what he needs are often different.
  - Don't concentrate so much on how you're going to respond that you miss what he is saying to you.
  - Only interrupt him when you need clarification.
10. Realize that understanding a counselee's point of view or behavior is not the same as accepting it. We must allow counselees the freedom to speak and to bear their souls in an environment where they will not be censured. This does not mean that we have no responsibility to give them Biblical counsel at a later time.
  11. When you want to know information, ask open-ended questions (questions beginning with why, how, or what). When you want to confirm what he is saying, ask questions that call for a yes or no answer.
  12. A counselee has come to you because he already has some trust in you. Build on that trust and encourage it. If you make a mistake, admit it. Be open and honest. Behave in such a way that he may explore his life and problems because he feels safe with you not in spite of you.
  13. We can best help others by enabling them to do what they themselves ought to do and deeply wish to do.
  14. Help others cope with reality rather than defend against it, deny it, or distort it.

### Legal Advice for Ministerial Counselors

- If you counsel people outside your congregation, you will be held liable just as a licensed professional would be.
- If information on sexual abuse of children comes to light, you **MUST** report it. For Tennessee the number is: 877-237-0004. One should do this immediately; else he/she will become criminally responsible for withholding information.
- In cases where inappropriate behavior has happened in the long past and where there is no vulnerability in the present, it is best not to report. If you are in doubt about what you should report, call the state hotline (877-237-0004) for information. Report only clear-cut cases of sexual abuse, incest, or physical abuse. Use good judgment, and do not accuse without reason.
- If a preacher divulges information on someone's sexual behavior, he may be liable for a lawsuit.
- Inform counselees of your own legal requirements. Don't start every session off with disclaimers, but do tell clients prior to the revelation of a legal matter.

A tort or legal wrong for which one can be called into account presents itself when it can be established that:

- A duty existed between the plaintiff and the defendant.
- A breach of that duty has occurred.
- There is a causal relationship between the breach of duty and the harm to the plaintiff.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Harold Bigham, *Christian Chronicle*, February, 1986.

The insurance package of every church should include coverage for preachers and elders who give counsel to hurting individuals. Be sure to check with the leaders of the congregation to see if you are protected.

**Some Helpful Books:**

Bill Flatt, ed., *Personal Counseling*, Resource Publications, 1991.

Frank Minrith, *The Minrith Guide for Christian Counselors*, Broadman & Holman, 2003.

Bob Moorehead, *Counsel Yourself & Others from the Bible*, Multnomah, 1994.

Jeffrey Watson, *Biblical Counseling for Today*, Word, 2000.

Jay Adams, *The Christian Counselor's Manual*, Baker, 1973.

Bruce Narramore, *The Psychology of Counseling*, Zondervan, 1960.

## Relationships

### General Advice

1. Matthew 7:12 "Therefore, however you want people to treat you, so treat them, for this is the Law and the Prophets."
2. Matthew 5:38-48 Because you are God's child, treat people better than they deserve.
3. Eph. 4:25-29 Therefore, laying aside falsehood, speak truth, each one of you, with his neighbor, for we are members of one another. be angry, and yet do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not give the devil an opportunity. Let him who steals steal no longer; but rather let him labor, performing with his own hands what is good, in order that he may have something to share with him who has need. Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, that it may give grace to those who hear.
4. Eph. 4:31-32 Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. And be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.
5. James 1:19-20 This you know, my beloved brethren. But let everyone be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger; for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God.
6. James 3:13-18 Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by his good behavior his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom. But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth. This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing. But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy. And the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.
7. 2 Tim. 2:24-26 And the Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will.
8. You must be everyone's preacher. You cannot show partiality (James 2:1-4).
9. You must keep your promises.
10. You must keep confidences. The only exception to this is if someone should tell you they have abused a child. By law, *you must report* this to authorities (329-1911).
11. Never use the pulpit to address an individual problem or to punish someone.
12. Pay your bills on time as you have promised (Rom. 13:8).

