

On Pastoring

1. As recently preached, a N.T. pastor has the office of elder/bishop/overseer/steward.
 - A. The rule of the church is committed to him. **HEB 13:7, 17.**
 - B. rule: To control, guide, direct, exercise sway or influence over...
 - C. control: To check or verify, and hence to regulate... 4. To exercise restraint or direction upon the free action of; to hold sway over, exercise power or authority over, dominate, command.
 - D. check: To stop (action, growth, exhibition of feeling, and the like); to stay the course of; to repress, restrain.
 - E. regulate: To control, govern, or direct by rule or regulations; to subject to guidance or restrictions; to adapt to circumstances or surroundings. b. To bring or reduce (a person or body of persons) to order.
 - F. Scripture, of course, is the supreme rule over all members, including the pastor. **PSA 119:128; MAT 4:4.**
 - G. There are many specific rules for the church's conduct and creed given in Scripture but there are times when a judgment call must be made as to how a specific rule or a principle should be applied and/or enforced.
 - (1) The pastor must decide on the order of the service: hymns, prayers, helpers, sermon topics, ordinances, etc.
 - (2) The pastor must decide on what is considered acceptable appearance (hair, apparel, body modification, etc.).
 - (3) The pastor must decide on what constitutes too many absences from church.
 - (4) The pastor has a say in church expenditure since he is the *steward* (An official who controls the domestic affairs of a household; supervising the service of the master's table, directing the domestics, and regulating household expenditure; a major-domo.) .
 - (5) As your pastor, I am very persuaded that the church is God's heritage to be ruled in His best interests, not mine. **1PE 5:3.**
 - (6) I will lean towards liberty where to do so does not violate a principle of Scripture or promote *an occasion to the flesh*. **GAL 5:13.**
 - a. It is a maxim that liberty is best enjoyed and preserved by people who know how to restrain themselves.
 - b. "When liberty destroys order, the hunger for order will destroy liberty." (Will Durant)
 - c. *Licitus perimus omnes* – These lawful things undo us.
 - d. "All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient..." (**1CO 6:12**).
 - H. The elder is the N.T. counterpart to the O.T. teaching priest. **1CO 9:9-14.**
 - (1) The priest had the oversight of God's house as does now the pastor. **NUM 4:16 c/w 1PE 5:1-2.**
 - (2) The teacher must differentiate between holy and unholy, clean and unclean so the people may have discernment. **LEV 10:10-11 c/w EZE 44:23.**
 - I. There are judgment calls that a pastor must make *in good conscience* to direct saints away from unholiness and towards holiness. **1TI 1:18-19.**
 - (1) I may not have a specific verse for every situation but according to the knowledge I have gained from scripture and experience, I must make a call accordingly.
 - (2) There was a time when the culture in general could be depended upon to uphold good conduct and ethics but those days are slipping away rapidly. In the absence of

- a cultural mandate for good conduct and ethics, the church must establish its own. That is where a pastor plays a vital role in leading by good rule and example.
- (3) Whereas I do not have authority from God to make law (God only is the lawgiver, **JAM 4:12**), I do have authority to apply and facilitate the implementation of appropriate laws and principles of Scripture. This is *executive authority* as it ought to be used.
 - (4) Defiant resistance of this pastoral authority is *rebellion* (rising up against legitimate governmental authority), which is *as the sin of witchcraft* and merits church exclusion. **1SAM 15:23 c/w GAL 5:20.**
- J. One guideline that I have found profitable in setting rules for the church is to point us all to the pattern of God's house that He has given (**EZE 43:10-11; 1CO 11:2**). The closer we stick to the N.T. pattern for worship and service, the better.
 - K. Those who are set in positions of judgment will never be 100% flawless.
 - (1) However, this does not mean that their judgment is 100% flawed.
 - (2) If you question my judgment calls in discretionary matters, talk to me about it in private, reason with me, *intreat me as a father* (**1TI 5:1**). I am approachable but mind that just because I am willing to hear you out doesn't mean that I am obliged to see things your way.
2. A pastor is duty-bound to warn, exhort, admonish, correct, reprove and rebuke in both private and public contexts.
- A. "Instruction in righteousness" is the easy part of **2TI 3:16 – 2TI 4:2**.
 - B. Do not ever get the idea that I get my kicks out of rebuking you as if I am "holier than thou" and just love to rub your nose in your deficiencies. I do not delight in trampling upon another person's sense of worth.
 - (1) It is a constant struggle with me to determine if I even have a moral high ground myself from which to do battle.
 - (2) Like Paul, there are times when I have had second thoughts about rebukes I have issued. **2CO 7:8.**
 - (3) Like Jeremiah, I would rather have kept my mouth shut but could not. **JER 20:7-9.**
 - C. But I **MUST** do this: for your good, for my good, for the church's good. **EZE 3:17-21.**
 - D. (**PRO 28:23**) He that rebuketh a man afterwards shall find more favour than he that flattereth with the tongue.
 - E. "Reprovers may displease those at first who yet afterwards, when the passion is over and the bitter physic begins to work well, will love and respect them. He that deals faithfully with his friend, in telling him of his faults, though he may put him into some heat for the present, and perhaps have hard words, instead of thanks, for his pains, yet afterwards he will not only have the comfort in his own bosom of having done his duty, but he also whom he reproveth will acknowledge that it was a kindness, will entertain a high opinion of his wisdom and faithfulness, and look upon him as fit to be a friend. He that cries out against his surgeon for hurting him when he is searching his wound will yet pay him well, and thank him too, when he has cured it." (Matthew Henry)
 - F. My boldness toward you is borne of both duty and love. **2CO 7:3-4.**
3. Concerning church attendance.
- A. I keep attendance records out of necessity. I am to give account to God for you in this area of Christian duty as much as any other, per **HEB 13:17.**
 - B. I have striven to be considerate and accommodating to absences for work, sickness, family and personal reasons.
 - C. I have a particular number of personal absences per year in mind that I consider to be the

