



Christian Leadership 1
Teaching Notes

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Lesson 1 – Leading as a Servant

Introduction

This course has been designed to provide students with a general understanding of what the biblical leadership is and how it relates to the Pastor who is leading a local congregation. Several aspects of leadership will be discussed in this course in order to help the Pastor be effective in his day-to-day ministry in the local church.¹

Part 1 - Servanthood Leadership

Having been part of a local congregation might have given you opportunities to participate in associational or national general meetings. I assume also that you have had contacts with other church leaders and have even come to know about the churches they are leading. So, let me begin asking you to think and answer this following question: “who have you observed to be a good leader? What about his leadership that you consider particularly good and inspiring to you?”

Definition of servanthood leadership

In this course as we will be discussing about servanthood leadership, bear in mind that we are thinking about someone who is leading as one redeemed by Jesus Christ with an attitude of self- sacrifice.

From the beginning God created man for community because it was “not good” for him to be alone (Gen. 2: 18-23). Therefore, leadership is fundamentally about relationships. We lead others within a community and how we lead either creates or destroys that community.

When considering the cultures during the New Testament times, there were various views of servanthood and leadership.

- The Greeks considered servanthood as undignified. Their culture told them “we are born to rule, not to serve.” Self-sacrificial service was unheard of in that culture. Being a servant was valuable only when it promoted individual development.
- In New Testament Judaism, servanthood was held in somewhat higher value, but was seen as meritorious. If I serve others, I will receive either temporal or eternal rewards.

Servanthood does not come naturally to man. We are *not* born with an attitude of servanthood. We are born with physical needs we cannot meet and a sinful heart. Servanthood is counter-cultural. God’s people struggle with pride as they become

¹ The notes for this course have been adapted from the same course as taught in the Action Pastors College curriculum used in Lusaka, Zambia. Rev. Emile Masabarakiza – Adjunct Professor at the Baptist Theological Seminary of Zambia and an instructor at Actions Pastors College (Lusaka) and Liberty Bible School (Mwembeshi) - has revised and arranged the contents for teaching in the BTSZ Bible School Network.

leaders as shown to us in two biblical stories. Please read: **2 Chronicles 26:1-5 and 2 Chronicles 26:16-21**. After reading those two stories from the bible:

ASK: (you can ask students to come up with answers either individually or in small groups)

- *What kind of king was Uzziah when he became the leader?*
- *What happened to him?*
- *When he was confronted by the priest, how did he respond?*
- *What principles can you gain about leadership from this story?*
- *How did Uzziah's story end?*
- *Why do you think it went that way?*
- *How can you apply his story to your ministry?*

READ again: **Matthew 20:20-28 (ESV)**.

ASK students:

- *What is the principle that Jesus is teaching here?*
- *What are some examples of this that you see in leaders you have observed?*

As leaders in Jesus Christ's Church, we are God's under-shepherds. We lead *under* the Lordship of Jesus Christ. We are responsible to him for how we lead. The most fundamental place to practice shepherding under the Lordship of Christ is within the marriage relationship (Ephesians 5: 25). Jesus used a parable to describe God as a servant of His subjects. Those subjects (servants) of God are likewise called to serve the church (Luke 12: 35-48)."

Under-shepherds "die to self" in order to serve the sheep under their care. As an example of poor leadership, the prophet Ezekiel describes the leaders of God's people as "shepherds" under him who had forsaken their duties to provide for and protect God's people. Rather than being those who fed and protected the sheep, the under-shepherds of Israel were only looking out for themselves. How could they get the best food? How could they do the least work? (Ezekiel 34: 1-10)

Years ago, A. W. Tozer warned us that a new cross had come into our evangelical circles, a cross that had little to do with suffering, sacrifice, and death. "The new cross does not slay the sinner," Tozer wrote; "it redirects him. It gears him into a cleaner and jollier way of living and saves his self-respect." [Warren Wiersbe]

The ultimate example of Servant-leadership is Jesus Christ. Servant-leadership was exemplified in Jesus Christ becoming incarnate.

Comment on sacrificial service:

- *The only path of greatness for Christians is to become the servants and even the slaves of all (Mk. 9:35; 10:44). More than table service is now involved; all kinds of sacrificial activity on behalf of others, as exemplified by Christ's own self-offering, are required. Service of others is service of God, and it may entail service even to the point of death itself (Jn. 12:25-26). (TDNT - Abridged)*

Jesus Christ is described by scripture as ruler of His creation and described as a servant. As students read **Philippians 2: 1-11**, let them answer the following questions.

- *What example does Paul use to teach servanthood?*
- *How was Jesus an example of servanthood?*
- *How can you, as a pastor, practice this every day?*

A servant-leader loves his followers more than his position or title. Fame, fortune, or privileges are not his motivations for leading God's people. Comments on motives for leadership:

- *Only love makes a servant put others first. Only love keeps a servant from exploiting and using his people for his own purposes. Only love prevents a leader from becoming a dictator. Duty becomes delight when it is saturated with love. [Warren Wiersbe]*
- *Ministry is too sacred to be motivated by gain and too difficult to be motivated by duty. [Warren Wiersbe]*
- *Apart from love, gifts and talents are hindrances to ministry. They become weapons, not tools. They exalt the servant; they do not edify the church. [Warren Wiersbe]*

Jesus Christ, who was called a "rabbi" and "Lord" gave himself as an example of servant-leadership by washing the feet of His disciples, a common task for a lowly servant in the home. After reading John 13: 1-20, ask students to answer the following questions:

- *How does this passage present Jesus as considering the needs of others more important than his position?*
- *What is the principle Jesus is teaching in washing their feet?*
- *What in Zambian culture would be corresponding to Jesus washing his disciples' feet?*
- *How can you, as a pastor, wash the feet of your congregation?*
- *How can you, as a pastor, encourage your congregation to wash other's feet?*

Servant-leadership involves a confidence in God's enablement for leadership. It is by God's grace, power, and gifting that we are able to lead others.

- **Joshua 1:1-6 (ESV)**
 - *Why could Joshua be confident in his leadership of God's people?*
- **2 Corinthians 10:7-12 (ESV)**
 - *For what is the authority Paul has been given to be used?*
 - *How does Paul view his readers?*

Part 2 - THE APPLICATION OF SERVANT-LEADERSHIP

In the following section, we will discuss what “servant-leadership” looks like in our practice of ministry. There are many principles that are “trans-cultural” but there are also ways we practice leadership in very different ways in our given culture. The application of the principles given earlier in this lecture must be carefully considered in your particular national and church culture. It may look quite different in your church context than in mine or even your fellow student’s.

A servant-leader is humble and willing to admit failure. The Proverbs give us much instruction in humility. If we are humble, we will be willing to hear even those under our authority when they confront our sin or give advice.

- **Proverbs 11:14 (ESV)** *Where there is no guidance, a people falls, but in an abundance of counselors there is safety.*
- **Proverbs 19:20 (ESV)** *Listen to advice and accept instruction, that you may gain wisdom in the future.*
- **Proverbs 15:31-33 (ESV)** *The ear that listens to life-giving reproof will dwell among the wise. 32 Whoever ignores instruction despises himself, but he who listens to reproof gains intelligence. 33 The fear of the Lord is instruction in wisdom and humility comes before honor.*
- **Proverbs 12:1 (ESV)** *Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge, but he who hates reproof is stupid.*

King David provides an excellent example of a willing heart to receive criticism.

- **2 Samuel 12:1-15 (ESV)**
 - *In that culture, what would the king probably do to Nathan?*
 - *Did David surround himself with “yes” men?*

Not only should leaders hear advice and criticism humbly, they raise up followers to leadership. Your goal as a leader is to develop shared leadership and to replace yourself in time.

A fear of those under our own authority who have leadership potential will result in destructive leadership.

- **2 Chronicles 21:4-6 (ESV)** *When Jehoram had ascended the throne of his father and was established, he killed all his brothers with the sword, and also some of the princes of Israel. 5 Jehoram was thirty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned eight years in Jerusalem. 6 And he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, as the house of Ahab had done, for the daughter of Ahab was his wife. And he did what was evil in the sight of the Lord.*
 - *What kind of king was Jehoram?*
 - *Why did he kill all his brothers and some princes?*
 - *How do you see this practiced in the Zambian church?*
 - *How can you overcome these fears in your own leadership?*

Moses’ father-in-law gave Moses excellent advice that we should receive ourselves. The “division of labor” is an important part of ministry growth.