### Family Relationships

1. Proverb 5:15-23 reminds us to rejoice in our wives.
2. Keep yourself sexually pure (1 Cor. 6:15-20; 2 Tim. 2:19-22; Heb. 13:4).
3. Show kindness and understanding to your wife (1 Pet. 3:7; 1 Cor. 13:4-8).
4. Discipline your children (Heb. 12:5-9; Proverbs 19:18; 22:15).
5. Love and spiritually nurture your children (Eph. 6:4).
6. Do not be an absent husband or an absent father to the point your family despises you or resents the work of the Lord.

## **Relationship with Elders**

### **Relationships with Elders**

1. Hebrews 13:7,17 Remember that you are under the oversight of the elders. Listen to them and cooperate with them. Before you criticize your elders or leaders, consider that they were wise enough to hire you. The elders are accountable to God for the church.
2. Elders often work full time and have many other concerns. Elders are not usually paid for their labors, while you are.
3. Elders make decisions with everyone's mind, not merely you. They must make out a budget for the whole church.
4. Elders often cannot tell all they know about a matter. Trust them when they make decisions you do not understand.
5. Help your elders, work with them, pray with them, and meet with them. Keep them informed of problems and challenges.
6. When they must talk to you or admonish you, listen to them.

### **When You Begin a New Work**

1. Learn everyone's name as quickly as possible. I usually ask each person to tell me their names each time I greet them for the first few weeks. Don't be ashamed to ask a name again and again. Tell them they are important to you, and you want to remember their names.
2. People will tell you a lot about what went on before you. They are telling you what they appreciate and approve. They are also telling you what they do not approve. Listen carefully for what they desire from you, but keep quiet about former preachers. Be thankful they have loved former preachers, since they are showing they can love you too.
3. Try to learn the way individual churches do things. Do not be too quick to change things. You are the preacher, but that doesn't mean you are the boss and can control everything.
4. If you want people to listen to you, you must first listen to them. You must earn the right to speak to people about the most important matters of their lives. This usually takes time to grow close. It takes 3-5 years to gain a hearing. The best years come when preachers have labored with them for more than seven years. People are eager and willing to invite others to church if they know you will bring consistently good messages with relevant and helpful Biblical material.

### **When You Leave a Congregation**

1. Be gracious and thankful for the opportunity to serve, even if you are asked to leave. Encourage them to remain true to God. Write a thank you note in the bulletin.
2. Do not use a time of parting to criticize or take pot shots at church leaders. Do not foster division or encourage the beginning of a new congregation a few miles away. Encourage any disgruntled members to remain with the congregation.
3. Do all you can to leave with a good relationship and the desire to reunite. These are people whom you have loved and taught. You will see them in heaven.
4. Do not leave a community with debts you do not intend to pay. If you are moving, make sure your creditors know your new address. Do not leave a congregation owing personal loans from church members.

## **God's People Know How to Resolve Conflict** **Colossians 3:12-14**

We are individuals. We will disagree with each other. We do not think alike;  
 we have different homes of origin;  
 we have had different experiences;  
 we are going through different stages of life;  
 we have different maturity levels  
 we have different culture mindsets  
 we have different priorities and values

We must learn how to prevent disunity by learning how to deal with disagreements.  
 God always has the answers to our problems and difficulties—go to Him!

### **Some Suggestions**

#### **1. Welcome the disagreement.**

This is an opportunity to learn and grow. None of us knows everything. Learn from this and you will not make the BIG mistake—believing you must separate from your brother.

Disagreement doesn't mean I have to become negative—I can grow through the experience and overcome the negative.