outer limit of responsibility to God's house. When you are getting close to that limit, expect to hear from me. Do not force me to make an absolute rule in this area.

- D. Personal absences from the service of God's house have jumped 78% between 2014 and 2015. What is going on?
4. Concerning Bible studies.
- A. I don't consider Bible studies to be mandatory as are church services. However...
- B. Interest in the monthly Saturday study has dwindled greatly and the interest in the biweekly studies for the "northern group" have fizzled out.
- C. There were last year two major monthly studies that I put together for church members who had asked me to do so and then they never showed up for them.
- D. If I am not feeding you what you need, please tell me! If your zeal in general is languishing, repent. **LUK 8:14; REV 3:19.**
5. Concerning hair length.
- A. There are two major issues at stake here: the outward token of the woman's subjection to man and the need to steer away from blurring of lines of distinction between the sexes. **1CO 11:1-16; 6:9.**
- B. The woman's "...hair is given her for a covering" (**1CO 11:15**), i.e., a covering of her head (**1CO 11:5-6**), whereas the man's head in distinction to that should not be covered.
- C. The style of hair is not an issue; it is the length. Unless there is a biological, medical, or some other immutable characteristic that reasonably forbids a woman's hair to be longer than a man's and sufficient to cover her head, her hair should be longer and his should not cover his head.
6. Concerning dress code.
- A. Again, there are two major issues at stake here: modesty and avoiding the blurring of lines between the sexes. **1TI 2:9; DEU 22:5; 1CO 6:9.**
- B. Nakedness (buttocks, genitalia, women's breasts) is to be covered by garments that do not expose female breasts or cleavage, and should minimally extend to the knee in a standing posture. **EXO 28:42-43 c/w DEU 18:5.**
- C. Whereas there remains a need to avoid "cross-dressing," I am rescinding a restriction I had previously made concerning blue jeans for women.
- D. Brethren: use good judgment here. "Judge in yourselves..." (**1CO 11:13**). Do not force me to mandate a rigid dress code which would have to apply in all areas of public life, not just in church attendance!
7. Concerning tattoos and piercings, etc.
- A. There is a principle from **LEV 19:28** that I am compelled to not discard. The current cultural trend for tattooing is not something that I can in good conscience permit. If you already have tattoos, do not add to them.
- (1) Satan puts marks in men in this world. **REV 13:16-17.**
- (2) God's writing in the saints' foreheads is spiritual and heavenly. **REV 14:1.**
- B. Similar regulations apply to body piercings, body modifications, etc.
- (1) Scripture speaks of nose jewels, ear piercings, and other minimal alterations.
- (2) Scripture also associates self-mutilation with wild-eyed superstition and devilish lunacy. **1KI 18:28; MAR 5:5, 15.**
- (3) Paul's bodily markings are acceptable. **GAL 6:17.**
- C. I do not intend to leave this door open for the church to become a freak show.
- D. My rule on this issue does not forbid minimal modification such as pierced ears.
8. Concerning the "Chad and Konul" effect.
- A. Their transfer to another church has definitely been felt here. The Lakeland Church's gain has been our loss.