- **Exodus 18:13-27 (ESV)**
 - *How did Moses fulfill the Proverbs read earlier?*

- *How would it be difficult to do what Moses did in response to his father in law?*
- *Why would Proverbs say, “in the abundance of counselors?”*
- *Who are your counselors?*

As leaders we must be prepared to encourage God’s gifting of present and future leaders and be God’s tools for creating and training these new leaders.

- **Numbers 11:16-30 (ESV)**
 - *What is God proving to Moses and Israel as he gives the Holy Spirit on the 70 elders?*
 - *How did Moses respond to the young man who noted that two continued to prophesy?*
 - *What good principle of leadership does Moses exemplify?*
 - *How can you also be an example of this attitude?*

A servant-leader is patient with the failures of those in the Body of Christ. As you develop and share leadership there will be times when your disciples fail morally and act unwisely.

Leaders must be patient knowing that ultimately the Holy Spirit will transform leadership disciples in his time.

- **James 5:7-11 (ESV)**

The results of authoritarianism and self-serving leadership is the oppression of God’s people and a stain on the Name of Christ to the watching world.

The scribes and Pharisees were known for seeking the admiration of their followers. They enjoyed the attention their authority the church garnered them. In turn they laid expectations on their followers that they did not apply to themselves.

- **Matthew 23:1-12 (ESV)**
 - *What is the principle that Jesus is teaching his disciples here?*

Those leaders who seek the good of their followers will lead with wisdom and understanding.

- **Proverbs 28:15-16 (ESV)** *Like a roaring lion or a charging bear is a wicked ruler over a poor people. 16 A ruler who lacks understanding is a cruel oppressor, but he who hates unjust gain will prolong his days.*

When a leader is self-seeking, he is easily swayed by falsehood and in turn destroy his followers.

- **Jeremiah 23:1-4 (ESV)**
- **Additional: Jeremiah 23:10-15 (ESV)**

The impact you will have as a servant-leader on the flourishing of your Christian community can be great.

- **Jonah 3 (ESV)**
 - *How did the king of Nineveh respond to Jonah’s preaching?*

- *What principle do you see in this passage for leadership?*
- *How can you be a means to the flourishing of your flock?*

Lesson 2 – The Calling and Qualifications of a Pastor

Introduction

Our first calling is to know Jesus Christ and to enjoy fellowship with Him (Romans 1:1-7; 1 Corinthians 1:9). The New Testament speaks disproportionately about this calling, and it forms our **identity**. Only by being firmly grounded in that identity can we profitably consider the calling to pastoral ministry. In what follows we will focus our attention on that calling. Paul expresses it, for example, in Romans 1:1 where he writes, “Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God....”

Part 1 – Biblical Examples of God’s Calling

A. The Calling of Moses (Exodus 3-4)

As the story begins, Moses is busy keeping the flock of his father-in-law Jethro. There is nothing unusual about a call to ministry arriving when a person is busy doing the work the Lord has already given him to do. It is crucial to the call that the **source** of it is the Lord. Through an angel, the Lord appeared to Moses in the bush that was burning but was not consumed. Moses thus experiences a theophany—a visible manifestation of God to man.

The Lord told Moses not to come near, and to take off his sandals because he was standing on holy ground. Moses’ response is indicative of one who has encountered the holy Lord: He hides his face because he was afraid to look at God. The holy God issues a holy call. This aspect of the call has sometimes been termed the **internal** sense of calling.

Next, in issuing the call the Lord already has a purpose and a plan. Moses did not choose his own **mission**; God gave it to him. Moses is not the master. He is called to be the Lord’s servant (Numbers 12:7-9). Further, it is important to recognize the Lord’s sovereignty over Moses’ call (Proverbs 19:21). Moses is reluctant, and his reluctance endures for some time. It does not, however, hinder God’s call.

Finally, the Lord will confirm Moses’ call among the elders of his people. In verse 16, the Lord commands Moses to gather the elders of Israel together to tell them that He has appeared to him and that He has promised to deliver them. God promises Moses in verse 18 that they will listen to his voice. For us as well, there ought to be this **external** call. God’s people, especially fellow leaders (deacons), must affirm our internal sense of calling.

B. The call of Paul and the Twelve (Acts 9:1-19; Mark 1:16-20; 2:13)

Paul’s calling, as compared to Moses’, has both similarities and differences. His calling to the Lord and to ministry takes place on the same occasion. This should

caution us to attend to the **general pattern** without insisting on particulars that may vary from person to person.

Saul was on his way to Damascus to arrest followers of Jesus. Suddenly a light from heaven shone around him. Blinded, Saul fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are persecuting me?" And he said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting."

Anyone who receives a call to pastoral ministry must first **know** Jesus personally, and enter into a relationship with Him. In Acts 26:16, as Paul recounts this event to Agrippa, he says that Jesus told him, "...I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you as a servant and witness...." Like Moses, Paul also receives a strong internal sense of call.

Paul's internal call is also matched by an **external** call. For example, the Lord told Ananias that Paul was his chosen instrument to carry His name before the Gentiles and kings and children of Israel. Ananias goes and lays hands on him and his sight returns. After being baptized, he began proclaiming Jesus in the synagogues. Similarly, in verse 27 Barnabas takes him to the apostles. Their acceptance of him confirms his call externally, as evidenced by the fact that he continues to boldly **preach** the name of the Lord after meeting with them.

Is a **dream** or vision normal or essential for a call to ministry?

We might be inclined to think so based on Paul and Moses. However, what about the other apostles? Mark 1:16-20 recounts the call of Peter and Andrew, who were fishermen. Jesus told them, "Follow me and I will make you become fishers of men." They immediately left their nets and followed him.

They went on a little further and came to James and John who were in their boat mending their nets. And immediately Jesus called them, and they left their father Zebedee and followed Him (see also e.g. Mark 2:13).

A vision or dream is not **essential** to calling. What is essential is to realize the incredible privilege of being called to be a pastor. It is equally vital to recognize we are called to serve on the model of Jesus. The call thus comes with great responsibility. It is a trust that demands to be carried out faithfully.

ASK students: How does your experience of calling compare to these models?

Part 2 – Called to Gospel Ministry

Next, we should ask what exactly we are called to if we are called to pastoral ministry. (Note: In the New Testament church, most of what is written about calling to ministry speaks about the role and ministry of pastors and elders. This does not mean other leaders cannot be called to serve, but the Bible gives the clearest examples for those in pastoral ministry.) We have already seen that at the heart of pastoral work is the ministry of God's **Word**. As a reminder, the ministry of the word entails preaching and teaching the whole counsel of God (the whole Bible), with a special emphasis upon the gospel.

The gospel is centered on Jesus Christ and His work. Paul tells the Corinthians that he resolved to know nothing among them except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. The gospel is not merely the way into the faith, it is also what sustains us in the faith. It is not merely the ABC's of the faith; it is the A to Z.

By way of summary, consider 2 Timothy 4:1-5. Paul writes from a Roman prison, fully aware that his sentence will result in execution. Timothy is a pastor in Ephesus and represents Paul's hope for future leadership in the growth of the gospel forward. Timothy must preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. A time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching. They will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their evil passions. Into that situation, Timothy must proclaim the word of God and do the work of an **evangelist**.

Recall what Paul told the Ephesian elders in Miletus. He said, "And now, behold, I know that none of you among whom I have gone about proclaiming the kingdom will see my face again. Therefore, I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all, for I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God" (Acts 20:25-27). We are called to preach the whole **counsel** of God from all of the Scripture because it is all God's word and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction and for training in righteousness.

But what is the whole counsel of God? Luke 24:24-27 provides insight. Jesus, unbeknown to the disciples, walks with them on the road to Emmaus. "And he said to them, 'O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?' And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself." Whatever your Scripture text, you are called to preach how it points to **Jesus** and His finished work. My preaching professor used to tell us that if your sermon would be acceptable in a mosque or synagogue it is not Christian.