Gal. 5:19-21 (8 words dealing with relationships--NIV)

hatred,	hostility
discord,	strife, making trouble
jealousy,	the desire to be as well off as another
fits of rage,	temper tantrums, outbursts of anger
selfish ambition,	selfishness, self-seeking ambition,
dissensions,	divisiveness, making people mad →divide
factions	organized division, cliques, party spirit
and envy;	the desire to appropriate another's possessions

#### **2. Distrust your first instinct.**

Our 1<sup>st</sup> instinct = Defensive – normal reaction. Cat in a corner – stick out the claws, hiss, show teeth. Remember that you may not know all the facts. James 1:19 – Be quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger

#### **3. Control your temper**

You can measure a man by what makes him angry. Proverbs 14:17 A quick-tempered man acts foolishly, And a man of evil devices is hated. Prov. 29:22 says an angry man stirs up strife, And a hot-tempered man abounds in transgression. Just because someone disagrees with you doesn't mean they are an enemy.

Eph. 4:26,27 Be angry, and *yet* do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not give the devil an opportunity. Don't stew over problems and rehearse them over and over in your head—each time adding a little more anger and misunderstanding

#### **4. Listen first.**

Proverbs 15:1 A soft answer turns away wrath. Build bridges, not barriers. Matt. 7:12

Let him finish – Was I thinking how I was going to respond or was I listening? Ask a question if you don't understand what a person meant.

***Be open to room for both to be right.*** *Paul may have been right about John Mark at one point in life but was wrong in another.*

Acts 15:36-40 Paul and Barnabas part

2 Tim. 4:11 Only Luke is with me. Pick up Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for service.

Sometimes anger comes from the fact that the other person holds a grain of truth which we find hard to face but need to hear. When someone criticizes, respond, "You may be right."

### **5. Look for areas of agreement.**

Jesus – letters to churches – Revelation 2, 3 – Find what is right. It has amazed me through the years to listen to heated discussions, where two people are arguing the same thing from different perspectives. Many disagreements are problems of semantics, language

### **6. Be honest.**

Apologize for your mistakes. Colossians 3:12-14 – Bear and forbear. Endure = Bear; Let go, ignore = forbear. Remember – You are no bargain to life with either.

Because you are often blind to your own sins, you may need an honest friend or advisor who will help you to take an objective look at yourself and face up to your contribution to a conflict.

When you identify ways that you have wronged another person, it is important to admit your wrongs honestly and thoroughly. One way to do this is to use the "Seven A's of Confession:"

- Address everyone involved (Prov. 28:13; 1 John 1:8-9)
- Avoid *if*, *but*, and *maybe* (don't make excuses; Luke 15:11-24)
- Admit specifically (both attitudes and actions)
- Apologize (express sorrow for the way you affected someone)
- Accept the consequences (Luke 19:1-9)
- Alter your behavior (commit to changing harmful habits; Eph. 4:22-32)
- Ask for forgiveness

### **7. Promise to think over and carefully study his ideas.**

Think, examine openly and honestly his ideas. They might have some merit. He/she may have seen something you did not see. If not, you will need to give clear reasons. The greatest courtesy you can show anyone is to listen (1 Cor. 13:4,5)

### **8. Thank him for his interest.**

It took courage to disagree with you. This shows that he cares deeply about the matter.

### **9. Postpone action and pray together.**

Pray for wisdom, knowledge and understanding. (James 1:3-5). Things after a prayer may look very different. Talk with a trusted friend about how to deal with the problem—you may need someone to arbitrate between you.

Prov. 9:9 Give *instruction* to a wise man, and he will be still wiser, Teach a righteous man, and he will increase *his* learning.

Prov. 27:9 Oil and perfume make the heart glad, So a man's counsel is sweet to his friend.

## 10. Remember that loving others is more important than winning victories.

1 Cor. 6:7 Actually, then, it is already a defeat for you, that you have lawsuits with one another. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be defrauded? (better to be wronged than shame Jesus) God expects all of us to give sometimes—even when we are “in the right”—I am not speaking here of compromising Scripture. 1 Pet. 2:18-24 shows Jesus at the cross.

