

Your Pastor's "Job" ...Don't You Mean...Calling?

A catechumen once asked me, in all seriousness, "Pastor, just what is your job?" So I replied, "Don't you mean calling?" And he just shrugged his shoulders. So I went to work on this paper, which I use to teach Catechumens; and to remind myself (see below)...What is my "*job*?!"

The purpose of this study is to serve as a reminder (for you and me) of what the Lord has commanded concerning the Office of the Holy Ministry and to see how it is actively applied in our congregation.

This study is divided into three main sections:

- 1). The Scriptural qualifications for pastors;
- 2). What God's Word says a pastor's responsibilities are; and,
- 3). Finally, we will consider how your pastor spends his time in the work of this ministry.

Part I – The Scriptural Qualifications for Pastors

What should a pastor be like? The Holy Spirit inspired and preserved quite a bit on this subject, most of which is found in the Pastoral Epistles of St. Paul, upon which this study will focus. The Pastoral Epistles are so named because they were written to two pastors, Timothy and Titus, whose ministries included many congregations. With such a responsibility, St. Paul gave them both guidelines for what to look for in a pastor. We will consider the following sections from these three Pastoral letters:

- **1 Timothy 3:1-7**
- **2 Timothy 2:24-25**
- **Titus 1:5-9**

The following chart takes these three sections and lists these important attributes side by side to help us see the "big" picture. Notice that many of these pastoral qualifications are listed by St. Paul in more than one of these letters (one attribute is even mentioned in all three sections).

1 Timothy	2 Timothy	Titus
above reproach		above reproach
husband of one wife		husband of one wife
temperate		not quick tempered
prudent		sensible
respectable		
hospitable	kind to all (hospitable)	hospitable
able to teach	able to teach	
not addicted to wine		not addicted to wine
not pugnacious		not pugnacious
gentle		
uncontentious	not quarrelsome	
free from the love of money		not fond of sordid gain
manages household well		

1 Timothy	2 Timothy	Titus
keeps his children in control		...children who believe...
not a new convert		
of good reputation		
	patient when wronged	
		holding fast the faithful word
	correcting in gentleness	refute those who contradict
		not self-willed
		loving what is good
		just
		devout and self-controlled

In these three sections, pastors are called by three different terms that describe their office: “bishop” or “overseer” (1 Timothy 3:1, Titus 1:7); “servant of the Lord” (2 Timothy 2:24); and “elder” (Titus 1:5). In God’s Word, these terms are all used to describe the office of what we call a “pastor” or “minister” today. The title “pastor” comes from the Latin word for “shepherd” (ποιμήν – “*poymain*”) and is connected to this office based on Paul’s words to the Ephesians’ elders at the end of his third missionary journey: ***“Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd (ποιμνίω) the church of God which He purchased with His own blood” (Acts 20:28).*** A pastor is to oversee (bishop), lead (elder), feed (shepherd), and serve (be a servant to) the believers of whom Christ Jesus has placed him.

Part II - Pastoral Duties

Paul tells the elders of Ephesus to ***“take heed to yourselves and to all the flock...”*** Likewise, Paul writes to Timothy, ***“Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you” (1 Timothy 4:16).*** The ministry of the Word involves the Biblical foundation of the pastor as well as his members.

In order to ensure a solid foundation Paul encourages Timothy, ***“Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine” (1 Timothy 4:13),*** and again, ***“But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus” (2 Timothy 3:14-15).*** The most important duty of a pastor is the continuing study of God’s Word so that he may: “Be diligent to present [him]self approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15).

This solid foundation is also to be passed on to the members of the congregation through instruction in the Word. The pastoral letters are full of terms like ***“preach”*** (2 Timothy 4:2), ***“instruct”*** (1 Timothy 4:6; 2 Timothy 3:16), ***“charge”*** (1 Timothy 1:3; 2 Timothy 2:14), ***“teach”*** (1 Timothy 4:11, 6:2; 2 Timothy 4:2), ***“commit”*** (2 Timothy 2:2), ***“exhort”*** (1 Timothy 4:13, 5:1, 6:2; 2 Timothy 4:2; Titus 1:9, 2:6,9,15) and ***“affirm”*** (Titus 3:8). These terms bring out the importance of instructing the flock in the Word, and keeping them from wandering from the truth. Scripture has been given to us for that express purpose: ***“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:16-17).***

At times this work will also call for discipline on the part of the pastor and members towards the straying member(s), out of concern for their eternal future. Paul tells Timothy, ***“Those who are sinning rebuke in the presence of all, that the rest also may fear”*** (1 Timothy 5:20 - cf. 2 Timothy 2:25, 4:2; Titus 1:13, 2:15, 3:10).

