

Call to Obedience #453
PO Box 299 Kokomo, IN 46903 USA
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Requirements for Prophets of the Lord Jesus Christ

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By “prophets of the Lord Jesus Christ,” I am referring to all those held in the right hand of the Lord Jesus Christ who preside over the church as His representative as portrayed in the Revelation. This includes anyone who is called to any one of the offices of the fivefold ministry: the apostolic office, the prophetic office, the evangelistic office, the pastoral office or the office of a teacher (Eph. 4:11). *The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches* (Rev. 1:20).

From this verse, please observe that ministers and laypeople are seen as distinctly different: as stars and candlesticks are substantially different. Sadly, the professing church in these days is trying to blur the lines between the two. God is not in this. While in the end, all people will have to appear before the judgment seat of Christ, ministers will be held to a higher standard. To whom much is given, much shall be required. And in the end, it is ministers and not laypeople who will have to give an account regarding each member of a congregation which is an immense responsibility: *Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you* (Heb. 13:17).

Also unfortunately, in much of the world, the ministry has become a vocation that men choose as they would choose any other vocation. No, one thousand times no! You do not choose yourself into the ministry. You cannot become a minister on your own. God must choose you and if He does not choose you, then you will not be a minister even though you may have gone through Bible college or seminary to get your “letters” and are now wearing a clerical collar. Only God can make you a minister. Again, if God does not call you to the ministry, He will not make you minister. You cannot do it; others cannot do it; education cannot do it; the church’s ordination cannot do it; only God can do it. The Apostle Paul said that God had made him a minister (Eph.

3:7, Col. 1:25). Only God can give the gifts and anointing for this work. Most of men's requirements for ministry do not come out of the pages of the Bible. So, there must first be a call of God to the ministry and secondly, there must be certain characteristics which a prophet must always seek after to truly represent the One who called him as portrayed by this prayer of consecration found in The Best of A.W. Tozer:

The Prayer of a Minor Prophet A.W. Tozer

And he said: O Lord, I have heard Thy voice and was afraid. Thou hast called me to an awesome task in a grave and perilous hour. Thou art about to shake all nations and the earth and also heaven, that the things that cannot be shaken may remain. O Lord, my Lord, Thou hast stooped to honor me to be Thy servant. No man taketh this honor upon himself save he that is called of God as was Aaron. Thou hast ordained me Thy messenger to them that are stubborn of heart and hard of hearing. They have rejected Thee, the Master, and it is not to be expected that they will receive me, the servant.

My God, I shall not waste time deploring my weakness nor my unfittedness for the work. The responsibility is not mine, but Thine. Thou hast said, "I knew thee—I ordained thee—I sanctified thee," and Thou hast also said, "Thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak." Who am I to argue with Thee or to call into question Thy sovereign choice? The decision is not mine but Thine. So be it, Lord. Thy will, not mine, be done.

Well do I know, Thou God of the prophets and the apostles, that as long as I honor Thee Thou will honor me. Help me therefore to take this solemn vow to honor Thee and all my future life and labors, whether by gain or by loss, by life or by death, and then to keep that vow unbroken while I live.

It is time, O God, for Thee to work, for the enemy has entered into Thy pastures and the sheep are torn and scattered. And false shepherds abound who deny the danger and laugh at the perils which surround Thy flock. The sheep are deceived by these hirelings and follow them with touching loyalty while the wolf closes in to kill and destroy. I beseech Thee, give me sharp eyes to detect the presence of the enemy; give me understanding to see

and courage to report what I see faithfully. Make my voice so like Thine own that even the sick sheep will recognize it and follow Thee.

Lord Jesus, I come to Thee for spiritual preparation. Lay Thy hand upon me. Anoint me with the oil of the New Testament prophet. Forbid that I should become a religious scribe and thus lose my prophetic calling. Save me from the curse that lies dark across the face of the modern clergy, the curse of compromise, of imitation, of professionalism. Save me from the error of judging a church by its size, its popularity or the amount of its yearly offering. Help me to remember that I am a prophet—not a promoter, not a religious manager, but a prophet. Let me never become a slave to crowds. Heal my soul of carnal ambitions and deliver me from the itch for publicity. Save me from bondage to things. Let me not waste my days puttering around the house. Lay Thy terror upon me, O God, and drive me to the place of prayer where I may wrestle with principalities and powers and the rulers of the darkness of this world. Deliver me from overeating and late sleeping. Teach me self-discipline that I might be a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

I accept hard work and small rewards in this life. I ask for no easy place. I shall try to be blind to the little ways that could make life easier. If others seek the smoother path I shall try to take the hard way without judging them too harshly. I shall expect opposition and try to take it quietly when it comes. Or if, as sometimes it falleth out to Thy servants, I should have grateful gifts pressed upon me by Thy kindly people, stand by me then and save me from the blight [stain] that often follows. Teach me to use whatever I receive in such manner that will not injure my soul nor diminish my spiritual power. And if in Thy permissive providence honor should come to me from Thy church, let me not forget in that hour that I am unworthy of the least of Thy mercies, and that if men knew me as intimately as I know myself, they would withhold their honors or bestow them upon others more worthy to receive them.

And now, O Lord of heaven and earth, I consecrate my remaining days to Thee; let them be many or few, as Thou wilt. Let

me stand before the great or minister to the poor and lowly; that choice is not mine, and I would not influence it if I could. I am Thy servant to do Thy will, and that will is sweeter to me than position or riches or fame and I choose it above all things on earth or in heaven.

Though I am chosen of Thee and honored by a high and holy calling, let me never forget that I am but a man of dust and ashes, a man with all the natural faults and passions that plague the race of men. I pray Thee, therefore, my Lord and Redeemer, save me from myself and from all the injuries I may do myself while trying to be a blessing to others. Fill me with Thy power by the Holy Spirit, and I will go in Thy strength and tell of Thy righteousness, even Thine only. I will spread abroad the message of redeeming love while my normal powers endure.

Then, dear Lord, when I am old and weary and too tired to go on, have a place ready for me above, and make me to be numbered with Thy saints in glory everlasting. *Amen.* AMEN.

So then, this is what you should be seeking for in a minister of the gospel: a man with a divine call from God having such a heart. Further, I also encourage every congregation which already has a minister to pray for its minister to have such a heart. Finally, I exhort every layperson to also make this his prayer as much as it is appropriate in whatever station he finds himself. By all of us living this way, the stars will brightly reflect the glory of the Lord and the candlesticks will hold the oil of the Holy Spirit and their lights will never go out.

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