Part 3 - Calling: The Privilege and Cost

The pastoral calling is an incredible privilege, filled with many blessings. Among them are the joy of participating in the Lord's work, seeing Him transform people into Christ's likeness, and witnessing the growth of the gospel and advance of God's kingdom.

But we need to also be aware that it is a costly ministry. It will be costly because the kingdom of God advances against the kingdom of this world. The two are **opposed** and so conflict with each other. We must not be surprised when we face the unpleasant effects of this conflict. Paul calls Timothy, "Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus" (2 Timothy 2:3).

At the beginning of 1 Timothy Paul exhorts Timothy to confront false teachers. He must **protect** the flock of God by refusing to allow these false teachers to poison them. Likewise, he must be faithful to pray and encourage the people of God to pray. He must toil to raise up deacons to serve the church.

In chapter 4 Paul warns Timothy that he will have to endure the heartbreak of seeing some for whose souls he has labored depart from the faith by following deceitful spirits and the teachings of demons. Any pastor who has ministered for very long will sympathize with Timothy. Meanwhile, he must continue to discipline himself for godliness.

The pastor should expect to experience temptation but must resist it. In chapter 6 Paul warns Timothy that the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. Through this craving some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs. But as for Timothy, he must flee from these things and **pursue** righteousness, godliness, faith, and love, steadfastness, and gentleness. He must fight the good fight of faith.

For good reason Paul calls it a fight. As pastors we are on the front lines of a warfare not against flesh and blood, but against spiritual forces of darkness. We must be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus (2 Timothy 2:1).

ASK students: What are some of the costs of pastoral ministry that you have encountered?

Part 4 - Qualifications for Pastoral Ministry

We may be tempted to think of **gifts** as we consider qualifications for pastoral ministry. *But the Scripture does not emphasize gifting when it comes to qualifications.* Remember how Moses objected to God that he was not eloquent but was slow of speech and tongue? God replied, “Who has made man’s mouth? Who makes him mute, or deaf, or seeing, or blind? Is it not I, the Lord?” God is the one who gives gifts, and His ability to work through whomever He chooses is not limited by them. Perhaps that is why, when it comes to qualifications for ministry, the emphasis in Scripture lies elsewhere.

1 Timothy 3:1-7 outlines **qualifications** for pastors. As we look at this passage, the first thing to note is that overseers and elders are synonymous (see also Titus 1:5, 7). Next, we need to know that from the New Testament perspective, pastors are among the elders (e.g. 1 Peter 5:1).

This passage says very little about gifts. Rather the qualifications are focused on **character** qualities. It is for this reason that Paul so strongly emphasized godliness when writing to Timothy.

An overseer must be **above reproach**. Such a person has no cause or occasion for blame, discredit, or disgrace. What follows really amounts to unpacking this foundational quality.

- **He must be the husband of one wife. He must be a one-woman man. He is to be faithful to his wife, focused on loving her as his beloved, which is to say, loving her as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her (Ephesians 5:25-33).**

- **Next, he must be sober-minded. The Greek word pertains to being restrained in conduct or what we sometimes call in English, level-headed. This is someone who does not easily lose his temper with people.**
- **Similarly, he must be self-controlled, which is to say, he must be prudent, thoughtful, and in control of himself. He must also be respectable, which means that he has qualities that people cannot help but to admire as honorable.**

He must be hospitable, causing people—and especially strangers—to feel the welcome he has experienced in Jesus.

- **Then he must also manage his own household well, which includes with all dignity keeping his children submissive.**
- **It is important to notice that a man disqualifies himself if his ministry detracts him from loving his wife or caring for his children. In God's wisdom he has built into the very qualifications for ministry a check against sacrificing one's family for the sake of ministry.**

No one in this present life will have these virtues in perfection. But notice how closely they relate to the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23). We must aim for them and seek God to enable us to grow in them. We must always continue to seek to grow in them by the grace that is in Jesus. Fathers and brothers, I do not care how gifted anyone is, if they lack these character qualities, they do not meet the standard required to lead in the church. At least for the time being, they are not called to the ministry.

Part 5 - Conclusion

Who are your heroes in the faith? Many of them may be those whose stories you read about in the pages of Scripture. But you probably have others. There are at least four men that come to mind for me. They have all been my teachers at one time or another.

- **Their teaching has been impactful not necessarily because they were the most gifted speakers, but because the holiness of their lives compelled a hearing. They were set apart from others by their evident godliness. They all had been tested through severe trials—each facing different kinds. They were purified by the Refiner's fire. Their lives demanded a hearing because they practiced what they preached, demonstrating they truly believed it.**

God's calling and the qualifications for pastoral ministry come together in the lives of such heroes of the faith. In such people we see that holiness and effectiveness in Christian ministry are inseparably bound up together. God is sovereign over our callings. We serve at His pleasure, and He is able to redirect us at any time He wishes. It is very easy to agonize over our callings, especially during certain seasons

of ministry. But at any given time, our focus really ought to be upon pursuing godliness.

Ours is a holy calling, issued by a Holy God. He does not need us. He does not need our gifts. He does not need our ministries. The Triune God is fully capable of accomplishing whatever work needs to be completed. Nevertheless, our Lord is pleased by His mercy to extend to us the **privilege** of genuinely serving His purposes. Since He does not need us to accomplish His work, what is most important to Him is that we should bear the family image. Our gracious Father has called us to Himself by the work of the Son and bound us to Himself through the Holy Spirit. On that basis, we must be holy as He is Holy.

Lesson 3 – Leadership Structure according to the Bible

Introduction

Leadership structure will vary in the particulars, depending on the tradition of which your church is a part. But there are fundamental biblical **requirements** that should transcend tradition. Our study will focus on the biblical principles that ought to be applied in any church setting. In Scripture, leadership is always oriented to service. Church leaders serve the Lord first and foremost. In so doing, they are also called to serve people. “If anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all” (Mark 9:35).

Part 1 - Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church (Ephesians 1:15-23)

This passage shows that it is the Father’s will that His Son should have preeminence over all things. His reign must especially be manifest in His church. The **foundation** for a healthy leadership structure is acknowledging that Jesus Christ is the Head of the church.

Paul is encouraged by what he hears about the faith of the Ephesian believers in the Lord Jesus. The title “Lord” already provides an important clue about Jesus’ role. He is the King over the church; He is the top bwana. There is no one higher. Jesus’ reign must not be thought of as merely a figurehead, or ceremonial like the queen of England. He is a real King.

In verse 16, Paul tells the church that the Father will give them the **Spirit** of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Jesus. He prays that the eyes of their hearts will be enlightened so that they may know the hope to which they have been called, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe.

The Father’s power is according to the working of His great might that He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead. As a result, He has now seated Jesus at His right hand, in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and **above every name** that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.

Verse 22 summarizes that the Father put all things under the Son’s feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fill all in all.

The scope of Jesus’ rule includes all things. Jesus’ reign fits into the wider arc of the biblical **storyline**. God had appointed Adam to rule over creation, but Adam failed to exercise the dominion God gave Him. He refused to defend the garden against the intruding evil serpent. Mankind fell into sin, and all creation was under God’s curse. But Jesus is the second Adam, who succeeded where the first Adam failed. He perfectly obeyed the Father, resisted every attack of the devil, and died for our sins.

He has been raised again. As true man, Jesus has assumed the reign that Adam had squandered. He reigns over all things. Of all places, His reign must especially be evident in the church! Pastors play an important role in making sure that is the case.

Part 2 - Jesus' Headship and Church Leadership Structure

Jesus is the head of the church. This is more than just a theory. Rather, Jesus' headship over the church must be expressed through the church **submitting** to His rule. For Jesus to be the head of the church means that no one else is the head. To claim such authority as, "head of the church," is to mount a coup against the rightful King. All leaders in the church are under Jesus, whether the saint in the pew, the deacon, or the pastor.

Paul begins to show the practical effect of Christ's headship in Ephesians 5:21 where he tells all the saints they must be, "submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ." Being a pastor, or a leader in the church, does not excuse us from this command. Since Jesus is the Head, we must submit to each other.

Paul was not hypocritical in this regard. Even as an apostle, he **abided** by his own counsel. In Acts 15 a theological dispute broke out. Some men came down from Judea and were teaching the brothers, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved."