Finally, the work of the pastor involves guarding against the intrusion of false teaching from without and within. Timothy had been sent to Ephesus for that very reason (1 Timothy 1:3-4). Then, after writing about some of the false teachings that would come, Paul continues, ***“If you instruct the brethren in these things, you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished in the words of faith and of the good doctrine which you have carefully followed”*** (1 Timothy 4:6). False teaching is to be pointed out, rejected (Titus 3:10), and avoided (2 Timothy 3:5).

The following verse serves as a good summary of the work of a pastor: ***“I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching”*** (2 Timothy 4:2).

Part III - Pastoral Service at Shepherd of the Springs

How is your pastor’s service being carried out? Your pastor, when he was installed here vowed to:

- *“...acknowledge that the Lord has called you through His Church into the ministry of Word and Sacrament;*
- *[To] believe and confess the canonical books of the Old and New Testament to be the inspired Word of God and the only infallible rule of faith and practice;*
- *[To] believe and confess the three Ecumenical Creeds, namely, the Apostles’, Nicene, and the Athanasian Creeds, as faithful testimonies to the truth of the Holy Scriptures, and do you reject all the errors which they condemn;*
- *[C]onfess the Unaltered Augsburg Confession to be a true exposition of the Holy Scripture and a correct exhibition of the doctrine of the Evangelical Lutheran Church? And do you confess that the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Small and Large Catechisms of Martin Luther, the Smalcald Articles, the Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope, and the Formula of Concord – as these are contained in the Book of Concord – are also in agreement with this one scriptural faith;*
- *Do you promise that you will perform the duties of your office in accordance with these Confessions, and that all your preaching and teaching and your administration of the Sacraments will be in conformity with Holy Scriptures and these Confession;*
- *Will you faithfully instruct both young and old in the chief articles of Christian doctrine, will you forgive the sins of those who repent, and will you promise never to divulge the sins confessed to you? Will you minister faithfully to the sick and dying, and will you demonstrate to the Church a constant and ready ministry centered in the Gospel? Will you admonish and encourage the people to a lively confidence in Christ and in holy living; and,*
- *Will you honor and adorn the Office of the Holy Ministry with a holy life? Will you be diligent in the study of Holy Scripture and the Confessions? And will you be constant in prayer for those under your pastoral care?*

The pastor's work will vary in congregations, depending on the size and the number of people assisting the pastor in that work. At SSLC, the pastor's work is best divided into the following categories: Study, Instruction, Visitation, Administrative, and Travel.

† **Study** takes up about 60% of the pastor's time and involves:

- Personal Bible study;
- Divine Service preparation;
- Adult and Junior Catechesis and Confessions (Men's Group) class preparation; and,
- Sermon preparation.

† **Instruction** takes up the next largest block of time and involves about 25% of his time. This involves:

- Divine Service/Vesper Services (Advent/Lent);
- Adult Catechesis;
- Catechism classes;
- Adult Instruction classes (as necessary);
- Confessions class for our Men's Group.

† **Visitation** takes up about (about 5%) and consists of:

- Checking in with members on the phone;
- Pastoral home visits;
- Pastoral hospital calls /shut-in visits;
- Individual Confession and Absolution.

† **Administration** involves about 5% of the pastor's time and consists of:

- Council meeting / Voters' Assembly preparation;
- Routine mail/and other extraneous necessities

† **Travel** makes up about 5% of the pastor's time and includes:

- Travel to and from members homes for visiting;
- Travel to and from hospitals/nursing centers.

As an "under-shepherd" of Christ, it's the pastor's responsibility and desire to bring the Word of God to you – through worship services, Catechesis, over the phone, and in private home devotions. Your pastor is always available for Scriptural guidance, pastoral counseling, and instruction. If you have questions, if you are interested in studying a specific issue or topic, or if you or a family member are sick and would like private devotions and Holy Communion, let your pastor know. Your pastor is here to serve you with the Word!

But your pastor also needs your help: First, never assume that he knows what is occurring in your life. He is not God! Secondly, He is a fallible human being (like you); so never presume that He's perfect! Third, never think that he will do whatever you desire him to do...he will not! Your pastor's call is through you (the congregation) from our Lord God! So, theologically, you pastor is answerable to the Lord God and will, therefore, always stand on the Truth of God's Holy Word (remember, the **rebuke** from 2 Timothy 4:2). He will not allow anything or anyone to violate God's Holy Word, our Confessions, and his conscience. It's better to be upfront and honest with him! Lastly, never plan

anything concerning the church or his involvement before discussing your plans or desires with him. Never expect him to “jump through your hoop!” It will not happen!

In closing, your pastor needs your support and your prayers. Pray that your pastor would be a shepherd who is faithful to the Word of God; pray that he would have a love for souls, and conduct his work accordingly; and pray that the Lord would give him the strength to carry out his work according to God’s will.

May our Good Shepherd, Jesus, the Christ, bless each of us in our service to and for Him!

Your Servant in Christ,

Pastor +++