

Call to Obedience #292
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You and Your Pastor Part 3” By Pastor Reimar Schultze

“And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God; and they stood at the nether part of the mount” (Exodus 19:17).

In the previous sections of the article, I shared with you:

- 1) That Jesus ordained that ministers should be paid;
- 2) That ministers should be shepherds and servants; and
- 3) That sheep can only be fed by the Holy Spirit.

Then I began to share with you about the laity’s call toward the ministers:

- 1) Laymen should acknowledge the high and holy calling of Jesus’ sent ones; and
- 2) Laymen should commit themselves to the ministry of presence; and thirdly:

Laymen Should Give Themselves to the Ministry of Prayer for Their Pastors.

Pray for your pastor. Layman, know that it is your responsibility to pray for the pastor, regularly and frequently as it is your pastor’s responsibility to pray for you and give to you the Word of the Lord (2 Cor. 1:11; Col. 4:3; 1 Thess. 5:25).

Let us look a little closer at a Pauline passage where Paul calls on the laity to pray for him, *“Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ’s sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me; That I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judaea; and that my service which I have for Jerusalem may be accepted of the saints; That I may come unto you with joy by the will of God, and may with you be refreshed”* (Rom. 15:30–32).

Paul says, *“I beseech you...”* This is an earnest plea of a man who stands between the living and the dead and who knows he cannot win the battle alone, so he cries, *“Help! Help! Pray for me. Pray with me for that for which I am in prayer. Pray for my deliverance. Pray for my acceptance. Pray that I may come to you with joy.”* If you believe that Romans 15 is the inspired Word of God, then how can you neglect to pray for your pastor? Nowhere does the Bible encourage anyone to find fault with the servant of God or to criticize him. Instead, it is pray, pray, and pray for the shepherd God has sent to you. So, here in Romans, you have a little prayer list for your pastor. Let me make this list longer yet:

Pray for his health and for his nervous system. Pray that he may be led by the Spirit, comforted by the Spirit, and taught by the Spirit. Pray that he will not be deceived. Pray that he will not fall for the traps of the devil. Pray for a fresh and new infilling of the Holy Spirit upon his life. Pray that he will pray. Pray that he will be tender and anointed. Pray that he will be uncompromising in the things of God. Pray that God will help him in his marriage and with his children. Pray, pray, pray!

So, we have three parts so far for the layman: 1) recognize the holy call upon your shepherd; 2) exercise your ministry of presence; and 3) Pray. Next, let us add:

Minister to the Shepherd’s Needs and Desires.

As your pastor ministers to your needs, so should you also minister to his needs in his calling. God wants it both ways. There is a secret here that I want to tell you about. The more you bless your shepherd, the more blessings will come back on you. If you fail to bless the man sent from God, you only impoverish yourself. If you murmur about him, plan on God withdrawing his blessings from

your life. Remember what happened to Israel which murmured about Moses—God destroyed them. I don't expect to see any of them in heaven. For though they said, "We believe," God said they died in unbelief (Heb. 3:12, 19).

Jesus said, "*He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward...*" (Matt. 10:41). This tells us that the front seats in heaven are not reserved for faithful prophets only. You, as a layman, can sit with them, *if* you have received them and have attended to them here on earth, even to the giving of a cup of cold water (v. 42). Elisha washed the hands of Elijah for ten years. When Elijah went to heaven, Elisha got a far greater anointing than his master ever had. Of course, this is what he asked for. Jesus traveled the country with a large entourage of people, like Mary, Martha, and Joanna, who blessed him daily with little and big things. It is upon people like this, nearly 120 of them in the upper room, that the Holy Spirit fell on Pentecost. Do you see the picture? The more you bless the man of God, the more God will bless you.

The ministry is hard. Your pastor rides the point against evil forces. Give him all the encouragement you possibly can. No one in the congregation is harassed and accused by the devil as much as your shepherd. The ministry is a great, great warfare, higher than any layman can ever imagine. This is why there is such a high mortality rate in this "profession." Testify in church, if permissible in your congregation, about how much your pastor's sermon has helped you. Or send your pastor a letter of encouragement from time to time. You see, almost every time a servant of God leaves the pulpit, the devil will jump on him and tell him how bad his message was, that he failed God, that he offended someone, that he misinterpreted the Scripture, etc. Pray about doing something special for him once in awhile. Pour out an alabaster box of ointment on him here and there, or a little bit of that ointment, and in no way will you lose your reward.

This will encourage your pastor, but so much the more, it will help you. When Paul rejoiced over the fact that the Philippian Christians had resumed their financial support for him, he was more glad for them than for himself. He said, "*I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content... Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account*" (Phil. 4:11, 17). And it is because the Philippians had resumed their giving toward his needs that he could give them the Philippian blessing, "*But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus*" (v. 19).

Don't ever try to monopolize your shepherd. No matter how much you do for him, never think that he now owes you special attention or something in return. The shepherd always belongs to all the sheep—the obedient ones as well as the obstinate ones. A shepherd must never become a respecter of persons, showing favor toward anyone. If you help him, do it for Jesus, expect nothing in return from him.

