The Pastor's Expectation for the Church

(The Sheep Cooperating with the Under-Shepherd)

Selected Scriptures

4/13/2014

What attitude and action does God expect the sheep to have for their shepherd?

I. **<u>Appreciate</u> Your Pastor** (1 Thess. 5:12)

*And we beseech you, brethren, to **<u>know them</u>** which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you;*

II. **<u>Respect</u> Your Pastor** (1 Thess. 5:13)

*And to **<u>esteem them</u>** very highly in love for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves.*

III. **<u>Obey</u> Your Pastor** (Hebrews 13:17)

***<u>Obey them</u>** 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.*

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There are a couple of subjects that are always touchy areas for a pastor to preach on:
1) giving - because people think you are begging for money
2) honoring your pastor - because people think you are tooting your own horn or selfishly asking things for yourself

To be a pastor and to preach how your people out to treat their pastor is indeed awkward and difficult. I wonder how the pastors felt as they read this letter of Paul to their people at Thessalonica.

But I view this message to be more for your own benefit than for mine.

As pastor, I am your servant.
The benefit of being served is yours

As pastor, I am your shepherd.
The benefit of being fed is yours.

As pastor, I am your overseer.
The benefit of being led is yours.

(NOTE: the emphasis on the word you in verse 13)

I am to lead, feed, protect, serve, pray for you, plan for you, etc. So you see, if I am a godly pastor, anything you do for me, you are doing for you!

To mistreat your pastor is to hurt yourself.
To gossip about your pastor is to inflict injury on yourself.
To not provide for your pastor is to "cut your own throat."

Timothy had just returned from the Thessalonian believers and evidently told Paul that their attitude toward their pastors was not all that it should have been.

In their expectation of the Lord's soon return, they may have not only quit their jobs (inference from II Thess. 3:10-11) but also may have thought, "What do we need our pastor for? After all, we are not going to be here long!"

Or they may have thought that their pastors were crooked, in the ministry for what they could get out of it. so Paul responds in I Thess. 2:3-6 in defense of himself.

Whatever the reason, they apparently had been: quenching the Spirit (v. 19); despising what the preacher uttered (v. 20); and may have even had some quarrels, gripes, etc., rather than being at peace (v. 13b)

Whereas v. 14-15 describes the believers' attitude toward each other, verses 12-13 describes the believers' attitude toward their pastor.`

I'm sure that if every pastor knew exactly what everyone of his church members thought of him, his feelings would not be too positive.

You won't answer to me for your attitude (which I can't always read), but to God!

Therefore . . .

Every believer should have the attitude that God wants (expects) toward their pastor!

What attitude and action does God expect?

I. **<u>Appreciate</u> Your Pastor** (1 Thess. 5:12)

"We beseech" = like a friend making an urgent appeal or request of a friend. Paul is saying: "We are begging you, brothers."

Only real brothers (Christians) could and would truly do what Paul is about to ask. Non-spiritual people cannot recognize or appreciate spiritual workers or their work (Hiebert, p. 231).

"Them" = why plural? ANSWER: Paul is writing to the church at Thess. in a collective sense. They met in houses throughout Thess. (cp. Acts 17:5; Ro. 16:5; I Cor. 16:19), and each house had at least one elder (pastor) overseeing the assembly. (However, a plurality of pastors would also be necessary in larger churches; cp. Acts 14:23)

This letter, therefore, would be an encyclical letter that was passed from house church to house church.

Two main Greek words for "know":

1) - the act of taking in knowledge; to come to understand (the process of learning)

2) - the state of having attained knowledge; to see or perceive (the perfection of knowing)

So, in this verse God is not teaching you to get to know (become acquainted with) your pastor (although this is important), but to know what I am worth to you and the cause of Christ.

It means to "know the value" of your pastor, or in other words "to appreciate."

To express what you are to appreciate about your pastor, Paul uses 3 participles to describe the pastor's function (what he does for you).

A. APPRECIATE HIM FOR BEING YOUR SPIRITUAL LABORER

"Labour" = to work to the point of exhaustion (cp. 1:3). The word describes the type of work that makes one weary; that takes much strenuous effort. The word is used both of bodily and mental labor.