### Peacemaking

#### Go and show your brother his fault

Another key principle of peacemaking involves an effort to help others understand how they have contributed to a conflict. Before you rush off to confront someone, however, remember that it is appropriate to overlook minor offenses (see Prov. 19:11). As a general rule, an offense should be overlooked if you can answer "no" to all of the following questions:

- Is the offense seriously dishonoring God?
- Has it permanently damaged a relationship?
- Is it seriously hurting other people? and
- Is it seriously hurting the offender himself?

If you answer "yes" to any of these questions, an offense is too serious to overlook, in which case God commands you to go and talk with the offender privately and lovingly about the situation (see Matt. 18:15). As you do so, remember to:

- Pray for humility and wisdom
- Plan your words carefully (think of how you would want to be confronted)
- Anticipate likely reactions and plan appropriate responses (rehearsals can be very helpful)
- Choose the right time and place (talk in person whenever possible)
- Assume the best about the other person until you have facts to prove otherwise (Prov. 11:27)
- Listen carefully (Prov. 18:13)
- Speak only to build others up (Eph. 4:29)
- Ask for feedback from the other person
- Recognize your limits (only God can change people; see Rom. 12:18; 2 Tim. 2:24-26)

If an initial confrontation does not resolve a conflict, do not give up. Review what was said and done, and look for ways to make a better approach during a follow up conversation. It may also be wise to ask a spiritually mature friend for advice on how to approach the other person more effectively. Then try again with even stronger prayer support.

If repeated, careful attempts at a private discussion are not fruitful, and if the matter is still too serious to overlook, you should ask one or two other people to meet with you and your opponent and help you to resolve your differences through mediation, arbitration, or church discipline (see Matt. 18:16-20; 1 Cor. 6:1-8).

#### Go and be reconciled

One of the most unique features of biblical peacemaking is the pursuit of genuine forgiveness and reconciliation. Even though Christians have experienced the greatest forgiveness in the world, we often fail to show that forgiveness to others. To cover up our disobedience we often use the shallow statement, "I forgive her—I just don't want to have anything to do with her

again." Just think, however, how you would feel if God said to you, "I forgive you; I just don't want to have anything to do with you again"?

Praise God that he never says this! Instead, he forgives you totally and opens the way for genuine reconciliation. He calls you to forgive others in exactly the same way: "Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you" (Col. 3:12-14; see also 1 Cor. 13:5; Psalm 103:12; Isa. 43:25). One way to imitate God's forgiveness is to make four specific promises when you forgive someone:

- I will not think about this incident.
- I will not bring this incident up and use it against you.
- I will not talk to others about this incident.
- I will not allow this incident to stand between us or hinder our personal relationship.

Remember that forgiveness is a spiritual process that you cannot fully accomplish on your own. Therefore, as you seek to forgive others, continually ask God for grace to enable you to imitate his wonderful forgiveness toward you.

### **When a Brother Comes to You**

"If therefore you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your offering there before the altar, and go your way; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering. Make friends quickly with your opponent at law while you are with him on the way, in order that your opponent may not deliver you to the judge, and the judge to the officer, and you be thrown into prison" (Matt. 5:23-25).

"If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men" (Rom. 12:18).

"If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us" (1 John 1:8-10).

"I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, entreat you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing forbearance to one another in love, being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:1-3).

### **Dealing with a Brother By Phil Sanders Gospel Advocate 2002**

It happened again. Some zealots have decided to label a brother a "false teacher." The evidence was slimly built upon ignorance, assumptions and misinformation. The accusers did little to substantiate the facts but relied upon rumors and hearsay. Nor did the accusers feel any need to contact the brother to find out the whole truth. Lately it has been open season upon many a faithful brother in the Lord. I am reminded of Solomon's proverbs,

*"There is one who speaks rashly like the thrusts of a sword" (Prov. 12:18).*

*"The first to plead his case seems just,*

*Until another comes and examines him" (Prov. 18:17)*

*"Do not go out hastily to argue your case; Otherwise, what will you do in the end,*