Paul and Barnabas vigorously debated with them. But they were unable to come to resolution on this point. So they, along with some others, were appointed to go up to Jerusalem to **meet** with the apostles and elders. They were welcomed by the church and the other apostles and the elders, and they were able to report all that God had done with them.

The apostles and elders were gathered together to consider whether Gentile converts had to be circumcised to be saved. Acts 15:6 reports that there was much debate. Peter stood up and spoke. He reminded **the council** of all that God had done through Him to confirm that the gospel must go to the Gentiles. He argued, "Now, therefore, why are you putting God to the test by placing a yoke on the neck of the disciples that neither our fathers, nor we have been able to bear? But we believe that we will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they will." Paul and Barnabas also had their turn to speak. Later James spoke. Acts 15:22 confirms that the decision was made by the whole council.

For our purposes, the Jerusalem council establishes an important principle about how Jesus' headship must take **practical** shape in the structure of the church. When a theological dispute arose, Paul and Barnabas recognized that it would have to be resolved among the apostles and elders. It was not simply up to them.

Mutual submission therefore implies mutual **accountability**. The church structure must bear out this accountability as a matter of respecting Jesus' headship. What this means practically, is that every leader must be accountable to someone else (or other people). That accountability should be formalized in the church structure in order to uphold it. Even as a pastor, you must be accountable to others in the church.

Part 3 - Leadership of Word and Deed

In the synagogue in Nazareth, Jesus read from the scroll of the prophet Isaiah, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has **anointed** me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set a liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”

Jesus prioritized proclaiming the good news, the gospel of the kingdom of God. It was the key to everything. But He also demonstrated the **deeds** of the kingdom like healing and driving out demons. Every particular church should recognize these two vital aspects of Christian ministry: preaching God’s word, and manifesting deeds of mercy.

Once again, depending upon your tradition, you might use different terms for those who bear responsibility for leading the church in word and deed ministry. For our purposes, there is no need to argue over the terms. The important thing is to see that the church **continues** the ministry of Christ. To ensure that we are ministering faithfully, Jesus calls and gifts leaders to oversee word ministry, and other leaders to oversee deed ministry. The church needs both.

In Acts 6, the Hellenists complained against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution. The twelve apostles summoned all of the disciples, and explained, “It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables” (Acts 6:2). They instructed the believers to **choose** seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom they would appoint to that service (Acts 6:3). This allowed the apostles to concentrate on prayer and ministry of the word and also ensured that the mercy ministry received proper oversight.

- **Elders**

During their first missionary journey, one of their priorities was to make sure that every church had elders. Acts 14:23 summarizes, “And when they had appointed elders for them in every church, with prayer and fasting they committed them to the Lord in whom they had believed.” It is important to notice that each church had not just one elder, but *elders* (plural). In the Protestant church we have generally insisted on the **plurality** of elders. Every church should be governed by Christ through a body of elders.

In Acts 20:17 we have already seen how Paul called for the Ephesian elders to come to him at Miletus. As he addresses them, he reminds them about the ministry he modeled when he was with them. In verses 20-21 he reminds them about, “how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and **teaching** you in public and from house to house, testifying both to Jews and to Greeks of repentance toward God and of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.” Similarly, they must continue the ministry of the word of God, remaining faithful to apostolic gospel even in the face of difficulty and suffering.

He exhorts them to pay careful attention to themselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit made them overseers. He underscores his point by reminding them to care for the church, which Jesus obtained with His own blood (Acts 20:28). As he

prepares to depart, Paul tells them, “And now I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified” (Acts 20:32). They need to be nourished by God’s word. But in turn the principle that God’s word **builds up** must focus their ministry as they shepherd the flock.

ASK students: Does your church have elders? How are they identified, and what are their responsibilities?

- **Deacons**

In 1 Timothy 3:8-13, immediately after identifying qualifications for elders, Paul sets forth qualifications for deacons. The sequence indicates that there is a distinction between these two ministries. Many of the qualifications for deacons are similar to those for elders. That makes sense if deacons are also leaders in the church. They must be dignified, honest, temperate, not greedy for dishonest gain. They must also be doctrinally settled and sound. They should not be immediately appointed, but first should be **tested**. Only after they have proved themselves blameless should they serve as deacons. Their wives must also be dignified, not slanderers, but sober-minded and faithful in all things. Like elders, deacons must also demonstrate their leadership by managing their own households well.

Part 4 - How are Leaders Appointed?

1 Timothy 3 serves as a reminder that **character** is primarily what qualifies someone to become a leader in the church. Solid character certainly includes doctrinal soundness. Similarly, 1 Timothy 3:6 warns that an elder should not be a recent convert. In the church, it is vital for us to resist the temptation to elevate leaders too soon. Likewise, we must resist the temptation to elevate people based on a perception of giftedness. Far more important than gifting is manifesting the character of a disciple who is being conformed to the likeness of Jesus.

When we read the language, “appointed,” we may assume that means the pastor appoints leaders. However, Acts 6:1-7 demonstrates a wise alternative. Let me suggest that the apostles procedure serves as a wise paradigm to adopt in our churches. The apostles instructed the believers, the church members, to **pick out** seven men of good repute. The people were able to choose who should lead them. Only then, did the apostles appoint them to the duty.

ASK students: Do you see any similarities or differences in the way your church has been choosing leaders. If any, please share with the rest of the class.

The key **distinction** between these two ministries is that while elders (or those who oversee word ministry) must be able to teach, that is not a requirement for deacons (or those who oversee deed ministry). Elders and deacons are both needed. 1 Timothy 3:8 indicates there should be a body of deacons just as there should a body of elders. Likewise, with the deacons there should be plurality.

Ideally, then, every church would have a body of elders and a body of deacons. Again, the terminology may vary. But the point is that there are leaders of the word ministry and leaders of the deed ministry. On the model of Acts 6, elders lead the church in the ministry of word and shepherding.

The deacons, for their part, lead the church in deed ministry. They should not be doing all the work. Rather, they are responsible to lead the church in doing the work. In Acts 6 deacon service included mercy ministry, making sure the needs of widows were being met. Deacon ministry might also include leading in stewardship, including caring for any church property and encouraging generosity among God's people. In this way, deacons help the church to serve faithfully in manifesting the **deeds** of the kingdom of God.

Lesson 4 – Finding and Training Leaders in the Church

Part 1 - Selection and Development of Leaders

If you have been called and appointed by God to shepherd His flock, you have not been called to do that work by yourself.

- **Jethro** was the priest of Midian, Moses' father-in-law. He brings Moses' wife and children to rejoin Moses after they have left Egypt, and he praises the Lord for delivering the people out of the hand of the Egyptians. He confesses that the Lord is greater than all gods and offers sacrifices to Him.
- He also has opportunity to observe Moses judging the people from morning to evening. He bluntly asks Moses, "What is this that you are doing for the people? Why do you sit alone, and all the people stand around you from morning until evening?" (Exodus 18:14).

Moses answers that it's because the people have come near to inquire of God. He explains that he decides between disputes and makes known the statutes and laws of God. Again, Jethro is blunt. "What you are doing is not good" (Exodus 18:17b).

- Then he explains that both Moses and the people will wear themselves out. He points out to Moses that the work is too **heavy** for him to bear alone. He tells him, "You are not able to do it alone" (Exodus 18:18).
- He then **advises** Moses as to what he must do: You continue to represent the people before God and bring their cases to him. But he says, "...look for able men from all the people, men who fear God, who are trustworthy and hate a bribe, and place such men over the people..." (Exodus 18:21a).

Throughout the Scripture **plurality** is the pattern of the leadership of God's people. Nevertheless, leaders in the church continue in Moses' error. Attending to the Creator/creature distinction can help us to avoid this trap. We must remember that we are not God, but finite and limited human beings.

- Further, some leaders may become intoxicated by their sense of **power**. They enjoy the sense of being in control and are reluctant to share leadership with others. This hurts them and the church. Jesus is the only Head of His church.
- Still others, are mistaken into thinking that they alone possess the gifts to lead the church. They forget that God does not need anyone or anything. God's pattern for leadership in the church is that it should be shared among multiple leaders.