In reference to pastors, however, this word is specifically used of the mental and physical labor of studying and ministering the Word of God.

I Tim. 5:17 - "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine."

B. APPRECIATE HIM FOR BEING YOUR SPIRITUAL LEADER

"Are over you" = lit. means: to stand in front of, ahead of, or before. Hence, to be at the head, to direct or rule.

The qualifying phrase "in the Lord" shows that the pastor is to stand in front of the flock:

1) for spiritual service.

a. not civic or political affairs
b. the pastor is not a secular social worker
c. is not a "do-it-all" man for the church either

I'm sure most problems between pastors and their members would be dissolved if the people would know the duties, priorities, and ministries of their spiritual leaders.

The pastor is not a:
1.taxicab driver
2.errand boy ("gopher")
3.babysitter
4.tour guide
5.janitor
6.walking encyclopedia
(with all the answers to science, history, sociology, politics, economics, etc.)
7.banquet caterer

2) in a subordinate service

Christ's lordship is above the pastor's leadership. He is the Chief Shepherd. The pastor is not a lord over God's heritage (I Pet. 5:3).

I am standing in front of you in the Lord's service, not my own (FBC is a church that belongs to God - I Pet. 5:1).

Some pastors wrongly set themselves up and teach their people: "Touch not the Lord's anointed" (meaning: don't ever question his beliefs and practices; don't ever offer any input, suggestions, etc.).

But this is wrong!

Because the pastor has a God-given position of "standing before" the flock, this points to leadership!

The pastor's office is a very serious one. We are to lead the flock or "oversee" the flock (I Pet. 3:2).

Pastor leadership means 2 things:

1) Spiritual guidance - In order for someone to guide, you must have those who are willing to follow (submit)

Heb. 13:7 - "Remember them which have the rule over you..." This verse means: Be mindful of their faith and follow their example.

Heb. 13:17 - "Obey them..." This verse means: Do what the pastor says and yield to his leadership because he goes without sleep ("watches") for your souls and will answer to God for you. You will also answer to God for your obedience and submission tot he pastor.

Heb. 13:24 - "Salute them..." To salute means to greet with respect. I don't want to be bowed down to, nor called "Reverence." "Holy and reverence is His Name" = God only! (Ps. 111:9)

2) Spiritual protection - SEE Acts 20:28-31

C. APPRECIATE HIM FOR BEING YOUR SPIRITUAL COUNSELOR

"Admonish" = lit. to put into the mind; to confront one's thinking. The word is used in the sense of: 1) to rebuke; and 2) to instruct

1. To rebuke = to correct sinful thinking (Ii Thess. 3:14-15 - "And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother) (cp. Tit. 3:10)

2. To instruct = to strengthen defective (weak) thinking cp. Rom. 15:14)

a. To remind about what may be forgotten (Acts 20:31 - "Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears."

b. To warn about potential danger (cp. Acts 20:31; I Cor. 4:14 - "I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn you.")

c. To encourage about God's will (Col. 3:16 - "Let the Word of Christ dwell in your richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord."

What does a pastor use to confront the flock's thinking? The Word of God. The Bible (including the examples in the O.T.) has been "written for our admonition" (I Cor. 10:11).

The pastor is to preach the Word (II Tim. 4:2).

The Word is inspired and profitable to show what is right ("doctrine"); what is not right ("reproof"); how to make it right "correction"); and how to keep in right ("instruction in righteousness") (II Tim. 3:15-16).

No Christian should have to go to a secular psychologist (shrink) for counsel. God gave you a pastor to counsel you (we also have each other to help counsel us - Rom. 15:14).

NOTE: Some people's mental problems stem from physical problems in which case a psychiatrist [who can prescribe medicine] is needed)

The world has no answers to spiritual problems!

How can those with blinded minds (II Cor. 4:4) enlighten your mind?

II. **<u>Respect</u> Your Pastor** (1 Thess. 5:13)

"Esteem" = to think highly of, to build up someone in your mental conception of them.