*When your neighbor puts you to shame? Argue your case with your neighbor,  
And do not reveal the secret of another, Lest he who hears it reproach you,  
And the evil report about you not pass away” (Prov. 25:8-10).*

The assumption is that since the offense was not personal, and since the brother spoke publicly, he is fair game for public accusation and perhaps slander. Such men who speak out thus feel protected by the fact that a brother cannot sue them. They feel free to bite and devour others on the narrowest of pretext. They do not seem to ask whether the charge is either true or kind.

The justification for such speaking out normally falls upon the need to protect the flock. Certainly faithful gospel preachers will speak out against evil. I wonder, however, if the protectors ever thought about the souls of the people they ridicule and condemn. Even a brother who is deceived has a soul.

Let every one know that false teachers should be marked and avoided (Rom. 16:17,18), that factious people should be rejected after a first and second admonition (Tit. 3:10-11), and that those who go beyond the teaching of Christ do not have God and must not be supported (2 John 9-11). But we should also realize that not every accused person is guilty.

I fear some of our brothers have been driven away from the Lord and the church by careless and hateful speaking. How tragic when hateful and crude speech drives away a brother who could be saved. A hateful representative of the truth has more than once driven a young man into the hands of a false but benevolent teacher. No one sleeps with a dog that bites.

To be sure, ravenous wolves must not fill any pulpit, classroom, or editor’s desk (Matt. 7:15-20; 2 Tim. 2:16-18). Yet there are some that are misunderstood or misquoted. There are others still who although good in heart are simply misinformed. Like Apollos they need an Aquila and Priscilla to take them aside and shown them the way of the Lord more perfectly (Acts 18:24-28). It never seems to occur to some brethren that a private discussion could help a brother. They have decided that “writing up” a brother is the best means of dealing with him.

The fruit of the Spirit is “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law” (Gal. 5:22,23). Those who practice writing up a brother upon rumor and faulty evidence fail to show these characteristics toward their brother. Where is love? Where is peace? Where is patience? Where is kindness? Where is gentleness? Being “sound” in doctrine does not ensure being healthy in heart or practice.

The golden rule should apply between brethren. “Therefore, however you want people to treat you, so treat them, for this is the Law and the Prophets” (Matt. 7:12). I have often wondered how some sound brethren might feel if indeed a brother unjustly and publicly accused them of sin. I wonder how they might feel if they had been slandered in ignorance and judged without mercy.

Some have argued that there is no need to discuss a matter privately with a false teacher before “writing him up” publicly for all the church to know. I wonder how many “sound” brethren would like being treated that way. The Lord teaches us to treat others *the way we wish to be treated*. Writing up a brother before one clarifies an issue and before trying to make amends violates this principle. Paul commands, “Reject a factious man after a first and second warning” (Tit. 3:10). In some cases, the “written-up” brother finds out about his admonition through a third party weeks later. Such behavior shows that the writer cares little about the soul of the one he has spoken against. Apparently the accusing writer feels exempt from the golden rule, since he has found an opportunity to accuse. Do we not owe it to our brother to talk to him before we talk about him?

The Pharisees sought to find fault and accuse Jesus with lies and half-truths. They likely felt victory in condemning righteous Jesus to a cross for blaspheming. They had no love for Jesus, though Jesus loved them. This, by the way, is one of the reasons the common people wanted to hear Jesus but cared nothing for the Pharisees (Luke 15:1,2; 18:9ff.). One unjust accuser who has labeled many brethren recently lamented that he had no friends. People don't like to sleep with dogs that bite.