Part 2 - The Development of Leaders

Some years ago, Walter Henrichsen wrote a book entitled *Disciples Are Made Not Born: Helping Others to Grow to Maturity in Christ*. The biblical picture for leaders in the church is aptly described in the same terms.

- Developing leaders requires **investment**. Existing church leaders must invest time, resources, prayer, teaching, and training into believers. Someone has said that it takes a leader to make a leader.
- Normally it will take multiple leaders to raise up new leaders. Leaders **invest** in potential leaders, trusting the Holy Spirit to develop them into servant leaders who are equipped to minister to God's people.

How do you know who to invest in as a potential leader? Paul answers that question for Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:2, "...and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also." The Navigators summarize it well: Invest in people who are **FAT**: faithful, available, and teachable.

- A faithful person aims not just to receive knowledge, but especially to live it out.
- Available people allow the time required for you to invest in them.
- People who are teachable humbly recognize they need to learn and are willing to submit to the process necessary to learn and train.

- **Teaching**

2 Timothy 2:2 identifies the kind of person in whom to invest, and the **content** that must be entrusted to them. In the context of 1 and 2 Timothy, Paul is talking about the core truths of the **gospel**, centering on the person and work of Jesus Christ. Too often church leaders take for granted the gospel with potential leaders, and we should guard against falling into the same trap.

The gospel is not merely the entrance into the Christian faith; it is not merely the ABC's of the faith. It is the A to Z. If you are a believer, you never graduate from the gospel. Anyone who would be a leader in the church must have a firm understanding of the gospel and must learn to apply it to the various circumstances of our fallen human lives.

In order to help others spiritually, potential leaders must also know the **story** of Scripture. Remember our risen Lord on the road to Emmaus with two of the disciples: "And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself." (Luke 24:27)

The biblical story is a true story! Jesus taught them how the Bible is all about Him. It is certainly the case that the Bible contains many books, written by many different human authors, encompassing many kinds of literature. There is diversity. But it is also true that God has inspired the whole Bible, and it tells one overarching story.

Potential leaders should also have a working knowledge of basic **theology**. "Theology" simply means the study of God. Teach potential leaders about our need for revelation, not only in the Word written, but also in the Word Incarnate. Leaders must have a biblical understanding of what it means to be human. Potential leaders must understand **sin**, and how God work in our lives as believers. Indeed, key topics

that must be understood for effective ministry are not found in one chapter, or one book of the Bible. **Prayer** also needs to be understood from the whole Bible.

The teaching needed will **vary** based on the specific leadership responsibility. An elder candidate will need to have a thorough understanding in all these areas. While a church treasurer would not be expected to have the same level of understanding. Similarly, someone entrusted with significant teaching responsibility in the church would need thorough teaching, whereas an office assistant probably would not.

- **Training**

In Exodus 18 Jethro advised Moses to look for men of character. 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 do the same in the listed qualifications. Throughout Scripture we see that godliness is a baseline qualification for leadership. But most importantly, potential leaders need to see existing leaders modelling godly character. Young leaders need to grasp that godly character defines effective spiritual leaders.

Good leadership in the church will be **proactive** about equipping people with the skills they will need.

- Children's Bible teachers, for example, need to have a God-given ability to teach children. But as leaders we can also provide training in order to help them sharpen their teaching skills.
- Similarly, someone may be strongly gifted in **evangelism**. But an evangelist who has honed his own skills would be able to provide training that would help the young evangelist to grow as an evangelist.
- Existing leaders have a responsibility to provide training in order to equip potential leaders to serve effectually.

- **Methods for Teaching and Training**

First, what if you are currently the only proven leader in your congregation? To begin with, identify the immediate leadership need. Next, identify a few individuals you believe show potential (more about that in a moment) to fill that need. **Focus** the time and energy needed on teaching and training those few people to fill the need.

One person may emerge as the leader to assume responsibility for the area you identified. It may be that the others could fill similar positions. Once you have raised up new leaders, they should be recruited to help you raise up more leaders. Help them to **reproduce** the kinds of things you did with them to help others.

Second, how did Jesus train the men who would become the first leaders for the fledgling church? Mark 3:14-15 provides the answer: "And he appointed twelve (whom he also named apostles) so that they might be with him and he might send them out to preach and have authority to cast out demons."

Why did he appoint them? First, to be with him. You want to teach and train leaders? Spend time with them. Get to know them. Let them know you. **Involve** them as much as you can in the ministry tasks you are already doing. Are you preparing for your

sermon? Why not include a potential leader in your preparation? Pass on your study habits, and how you organize your sermon material. Study the word together and learn together. Are you visiting a family in the church? Take a potential leader with you. Whatever ministry you are doing, do it with a potential leader.

Third, you can organize intensive teaching and training **events**. It may be a weekend seminar on the whole story of the Bible. It may be a week-long conference on some other leadership topic. Use your imagination and work around the schedules of your potential leaders.

Part 3 - The Identification of Leaders

First, identifying potential leaders should be done **prayerfully**. Humbly ask the Lord of the harvest to send laborers into his harvest (Matthew 9:38). Ask the Lord to provide wisdom for you and the other leaders in your church to identify potential godly leaders. Ideally, you should partner with existing leaders in both prayer and identifying potential leaders. If you have deacons you should certainly involve them in the work of identifying, teaching, and training potential leaders.

Second, in order to choose leaders for specific offices within the church—Pastors/elders and deacons—I would recommend following the **pattern** set down in Acts 6:1-7. By way of reminder, the twelve brought together the full number of disciples. They explained the need for new leaders. Then they encouraged the disciples to pick out from among them seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and wisdom, whom they would then appoint to serve. Since these leaders would be serving the larger church, it was wise of the apostles to allow the people to have a say in who would lead them.

Third, ideally, **developing** future leaders should be an ongoing element of our ministries. There is an important relationship between developing and identifying leaders. If we are identifying potential leaders, and then teaching and training them, we will constantly have a pool of people to draw from for leadership. In other words, by keeping the process going, we will have leaders to fill specific needs.

Fourth, in identifying leaders we ought to prioritize **character**. God is God, and that means He does not depend upon the creatures He has made. Strictly speaking, He does not need us. Out of His own love He has created us. According to His own grace and mercy He has rescued us from sin and death. But He depends on no one.

Therefore, it should not be a surprise that character is more important for leadership than gifting. Leaders in the church not only serve God, they also represent Him in a world that both rejects, and needs Him. Since we represent Him, it is essential that we bear His image; we must be conformed to Christ. None of us are perfect in this present life, but we must be making progress toward Christ-likeness.

Finally, we should be on guard against putting **unqualified** people in leadership positions. We sometimes compromise this instruction for what seem like good reasons. Maybe an existing leader has a good relationship with that individual.

Perhaps the existing leader is assured that person will remain loyal to him. Perhaps, he may even be a family member. In other cases, there is temptation to give leadership as a **reward** for some service or favor rendered. These are the ways things are done in the world. But not in the church.

Brothers, the church is the people of God upon whom He has set His love. They are those for whom Jesus became incarnate, lived in this broken world, suffered, died on a cross, and was raised again. We ought to so care for his people that we never install unqualified leaders.

Lesson 5 – The Pastor and His Integrity with Money

Introduction

This lecture seeks to bring out the biblical mandate on church finances and the pastor while taking into account the Zambian context. We interviewed Zambian Pastors and church leaders who responded to questions by sharing what they believe in and what they practice as a church.

Question: Are there some church financial scandals involving Pastors in Zambia? Let us discuss briefly.

Part 1 - Importance of Church Finances

Today's Trend - This area has been the **downfall** of many and so we need to give humble attention to what the Bible says about it (Rev David Wegener – from TICA).

Every Pastor and church leader I interviewed suggested that Pastors should **never** handle church finances. They can oversee this area, but not to play the roles of the treasurer or accountant of the church. Unfortunately, the picture is different in some churches today.

Pastors leading churches that are in the beginning stages play various roles in the church including the handling of funds. However, even when the church grows and the members mature, some Pastors do not **relinquish** the responsibility of handling funds. This has brought about **tensions** in the church and the Pastor's integrity is **questioned**, especially when the financial reports do not reflect the actual giving of the church.