"To esteem" (being in the middle voice) does not mean to brag about your pastor to others, but to regard him highly in your own mind. This thinking is also to be continual (present tense).

Phil. 2:3 - "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.

The noun form is used of one in a high office and is translated "prince, governor, leader, chief, or ruler."

The phrase "very highly" answers the question "How much should I respect him?" It points to the quantity of respect.

The phrase "in love" answers the question "In what way do I show my respect for him?" It points to the quality of respect.

The phrase "for their work's sake" answers the question "Why should I respect him?" It points to the basis of the respect.

A. THE MEASURE OF RESPECT
(Esteem them highly)

"Very highly" = is a very emphatic superlative adverb which means "abundantly beyond all limits" or "above all measure."

Paul used this term in I Thes. 3:10 to describe how he prayed "exceedingly."

This word is used to show how God is "able to do exceeding abundantly above all we ask or think" (Eph. 3:20; cp. also Mk. 7:37).

I certainly am not worthy to be thought of to this extent (nor is any pastor, evangelist, missionary, etc. on the face of this earth).

But can you imagine how pleased a pastor would be to be thought of this way? How motivated a pastor would be to serve a people like this?

B. THE MANNER OF RESPECT
(Esteem them lovingly)

How does a congregation express its attitude of respect for its pastor?
ANSWER: Agape love.

**This love is not an emotional feeling (EX: the dangers of people, especially women, who get emotionally attached; or of others who "love" his charismatic personality).

**This love is a decision to give him what he needs
--Give your pastor a willing, servant's heart
--Provide for your pastor financially

The mentality of "Keep your pastor poor" is of the devil.

It contradicts Scripture: SEE I Tim. 5:17-18 ("double honor"... "don't muzzle the ox")

If God wants me to be poor, fine! But a congregation should never want this for their pastor.

ILLUS. of pastors "church hopping" in midwest because under-appreciated and underpaid.

ILLUS. of pastors having to work secular jobs when the church they pastor is fully able to support them.

ILLUS. of pastors having to be concerned about how they will pay their bills.

I'm not at all saying that the pastor should live like Jim Baker and Oral Roberts, etc. But the people should do their dead-level best to see that his needs are all met.

This is loving your pastor where the rubber meets the road.

"For their work's sake" = Because of their work.

The emphasis is not on the act of working (which would normally be indicated by the participle "working"), but on the type of work. (My boss, employer, foreman, etc. is the Lord - it is His work)

Although a pastor will deserve respect if he works hard and well, the point here is not on how he does his job, but on what his job is. (EX: we are to respect a police officer, etc., because of his position, not merely for his performance)

1Timothy 5:1 - **Rebuke not an elder, but intreat him as a father**;

C. THE MOTIVE OF RESPECT
(Esteem them for their work's sake)

Why should a pastor be held in high esteem? Certainly not because of his popularity or personality; but because he is doing the Lord's work!

The greatest work in the world is the Lord's work. The work that yields the highest eternal reward is the Lord's work. The work that does the most for mankind, society, etc., is the Lord's work.

"If any man desires the office of a bishop, he desires a good work" (I Tim. 3:1).

"Your labor is not in vain in the Lord." (I Cor. 15:58).

Don't respect me for my intellect, ability, personality, popularity, age, or experience in the ministry -- but because I am by God's grace doing His work (I Tim. 1:12 - "And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry."

"Be at peace" - Why does God include this exhortation? Because a right relationship between pastor and people is vital to a harmonious, orderly, Christ-honoring church.

I am to be at peace with you, you with me, and us with each other!

God does not merely want you to make peace with your pastor and each other, but to maintain it (present tense) (Hiebert, p. 234).

Guard it! If you hear gossip about your pastor, put an end to it.

If there are ill feelings in our church, lets get them corrected.

If anyone ever seeks to usurp authority or divide a church against its pastor, then its time to fall on our knees, beg for forgiveness and make reconciliation.

No peace = no power! No peace = no growth!

