

Pastoral Watchcare

The concept of “visit” or “visitation” refers to the pastoral duty (spiritual watchcare of others) in which he analyzes the problems to effect a remedy. This concept is basically “visit”. **Jesus also identified the true believer as a person which has the naturally emerging joy to serve and help others.**

In **Mat. 25.43**, Jesus identified the true believer as somebody that attended to problems of others, “*was sick*”, in “*jail*”, or “*visited*”. This does not refer to doing it directly to Jesus. **Mt 25:40... Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.** That is to say, the true Christian is known by his love of Christ, and this evidence of taking care of others (“pastoring” formal or informal) is to serve and help their brethren in the faith.

The church is a community of saved persons, and each one shows their concern, compassion, love, and service to their brethren in the faith. **If this is distasteful to somebody, it is probably because they are not really saved.**

What is the general purpose of God for his flock? Why did God use the image of “pastors, sheep, wolves, and flocks”? In a united group (the flock) that doesn't see the threat of wolves, God has placed a minister (pastor) to serve God by serving the brethren. The sheep have two functions: **(1) reproduce, and (2) give milk and wool.** From the milk and wool, the pastor lives, but he doesn't sacrifice the sheep (killing them for food). **The sheep sustain the pastor, but it is a grave error to think that the pastor can use his position and authority to “make tacos out sheep meat.”**

Pastoral visitation (watchcare) is a formal part of the duties of a pastor, but the concept of pastor goes beyond that. There are principal areas in which the biblical pastor has to comply: **(1) spiritual feeding (preach and teach), (2) be a watchman (inform and protect), (3) pastoral visitation and watchcare (counseling), (4) intercession (prayer).**

Threats to Wicked Pastors

Ez 34:2 Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD unto the shepherds; **Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! should not the shepherds feed the flocks?** 3 Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool, ye kill them that are fed: but ye feed not the flock. 4 **The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost;** but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them. 5 And they were scattered, **because there is no shepherd;** and they became meat to all the beasts of the field, **when they were scattered.** 6 **My sheep wandered** through all the mountains, and upon every high hill: yea, my flock was scattered upon all the face of the earth, and **none did search or seek after them.** 7 Therefore, ye shepherds, hear the word of the LORD; 8 As I live, saith the Lord GOD, surely because my flock became a prey, and my flock became meat to every beast of the field, because there was no shepherd, neither did my shepherds search for my flock, but the shepherds fed themselves, and fed not my flock; 9 Therefore, O ye shepherds, hear the word of the LORD;

Exactly to whom is the Lord speaking here? To the spiritual leaders of Israel that had failed in their duties. This passage instructs us on the duties which spiritual leaders should be constantly doing, and warns us if we or our leaders fail in doing them.

Spiritual Food

Acts 20:27 For I have not shunned **to declare unto you all the counsel of God.** 28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, **to feed the church of God,** which he hath purchased with his own blood. 29 For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. 30 Also of your own selves shall men arise, **speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.** 31 Therefore **watch,** and remember, that by the space of three years **I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.**

Firstly, the biblical pastor **preaches the whole counsel of God, warning without abating, and with tears (passion, compassion).** The pastor should be a compassionate preacher of the Word of God.

His preoccupation is not to win followers to himself; his ministry is **to proclaim the message of God.** The priorities are very clear, because there are those who would forcibly draw the weaker brethren after them. These ravenous wolves teach what is easiest, what most benefits their purposes, what best traps their followers. The good pastor worries about his flock, that they would understand God's message, find God's will, and correct their lives of error and sin.

The ministry of pastor-teacher (**Eph 4:11**) is very clear... *For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: (Eph 4:12-13).* While the wolf watches who will follow him, he pressures absolute devotion to himself. The pastor watches for his sheep, **“That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:”** (**Eph 4:14-15**) The pastor desires Christ to be formed in his sheep, not that he alone controls them.

Watchman (to Advise and Protect)

Ez 33:7 So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me.

Is 56:10 His watchmen are blind: they are all ignorant, they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber.

Every pastor is a spiritual watchman, whose duty is to take care of the sheep. **He should investigate everything about the dangers to the sheep, to recognize each spiritual threat and intercede for the**

sheep. Therefore the pastor should be a person with great **understanding and wisdom in spiritual things**, in things pertaining to heresy and error, and in the things that are not very beneficial to spiritual life and growth. Equally the pastor should discern the good from the bad, and should have courage to confront and rebuke error, incorrect conduct or doctrine, and be able to correct it. While “spiritual feeding” is also a spiritual activity of a watchman, his duty also focuses on resolving problems as much as edifying and growth.

Pastoral Visitation

Sal 23:1 *The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.* We have already dealt with this somewhat, but pastoral visitation is a personal chat with a member of the church, one on one, where the pastor and the sheep can freely talk about the things in the life of the Christian, his victories, his defeats, his temptations, his problems. The pastor then tries to direct teaching or counseling to resolve these things. In **Eze 34:4** God blamed those errant pastors who did not fulfill their charge to strengthen the sick (weak), who did not cure the sick (problem laden), who didn't seek to return the errant members, and who did not seek the lost (evangelism of the lost).

Rather than fulfilling the biblical duty that God ordered, these evil pastors “**pastored them with force and cruelty**” which is to say, their actions were more directed towards control of the group, and forcing them to do these wicked pastor's will, than to obey God. What is wrong in the sheep, the pastor should correct. The sheep should submit to this pastoral treatment.

Intercession through Prayer

Heb 13:17 *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.*

The pastor is someone **who intercedes as priest between the sheep and God**. Although God did not use the term “priest” to name this function and duty, the concept of **watching for their souls** is still there.

The pastor should educate the sheep as to the will of God through intensive study of the Bible. He should be the speaker for God in speaking God's words, explaining God's message, correcting, encouraging, and exhorting the people of God. The pastor carries the spiritual burdens of the flock very close to his heart.

This charge and his position as knowing the intimate details of each person in his church makes him the sheep's intercessor before the throne of God. That is to say, **every pastor should pray vigorously for the needs and situations of the members of his church**. Part of this comes from his pastoral visits, and part comes from his general knowledge of Scripture, and the evils out there.

Pastoring for the Love of Christ

Jn 21:15 *Simon, son of Jonas, **lovest thou me more than these**? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, **Feed my lambs**. 16 *...lovest thou me?... **Feed my sheep**. 17 *lovest thou me? **Feed my sheep**.***

Even though it is very clear that Jesus called Peter into the ministry to watch over his brethren, this calling first happened before this present passage. Jesus wished to focus on all Christians' obligation to “be pastors” (care for their brethren) and be concerned for their brethren. If you love Christ, you will seek to help your brothers and sisters in the Christian faith. Real love is thus seen.

This also can be extended from a formal calling as pastor in a local church, to every Christian should be laboring in serving and caring for their fellowship Christians, especially in the local church where they attend. Even evangelism is here brought to the motive of loving Christ.



The Biblical Pastor

The Biblical Duty

By David Cox

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Jer 3:15 *And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.*

God has prepared the life of each believer to have a relationship with a congregation and local community of believers, where there should be at least one man of God that “pastors them”. **To pastor is to spiritually take care of the believers.** This is to be a married man.

This is the heart of God, and it is his promise and will (**Jeremiah 3:15**). But the problem with many churches is that they do not understand or know what are the duties of a pastor are (and at times neither does the pastor), so we need to search the Scriptures to understand God's teaching on this matter, what are the duties and responsibilities of a pastor.