Therefore, I recommend that the Pastor of a young church should do a good job in discipleship and delegate responsibilities to maturing church members **as soon as** they are able to handle those responsibilities.

Some Pastors are not necessarily treasurers of the church, but they easily **command** those in charge of finances to release money whenever the Pastor needs it. Note that Pastors are not to abuse their authority.

Some Pastors in Zambia have been known to have begun churches with a **business** purpose in mind. The Pastor and his wife are both pastors and treasurers of the church. In this case, all the monies collected in church belong to the Pastor. Thus, no need for the Pastor to be put on a **Salary** and the church ends up struggling in the acquiring of assets.

Part 2 - Biblical Standards for Handling Money

Pastor's Integrity – The Bible commands that the Pastor should be above **reproach** (1 Timothy 3:2). This means he should not be a disappointment or be a subject of criticism even in the area of church funds. The Pastor ought to be content with what

he has and not to love money (1 Timothy 6:6-10). He ought to be **generous** (1 Timothy 6:17-19). There should be no hint of **greediness** in the life of the Pastor (Ephesians 5:3). Remember, you and I must Pastor not for gain or out of coercion, but willingly as servants of God (1 Peter 5:2-3)

Pastor's Support – Yet even when the Pastor is to serve willingly and not for gain, the church has the responsibility of financially **supporting** their Pastor or Pastors. 1 Timothy 5:17, 18 and 1 Corinthians 9:3-14 teach that the Pastor has the right to reap a **material** harvest from those he preaches to. He is human too and so he has the right to have the necessities of life to sustain his family. And who is to make sure this happens? The church he serves.

The church should plan on how to support their Pastor for him to do a good job as he serves them. Through the church leadership, or the **administration** committee, or the finance committee, depending on the structure; the church must determine the salary, allowances, benefits, **pension** plans, medical insurance, etc., of their Pastor. Our churches have rights to learn this truth so that they can carry out their responsibilities towards their Pastor. This is discipleship.

Part 3 - Financial Procedures

It is vital for the church to be **systematic** in the handling of its finances. The financial systems may call for the appointment of the financial team and for the formulation of financial policies and procedures.

Financial Team

A church finance team or committee is the financial **think-tank** for a church. Develop a finance team that is committed to budgeting, monitoring and controlling how church funds are spent and your church will have the necessary resources to fulfill its mission, vision, and strategy.

The financial team or committee will be responsible of the **management** of church funds. This team is important because it can influence the sustainability of the church's financial health and the growth of church asserts. If funds are mismanaged, the team can negatively affect the long- term financial viability of a church – something no one wants to be responsible of.

The financial team will be responsible of **guiding** the church in its revenue projections and collection, budgeting process, financial stewardship, debt management, formulation of financial procedures, member's personal financial management, regular financial reporting, adhering to financial statutory requirements, etc.

The financial team will need to be appointed or elected by the church membership or by the church leaders depending on the nature of church government being observed by the local church.

Financial Policies – Setting up financial **policies** and procedures helps in safeguarding church funds as well as the integrity of the financial team. These policies and procedures need to be well known and adhered to by every church member. Policies and procedures may include the following:

- ❖ Who **collects** and who counts the offerings and tithes (if the church believes in tithing)? At least two people should be responsible of this task.
- ❖ Is the money collected to be recorded in a book and signed for by those who count it?
- ❖ Who deposits church funds into the bank account and after how many days from the day of collection?
- ❖ Is it all funds of the church that have to pass through the bank account?
- ❖ Will we keep a book for bank deposit slips?
- ❖ Who checks to see if the amount counted **matches** the amount deposited?
- ❖ Will the church keep petty cash? If yes, what is the maximum petty cash and what will it cover?
- ❖ Will the church receive gifts in kind from non-members?
- ❖ How will financial requests be done?
- ❖ Who will approve and **authorize** financial requests?
- ❖ Who will be the signatories to the bank account? The Pastor can be one of them.
- ❖ How often will financial reports be given to the church and in what format?

Part 4 – Making a Church Budget

A budget is simply an **itemized** allotment of funds and it is a tool for financial monitoring. It is very important for a church to have a **budget** for the upcoming year because it is in the budget where expected revenue for the year is projected and it is in the budget where the allocation of funds towards salaries and activities is shown.

Revenue Projection – It is very difficult to budget without having a realistic **picture** of how much money will be available in the year. This realistic revenue projection can be achieved by analyzing historical giving, attendance patterns, average member donations, and investment projects.

Expenditure – based on the expected income for the year, items that will need funds should be listed and how much they will each require is to be indicated.

- ❖ The Pastor's salary, allowances, benefits, pension **contributions** and those of other staff need to be itemized.
- ❖ Ministry activities that the church will undertake need to be **planned** for in the budget. These ministries may include: Evangelism or Missions, discipleship, worship, widows and orphans, youth and children, building project, etc.
- ❖ Individual ministries may have to **create** their own budget estimates based on church strategy, goals, and allocated resources. Allowing individual ministries to prepare their own budget estimates makes them more **accountable**, accurate, and reliable. When put together, these ministry budget estimates will make a larger chunk of the main church budget.

- ❖ During the implementation of the budget, the financial team will be responsible of regularly monitoring the expenses and the income to make sure the church is within the budget.

Financial Reporting – There should be systematic reporting in a church that will help members to see how the church is performing financially. Monthly or **quarterly** and annual reports should be created.

- ❖ Church members have got the right to know how their giving is working for the church. They are the **key** stakeholders of all the activities of the church.
- ❖ Financial reporting may **encourage** church members in their faithfulness when they are motivated by a positive report of how church finances are used.

Summary

- Do not handle church funds as a Pastor for the sake of your integrity.
- The church should institute a financial committee.
- The church is responsible of financially supporting their Pastor.
- The church must always come up with an annual budget and monitor its implementation.
- It is helpful for the church to formulate financial policies and procedures and to **obey** them.

Christian Leadership 1 Final Exam

1. The greatest enemy of servanthood is P_____, even for God's servants.
2. A servant leader loves his F_____ than his position or title.
3. The Bible commands that the Pastor should be above R_____ (1 Timothy 3: 2). This means he should not be a disappointment or be a subject of criticism even in the area of church funds.
4. 1 Timothy 3 serves as a reminder that C_____ is primarily what qualifies someone to become a leader in the church.
5. Developing leaders requires I_____.
6. We are called to preach the whole C_____ of God from all of the scriptures because it is all God's word and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness.
7. The F_____ for a healthy leadership structure is acknowledging that Jesus Christ is the Head of the church.
8. Setting up financial policies and procedure helps in S_____ church funds as well as the integrity of the financial team.
9. A B_____ is simply an itemized allotment of funds and it is a tool for financial monitoring by the church
10. The ministry priorities of a senior or solo pastor includes the idea that as U-S_____, our most important duty in ministry is to lead God's sheep to the G_____ S_____ who cares for them perfectly.
11. The ultimate example of servant-leadership is J_____.
12. A key quality for a servant-leader is S_____ and willingness to admit failure/sin/mistake.
13. Good leadership in the church will be P_____ about equipping people with the skills they will need.
14. Emotional healing is promoted by the P_____ and ministry of a pastor or others in the name of Jesus. But it does take time—time spent with the grieving and time for the grieving to process their L_____ and pain.

CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP 1 FINAL EXAM

Answers

- 1. Pride**
- 2. Followers**
- 3. Reproach**
- 4. Character**
- 5. Investment**
- 6. Counsel**
- 7. Foundation**
- 8. Safeguarding**
- 9. Budget**
- 10. Undershepherds, Good Shepherd**
- 11. Jesus**
- 12. Submission**
- 13. Proactive**
- 14. Presence, Loss**

Appendix – Guidance for Pastors in Grief and Funeral Ministry

Introduction

The pastor plays an important role in the life of his members during both times of celebration and grief. This lesson will help the student know how to handle grief and funeral arrangements as and when they occur in the church that he leads.

Basic Beliefs about Funerals

The Bible teaches us many things about death that shape our response to our own deaths and the loss of those whom we love. The Bible is clearly a book about the meaning of life and the afterlife. But almost surprisingly, the Bible **prescribes** very little about what a funeral service should look like.

The obvious reason for the lack of specifics on funeral services is the **diversity** of cultures and practices that shape how we do a funeral service.