III. **Obey Your Pastor** (Hebrews 13:17)

Now the writer of Hebrews returns to where he began in verse 7, showing the church members responsibility toward their pastors.
Honor them for their work's sake (I Thes. 5:12-13).

"Obey" - (from *peitho*) - obedience as a result of faith or an inward persuasion; not the more common term –*hupakuou*—obedience as a result of listening (Vine, p. 796).

What God is saying here is this: Trust your pastor and then respond in obedience to truth he imparts and the direction he gives.

There exists much skepticism today regarding the clergy (and much distrust is not without warrant). God, however, expects His people to allow pastoral leadership to lead, and the people to respond with trust to such leadership.

"Rule" - lead (as in verses 7 and 24)

Excursus -
The congregation is not to rule (lead) the pastors, but rather the pastors are to rule (lead) the congregation (cp. I Thes. 5:12).
The leadership proposes the direction the church should go, and the church in urn voluntarily agrees to the decision. If they appeal a point made by the leaders, the leaders should review the point and if they agree, they may change their original decision. But the final decision (as in the home) should rest with the leadership.
[NOTE: When appeals are made (as at church business meetings), they should be made according to the order described in I Cor. 14:33-40.]
A dual accountability exists between the leadership and the laity. The laity is responsible to the leadership and the leadership is responsible to the laity (cp. I Tim. 5:19-20).
If the pastor has no accountability to congregation and can lead unchecked, what you have is a cult. However, (the opposite extreme) if the congregation is not accountable to the leadership and everyone does what they want, what you have is chaos (anarchy).
Pastors are not puppets responding to all of the strings pulled by the members. However, any wise and good pastor will seriously consider the validity of suggestions made by the congregation.

"Submit" - *(hueiko* - lit. *upo* = under; *eiko* = to yield) To give in o or yield (the opposite of stubborn rebellion).

This word is <u>not</u> the more common word *"hupotasso"* - to rank under, a positional rank under an authority.

What God is referring to here is a spirit or attitude which gives way to an authority rather than an attitude which contests or challenges or defies the authority.

"Watch" - *agrupneo* - from *agreuo* = to chase; *hupnos* = sleep; hence, to chase after sleep; <u>to be without sleep</u>*;* to be sleepless (Reinecker, p. 720; Vine, p. 1213).

The word metaphorically means to stay spiritual awake and alert so as to keep watch over the spiritual needs of the flock.

Not only does a pastor literally forfeit leisure or sleep so as to stay up late at night for teaching, discipling, visiting and studying; but he also must keep his eyes wide open to the attacks of Satan toward God's sheep.

"Quite frankly, it is much easier to "win souls" than it is to "watch for souls" (see Ezek. 3:16-21)" (Wiersbe, p. 151).

"They. . . must give an account" - All pastors because of their responsibility for tending to God's flock, will one day be held accountable to God for the type of job they did.

It's an awesome matter to be a pastor! We will receive the *"greater condemnation*" - James 3:1.

Note: At the Judgment Seat of Christ, we will be held accountable <u>not</u> for how the sheep turned out per se, but rather how we did our job of watching over them. However, it is no joy to a pastor to have rebellious, unteachable, "untendable" sheep. It's a grief, a burdensome, groaning experience.

"That is unprofitable for you" - Not only will the under-shepherd answer to God for how he watches over the sheep, but the sheep will answer for how they responded and respected the undershepherd.

Thee is NO benefit to being a stubborn sheep. There is ZERO advantage to being rebellious toward your pastor. It is harmful to you. Much of the stability of the flock is determined by their submission to the shepherd! If you go astray, I will grieve; but you will face the consequences!

"A person who never brings joy will never have joy" (MacArthur, p. 448).

Conclusion:

God expects you to:

1. Appreciate your pastor
2. Respect your pastor
3. Obey your pastor

It is a fearful thing to be a pastor. I will answer to God for how I led and fed you. You will answer for how you responded to what you were taught.

I am here at FBC for your benefit! So how you treat me is how you are treating yourself.

You will get (in blessings) exactly what you give (in attitude).

Gal. 6:7 - "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."