The Pharisees once accused Jesus of leading the people astray, but Nicodemus defended Him. The words of Nicodemus ought to sting the hearts of those who practice unfair accusation. "Our Law does not judge a man, unless it first hears from him and knows what he is doing, does it?" (John 7:51). Every brother, because he is a brother, ought to have the right to be heard before he is labeled and condemned. Would a sound brother faced with a false accusation not wish to be heard before sentence is passed? Why then should we not offer this right to any brother? Unwillingness to hear a brother often drives a wedge deeper than the initial offense.

James reminds us, "So speak and so act, as those who are to be judged by the law of liberty. For judgment will be merciless to one who has shown no mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment" (James 2:12,13).

There can be no doubt that there is a time to judge, but let our judgments be according to the teaching of Jesus. "Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment" (John 7:24). Find out the facts, let every word be established, and check with your brother to see if you have understood him correctly. You might be surprised that what you heard or assumed may not be completely right. A fact may be true but not the whole truth.

I fear that some have fallen into the trap of judging mercilessly on the basis of tradition rather than truth. Jesus taught against such. "Do not judge lest you be judged. For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you" (Matt. 7:1-2). One is not a Calvinist for simply quoting from the New International Version.

What do we owe our brothers with whom we differ? We owe them love (Rom. 13:8). We owe them a hearing (John 7:51). We owe them concern for their souls (2 Thess. 3:15). We owe them the fairness and respect we desire when we are accused (Matt. 7:12).

Let us talk to each other with patience before we talk about each other.

## **SWOT Analysis**

### **Understanding Your Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats**

SWOT Analysis is a very effective way of identifying your Strengths and Weaknesses, and of examining the Opportunities and Threats you face. Carrying out an analysis using the SWOT framework will help you to focus your activities into areas where you are strong, and where the greatest opportunities lie.

#### ***Strengths:***

- What are your advantages?
- What do you do well?
- What do other people see as your strengths?

Consider this from your own point of view and from the point of view of the people you deal with. Don't be modest - be realistic. If you are having any difficulty with this, try writing down a list of your characteristics. Some of these will hopefully be strengths!

#### ***Weaknesses:***

- What could you improve?
- What do you do badly?
- What should you avoid?

Again, consider this from an internal and external basis - do other people seem to perceive weaknesses that you do not see? It is best to be realistic now, and face any unpleasant truths as soon as possible.

#### ***Opportunities:***

- Where are the good opportunities facing you?
- What are the interesting trends you are aware of?

Useful opportunities can come from such things as:

- Changes in technology on both a broad and narrow scale
- Changes in the congregation or its leadership
- Changes in social patterns, population profiles, lifestyle changes, etc.
- Local Events

#### ***Threats:***

- What obstacles do you face?
- What are other churches and ministers doing?
- Are the required specifications for your job or services changing?
- Do you have bad debt or cash-flow problems?
- What baggage does the congregation have?
- What baggage do you bring to the congregation?

Carrying out this analysis will often be illuminating - both in terms of pointing out what needs to be done, and in putting problems into perspective.

**A SPIRITUAL SELF-ANALYSIS**

**2 Cor. 13:5**

*Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith;  
examine yourselves!*

*Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you  
--unless indeed you fail the test?*

	1	2	3	4	5
I read my Bible and pray daily					
I attend every service I can					
I am excited about my faith and others see it.					
I am giving liberally and cheerfully to the Lord					
I am the spiritual leader of my family					
I am a stronger Christian today than I was a year ago					
I am working hard to overcome my temptations					
I avoid using any foul or off-color words					
I avoid pornography and R-rated movies					
I am a good steward of the money God lets me possess					
I am a person others count on for help					
I control my temper					
I am patient with others when I drive					
I have encouraged other Christians to live faithfully					
I am an example of Christianity to my family					
When offended, I have learned to forgive					
I have visited the hospital in the last few months					
I have shared my faith with someone in the last few months					
I avoid repeating gossip and hurtful stories					

1. Entangled in the World
2. Babe in Christ
3. Maturing in the Faith
4. A Teacher in Word and Deed
5. Strong in the Lord (a powerful force for good)