Fifth, live a holy life. **Strive for perfection of heart.** The best and greatest alabaster box you can give to Jesus and his shepherd is godliness of life, having the mind of Christ, being a little Jesus wholly yielded to his will. Remember, it is perfection that you need to strive for—perfection of heart (Col. 1:28; Matt. 5:48; John 17:23; Eph. 4:13). Again, that is the calling of God on you pastor, to present you perfect in Christ Jesus.

Sixth, **appreciate spiritual gifts, yet be wary of how they can be abused.** Spiritual gifts are wonderful, simply because they are of God and help in the perfecting of the saints. But spiritual gifts are not for bragging, nor does any spiritual gift—or all of them put together—ever allow you to exercise spiritual authority over your pastor, no matter how weak he is spiritually. Nor do any of these gifts ever allow you to start a ministry of your own in your congregation. Spiritual gifts are not a sign of spirituality or of a Spirit-filled life. The sign of the Spirit-filled life is the fruit of the Spirit, as is made clear to us in Galatians 5:22–23: "*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.*"

It is indeed tragic that the only book in the New Testament that deals extensively with spiritual gifts begins with a negative commentary upon the believers in that church. Paul says that the Corinthians came behind in no gift (1 Cor. 1:7). This means that the gifts were also present in other churches but much more in the Corinthian congregation. In other churches, the gifts created no problems, simply because they were not elevated. But the Corinthians elevated them, and so the first fruits of these gifts among them, that we read about, were carnality, envy, strife, worldliness, and division (3:3). Accompanying and strengthening this strife was a division of the church into four factions: the Paul faction, the Apollos faction, the Cephas faction, and the Christ faction (1:11–12). The reason for this is that the gifts caused them to be puffed up (4:6, 18–19; 5:2)! To be puffed up means to be inflated with pride. This is why I said, “appreciate spiritual gifts, yet be wary of how they can be abused.”

Hence, people with spiritual gifts often, rather than drawing closer to the pastor and being more helpful to the church, become more difficult to shepherd. Being affected with pride, they sometimes become as useless to the body of Christ as a wheel that comes off the axle of an automobile. If you receive a gift, seek the infilling of the Holy Spirit so that you remain broken, humble, pliable, teachable and cooperative. Only in that way will your gift be a help to the body of Christ. It is not the will of God that all the people with gifts cluster into one congregation. The gifts are distributed to “*every man to profit withal*” (1 Cor. 12:7).

Seventh, **stop the “But”-ers**. Most all churches have people in it who say, “Our pastor is a wonderful man. I know God sent him, but...” You, as a godly layman, must come against the people with that spirit who are in a very sly, devilish way undercutting the man sent from God. When you hear that word “but” from anyone, rebuke that spirit in them. If it is not stopped, it will soon spread like a cancer of discontent over the whole congregation, the anointing will leave, people will start skipping church, and each man will begin to do that which is right in his own eyes. If you feel a “but” arising in your own heart, pray for your pastor, and by all means, talk to him! Perhaps you misunderstood something he said; perhaps he needs to clarify or re-state a point; perhaps others have the same question. For your sake, for heaven’s sake, for the church’s sake, communicate with your pastor—don’t criticize him!

Oh, my dear layman, do you begin to see a picture evolving? Do you just sit in the pew complacently, or do you find fault with your pastor, grudgingly putting in your tithe? Take your ministry toward your pastor as seriously as he does (or should) toward you. Friend, as a minister has to give an account at Judgment Day concerning his ministry toward you (Heb. 13:17), so will you have to also give an account of your ministry toward your shepherd on that same Judgment Day (Matt. 10:40–42). Get serious about this!

Now, I shall address one more issue:

Church Leadership

For 2000 years, Bible scholars have tried to find the ideal biblical mechanism for the government of the church. What is overlooked in most cases is that, in the book of Acts (the only truly biblical history of the church), we cannot find the kind of organizational structure that we need today. The early church was in persecution and was as yet unrecognized by the government. There were no building programs, no Sunday Schools, no youth or children’s ministries, nor was there any formulated mission’s program. The means of church organization was in a state of evolution as it grew into the period of the early church fathers, and as it exploded into different cultures and political systems. All we know is, because of the presence of the Holy Spirit in the early church, the church was bursting with creative energy and action to make her a dynamic instrument of change in every culture and political arena. Notwithstanding, there are universals that are to be gathered from the early church that we need in every church today, and these are:

- 1) The government of the church is not to be democratic but under the leadership of the Holy Spirit through God calling men and women into the five-fold ministry (Eph. 4:11).
- 2) These called ones are to appoint elders, deacons, and others as the Lord directs them for the operation of the local body of Christ.
- 3) Each one of these offices should be held to a high standard of holiness and should demonstrate a spirit of submission one to another, for humility and mutual respect is vital.

Obviously, in these past three articles, I have not solved each one's personal problem or conflict in the pastor-layman dynamic relationship. But, by the grace of God, I have given each of you biblical principles that, if they are observed on each side of the altar, will lead to a glorious church having neither spot nor wrinkle.

Let me end with these two questions: Pastor are you fulfilling your ministry toward your sheep? Layman, are you faithful in your divine, holy calling toward your shepherd?

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