I believe that a funeral service is a worship service that has **God** at its center.

Romans 11:36, “For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.” But a funeral service is also about a **human life** that God has given and God has taken away. The name of the Lord should be blessed for this life and this life should be honored and appreciated.

Therefore, a funeral service is about the worship of God and a celebration of the life of the deceased. This is true whether the person is a believer or not. God has graced every human life with mercy and benefits that have touched the lives of others; even when that mercy doesn't extend to their personal salvation. As an example of this consider David's poem of eulogy, celebrating the life of King Saul [2 Samuel 1:17-27].

In remembering the deceased and expressing our love and beliefs at a funeral, we are moving ourselves toward healing from the pain of loss. So, a funeral service isn't just about God and the person who has died. It is also about the **living** who remain. In addition, because we are all moving toward death, we need to hear from God about life, death, and life after death. This must lead us in the service to the hope of the resurrection and eternal life that God has given in Jesus Christ.

When a pastor is asked to officiate a funeral service for a church member or for someone from the community, it is a great opportunity to show the love and mercy of Christ. Our Lord entered into the grief and mourning of bereaved people when he wept at the grave of Lazarus [John 11:35]. We are commanded, “to weep with those who weep” [Romans 12:15].

Three Realities about Grief

First Reality: Grief and Mourning can be understood as two different things. Grief refers to the **internal** thoughts and feelings a person experiences in the death of someone they love. Mourning is the **outward** expression of those feeling and thoughts. Grief and mourning are normal human experiences. Every culture has its own ways of expressing grief, although weeping is universal and wailing occurs in many cultures.

Ask students: What does it mean for Christians to “not grieve as those who have no hope” (1 Thess. 4:14)? Paul is saying there is a way of grieving with hope. Question: What do you think that might look like in comparison to grieving without hope in the resurrection? Are there times when a line has been crossed into a display of despair? How would you know when that has happened?

Second Reality: Grief and mourning is a unique experience for each person that is shaped by our individual and cultural expectations, as well as life situations. It is usually wrong to tell someone what they should be feeling or thinking about their loss and how it should be expressed. But there are also Biblical truths that are intended to **shape** our thoughts and feelings in grief. “I believe in the resurrection of the dead” is a statement of gospel truth that makes a difference in how we respond to the death of a loved one who trusted in Christ. The hope we have in Christ as Christians means that there is comfort for believers in the loss that makes a difference in how they respond to grief.

In ancient Hebrew culture, mourning was practiced, even into NT times. See **Mark 5:38**, “They came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and Jesus saw a commotion, people weeping and wailing loudly.”

Ask students: What do you think about wailing in view of the hope we have in Christ for the resurrection? Is it wrong? Is it right?

We should be sensitive to those who are in grief and not be quick to correct or rebuke them. Job’s friends waited for seven days before they spoke. There was wisdom in waiting. They failed Job when they began to speak words of correction.

Third Reality: Recovery from the loss of a loved one is a process that takes time. The sense of loss does not completely disappear, yet it does **ease** over time. The intense pangs of grief become less frequent. Hope for a continued life emerges as the mourner can make commitments to the future. Normal activities do return while understanding that the dead person will not be forgotten and knowing that one’s own life can and will move forward.

Here is one of my favorite quotes about grief based on a reflection of the death of Jacob: “Joseph knew that he would never be able to talk with his father again in this life. Joseph lived for another 54 years. I’m sure that there were many times during those years that he longed to talk with his dad about something, but he wasn’t there. It’s that sense of loneliness, of missing the departed person, that makes grief linger, often for years. We have to work through our grief to the point where we establish a new “**normal**,” without the deceased person in our lives. That process takes time.”

Pastor Steven J. Cole, Bible.org

Here are some **cautions** in view of the reality of the process of grief:

- Someone has said, "We don't "get over" our grief but instead become reconciled to it." Those who think the goal is to push others to "resolve" grief become harmful to the healing process. Be aware that the length of time for mourning varies from person to person and the life situation.
- **Give mourners time and allow them to express their loss through their tears. God gave us tears to express pain and grief. He has given us voices to speak our grief.**
- **Don't be too quick to push mourners toward activity and a normal schedule. Usually, this approach just covers up the grief with layers of activity that don't bring healing or resolution. It is right and good for a person to not rush back to their normal schedule but to spend some time in contemplation and healing from the loss.**

Ask yourself: What are the meaningful practices you have developed, experienced or observed for ministering comfort to those who are grieving?

Good Practices for Pastors

Ask students: Is it culturally acceptable to talk about a person's desires about their funeral service while they are still living?

Spend time with the family and be available to counsel.

- Be a good **listener**. The practice of good listening means that we must restrain our impulse to judge and then speak. It also means that we restrain speaking something positive to counter or correct a grieving heart.
- Emotional healing is promoted by the **presence** and ministry of a pastor or others in the name of Jesus. But it does take time—time spent with the grieving and time for the grieving to process their loss and pain.
- I meet **privately** with every family as soon as possible after the death to lead them in a time of personal remembrance. I ask questions and practice good listening. This is part of the healing process. But it also helps me and them to prepare for the funeral.
- After the funeral, I do a visit the next week and then **monthly** follow-up visits until I think the person has reached a place of emotional stability. This varies according to persons, situations, and cultures.

Share Scripture and prayers with them. I recommend you have a selection of passages in your mind—even in your Bible—to help people in these circumstances. If you are always reading the Bible there will often be something you have read recently. Don't shy away from reading **well-known** but comforting passages like Psalm 23, Psalm 46, John 14:1ff.

Mobilize the church to help the family.

- What this help will look like is in some measure culturally conditioned.
- In what ways can the church help families during this time?
- Teach the church about grief and mourning.
- Don't forget widows and orphans.

Plan and prepare a funeral service. **My process for planning a funeral service:** I meet with the family to share memories of the deceased and talk about various elements of the service.

- I include as many family members as seems right and reasonable to them.
- I ask a set of questions intended to draw out their personal memories of the deceased. See the list of questions at the end of this lecture. Develop a culturally appropriate list of questions that you will ask. Often, just 2 or 3 of them will work to fill up 90 minutes of time with the family.
- I take notes on their memories and stories of the deceased and their relationship with him/her.
- I take notes on their input into the funeral service. This includes favorite hymns, songs, poetry, or passages of Scripture.
- I become aware of sensitive issues or relational problems that can be addressed at the time and/or later. The death of a loved one can be a strategic time for change in individuals and families.
- If there are unbelievers, it naturally leads to sharing the hope of the gospel in a more personal way than a sermon.
- I discuss various elements of the service. What do they want to be part of the service? I take the order of a typical service with me and then write notes as we discuss.

As I review the notes, I can usually identify key themes about the person's life; their generosity, their kindness, their wisdom, their strength, their perseverance, their loves, and hates, etc.

As I think about those themes, I begin to gather the various threads of their memories under those themes. The themes may be a single word [see the sample sermon] or phrases or a complete sentence.

Throughout this process of reviewing the notes, Biblical themes and specific passages of Scripture begin to come to mind that connect with the life of the deceased. I will weave those passages and stories together in remembrance of their life. A central passage will usually come to mind that will become the basis of the "sermon" part of the funeral message.

Conclusion:

Our role as ministers of the gospel gives unusual opportunities to comfort grieving hearts and point people to the great hope of the gospel. It is not so important that we be perfect in our role, as it is that we be a loving Christian servant and a genuine human being. There are many ways to express our Christian love and service to the bereaved, but none of them is more important than being present with a readiness to care, to listen, and to share the wonderful hope of the gospel through words and actions.

Important Questions for a pastor to consider in ministering during times of grief, including the funeral service and/or graveside service:

1. Is the deceased a believer or an unbeliever?
 - How do you think we should respond or develop services for unbelievers?
 - How do you think we should respond or develop services for believers?
2. How will you talk about children who have died?
 - What are your beliefs about their salvation?
 - What do you say to the family to give them comfort?
3. Will the pastor be involved if it is an infant?
 - If there is a still-born child, the service is likely to be more private and conducted by a pastor at the graveside.
4. Will there be a church service and a graveside service? What are your practices?

Elements of a Funeral Service:

Obituary (family life): This is a written and brief record of the major facts of a person's life and relationships. It names the family members who survive the deceased. It also includes those family members who preceded the deceased in death.

Eulogy (tribute): This is a narrative of the deceased's life that includes memories from friends and family. Sometimes family members or friends may participate in the eulogy upfront or from the congregation.

Singing: When the service takes place in a church there is usually the singing of hymns and songs that are especially relevant to our need for the comfort of God in the gospel and expressing our needs to God. If the service is at the graveside or a funeral chapel, choruses or hymns are sung, or they may be played by instruments or from CD's.

Words of Lament: Messages, Songs, and Prayers that express the hardness of life and our trust in a sovereign God. Lament makes up about fifty of the Psalms. See Psalm 13 as an example. Lament is honestly expressing our feelings in the moment but also moving toward the affirmation of trust in God.

Scripture Reading & Preaching: We need hope, comfort, and perspective in our loss; and a hundred other things that Scripture gives us. Above all, we need to hear the gospel. The saved need to hear the comfort and hope of the gospel. The lost need to hear the same that they may be saved. It is during such times that often the lost are made more sensitive and aware of their need of God's saving grace.

Prayers: The impulse of the human heart in the loss of a loved one is to cry out to God for help. Our public prayers give voice to what people are thinking and feeling.

Public prayer gives people words to express their needs. Prayer invites God to be present and expresses our trust in him.

Bonfire in Zambia: It is traditional to have an all-night bonfire at the funeral house.

A Few Observations from the Scriptures about death, grief, and funerals:

We don't have any passage that prescribes the elements of a funeral service in detail. But we do have descriptions of events related to funerals. The most detailed description of a death and funeral is that of Jacob's, found in Genesis 49:29-50:14. The elements include the following: Burial in a cave; weeping and mourning; embalming; Stated time of mourning—70 days; procession to the burial site;

Jesus' death and burial, without a public funeral, but with some details included, is probably the second most treated death and burial because it is treated by all four gospels. Matt 27:57-66; Mark 15:42-16:1; Luke 23:50-56; John 19:38-42. However, these passages provide little detail other than the facts that he was placed in a hewn cave that was closed and sealed with a large rock, the body was wrapped with linen and spices before entombment. Another significant death and burial are that of Lazarus, John 11:1-44.

In the many scenes of death recorded in the Bible, we can see that grief and mourning are present and considered a normal part of the human response to death. This includes weeping. Even Jesus wept at the grave of Lazarus, although his grief seems to be focused on the suffering of the mourners, rather than his own grief since he was preparing to raise Lazarus from the dead. His identification and empathy with our suffering are a great encouragement.

We also read of wailing attending the death of a small girl in Mark 5:38. Jesus does rebuke them but it doesn't seem that he is rebuking the idea of wailing. His rebuke is preparing the way for her to be raised from the dead while minimizing or covering up the greatness of the miracle. Jesus says she is only "sleeping".

Burial immediately, as in Lazarus' case, and delayed burial with embalming, as in the case of Jacob, are both recorded without any comment on the rightness or wrongness of such practices. The Scriptures seem neutral on such things. We can be thankful this is the case since there are many different cultural practices and circumstances that surround the death of believers in the world.

The common practice in the holy land is burial in caves. Probably this is so because of the prevalence of a rocky sub-strata just below the earth's surface. Many different conditions exist in the world which have given rise to many different practices including: burial with or without embalming; burial below ground is most common; burial above ground in crypts; temporary burial and then internment of bones in a different location; stacking of bodies in a single gravesite; cremation of remains and then internment in a gravesite; cremation and spreading of ashes;

Elements and Order of a funeral Service

1. At Church for a believer [can also be used for an unbeliever]
 - Prelude—Instrumental Music
 - Hymn/Worship Song [Can also be a reading]

Scripture Reading
Prayer Of Invocation [inviting God's presence and help]
Special Music [Solo, Choir, Smaller group] or Hymn/Worship Song
Reading Of The Obituary [the basic facts of a person's life]
A Remembrance of the Deceased [this may also include sharing from the congregation]
Message
Closing Prayer [For comfort and help for the family and friends]
Hymn/Worship Song or Reading
Benediction
Procession of casket to the Funeral Vehicle [lead by the pastor]

2. At the funeral chapel for a believer or unbeliever.

Prelude—Instrumental Music
Scripture Reading
Prayer
Special Music [choir or smaller group]
Reading Of The Obituary [the basic facts of their life]
A Remembrance of the Deceased
Message
Prayer
Postlude—Instrumental Music
Benediction
Procession of casket to the Funeral Vehicle [lead by the pastor]

3. At the graveside after a previous service at the church or chapel.

Procession of casket to the Grave from the Funeral Vehicle led by the pastor;
Pastor stands at head of casket
Scripture Readings with brief comments of comfort and hope to the bereaved
Words of Committal
Prayer/Benediction
Words of Comfort Spoken Personally to Family by the pastor

4. At the graveside when this will be the only service:

Procession to Grave from the Funeral Vehicle led by the pastor; [Pastor stands at head of casket]
Scripture Reading
Prayer
Reading of the Obituary [the basic facts of their life]
A Brief Remembrance of the Deceased
A Brief Message
Words of Committal
Prayer/Benediction
Words of Comfort Spoken Personally to Family

Various Helps for Funeral Preparation:

Possible Scripture Readings for a Church or Graveside Service:

Psalm 23	Rev. 1:17,18 with Rev	1 Corinthians 15;
Psalm 61:1-5	21:1-4	2 Corinthians 4:17,18;
Lamentations 3:19-26, 31-33	Other Passages:	Philippians 3:20-21;
Isaiah 57:1-2	Job 19:25-26;	2 Timothy 4:6-8;
John 11:25,26	Psalms 16, 39, 57, 90, 42, 46, 130;	Hebrews 12:1-3;
John 14:1-6	Matthew 11:28-30;	Revelation 7:9-17;
2 Cor. 5:1 ff.	John 11:17-27;	Revelation 22:1-5.
1 Thess 4:13-18	Romans 8; 14:7-9	

Words of Committal; These are the last words spoken by the pastor at the graveside.

In the light of the promises God has given us in his word and because it has pleased the Lord in his sovereign wisdom and purpose to take from us one whom we have loved, we now commit his/her body to its resting place: earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust; looking for the blessed hope and appearing of our great God and savior Jesus Christ, who shall change the body of our humiliation and create with it the likeness of his own body of glory, according to the working of his mighty power, by which he is able to subdue all things to himself.

A typical obituary includes the basic facts of a person's life, generally in the following order:

His/her name, age, and the date and location of their death

The date and place of birth and the names of the parents

Graduation date and location if appropriate

Marital state, including date of marriage to their spouse

Church membership

Vocation in life

Survived by his/her children [each are named and their spouses and location of residence]

Survived by his/her siblings and/or parents [each are named with spouses and location of residence]

Survived by grandchildren/great-grandchildren, nieces and nephews [usually only the numbers are mentioned but if there is a small number, their names may be included]

He/she was preceded in death by husband/children/parents/siblings [names are given]

Here is a typical obituary as I would read it in the service:

Biblical Benedictions Appropriate for Funerals [These would be used to conclude the service.] Hebrews 13:20,21; Isaiah 42:2,3; Isaiah 61:1-3; Romans 8:38-39; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Philippians 4:7; Jude 24-25; 1 Peter 5:10,11; 1 Peter 1:3-4;

Questions For Time with the Family:

Explain that you are trying to gain a better feel for what that person was like, so you can be more personal.

What are your favorite memories of him\her?

If you could name one value or lesson he\she most wanted to teach the next generation, what would it be?

What one achievement or accomplishment would make his\her eyes light up when you mentioned it? [in the case of a premature death: what did he/she want to do in life?

Did he\she ever put anything up on the wall - a picture or motto that expresses who he\she was? What were some of his favorite phrases or sayings?

If he/she could have me say one thing during the funeral, what do you think it would be? Or to parents: what do you want me to say on behalf of your family to his/her friends and your family?

Did he/she have any favorite passages of scripture? [ask to see his/her Bible]

Favorite hymns or chorus'?

Would you like our church to provide a luncheon?

Would you want there to be an open time of sharing in the service?