- (1) A church is a spiritual body of varied members. **1CO 12:27**.
- (2) No physical body which loses some of its parts is not normally pained by their loss, both in the severance and in the new reality of their absence. Only a dead body cares not about the removal of its parts.
- (3) “And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee...” (**1CO 12:21**).
- B. Relationships and friendships which were in place for years were suddenly changed or ended.
 - (1) Because we are programmed for companionship from the beginning (**GEN 2:18**), we both need and crave the interaction and mutual benefit of companionship.
 - (2) Remember the power of love (**SON 8:6**). The more you love someone, the more power that person has over you.
 - (3) As precious as is a good friendship or relationship, if the loss of that person makes shipwreck of our faith, then we have foolishly placed too much trust in that person's value to us. **JER 17:5**.
 - (4) People who *need* a relationship to be *complete* will tend to give up a part of themselves and/or their principles to make the relationship work. The relationship is deemed to be the most valuable thing imaginable. This is at least a substitute for First Love, per **REV 2:4**.
 - (5) We must ever be on guard against making another person (other than Christ or God) the center of our universe.
- C. I know there are other factors that have come into play in the last year, but it has been my perception that Chad and Konul's departure has had a cooling effect on the spiritual zeal in the church.
- D. I have personally struggled over their departure, entertaining thoughts like, “Did I fail them in some way and therefore God took them away as a chastening?” or “Have I been derelict in duty to the church in general and God took them away to wake me up?” or “Is this the first leak in the top of the failing dam, the 'handwriting on the wall' that predicts the church's demise?” or “Will Mr. Holland ever hear his opus?”
- E. Bless God Who comforts those that are cast down (**2CO 7:6**). I recently received a call from Brother Chad which was a help to me and may be likewise to you.
 - (1) Chad explained that they have found themselves in a position of “seasoned believer” status. Younger believers look up to them. They are filling a niche in that fledgling church.
 - (2) Chad also has expressed his thanks to me for teaching Biblical handling of wealth and especially child-training. Chad and Konul are setting the standard for others in the church with little children, showing them that peace, quiet and order is possible when parents overcome their fear of restraining their children or losing their love.
 - (3) I am pretty sure that, in hearing this from Chad, I heard the introductory strains of Mr. Holland's opus. :-)
- F. We would all do well to think of ourselves not as amputees, but as organ donors for the life of another body, even as we had to do with Brother Chad Wagner. Perhaps God deemed us strong and healthy enough as a body that we could afford to donate a kidney.
9. Concerning child-training, particularly restraining children.
 - A. I know full well that I have drawn hard lines on this issue and, God willing, I will continue to do so.
 - B. Remember Eli's and David's errors. **1SAM 2:29; 3:13; 1KI 1:6**.
 - C. Remember these wise words, start early and stick to them: (**PRO 19:18**) Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying.

(**PRO 13:24**) He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes.

(**PRO 22:15**) Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him.

(**PRO 23:13**) Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die.

(**PRO 23:14**) Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell.

(**PRO 29:15**) The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame.

(**PRO 29:17**) Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul.

D. I know a child has not been disciplined harshly enough because of the indifferent reaction before and after the discipline. Chastening should be *grievous* (pressing heavily upon a person...burdensome, oppressive). **HEB 12:11.**

E. You cannot let a child win a battle of wills where his/her obedience is at stake. You cannot let a child dictate the peace and order of your home or your lives. You cannot let a child be defiant or rebellious. You cannot let a child dupe you into thinking that his/her love of you will be lost if you administer necessary doses of Vitamin N (NO!) and Vitamin B (Beating).

F. Remember **HEB 13:7** in this area of Christian faith.

10. Concerning touchy subject matters.

A. There are times when a pastor must preach about things that are uncomfortable for some to hear or raise issues publicly which some may think untimely, better suited to a private context, or perhaps not ever mentioned.

(1) I have preached about godly deception.

a. There are times when the godly thing to do is to allow someone's own take on your words or actions to mislead him.

b. There are times when the godly thing to do is hide your good actions from the prying eyes of others, including those in civil authority.

c. There are times when the godly thing to do is to fabricate a cover story for your good actions so as to keep the wicked "off the scent."

d. There are times when the godly thing to do is to outrightly lie.

e. Consider Rahab the harlot, praised for her deception as a woman of faith and good works (**HEB 11:31; JAM 2:25**), or the Hebrew "pro-life" midwives with whom God dealt favorably for their deception. **EXO 1:15-21.**

(2) I have preached about limited submission to civil authority.

a. It must be resisted when it forbids obedience to God's law or demands disobedience to God's law. **ACT 5:29.**

b. Its abuses of power may be resisted both through legal and sometimes unapproved means. **2CO 11:32-33.**

(3) I have preached against the ungodly antichrist Jew and his imposed spiritual blindness directly owing to his commercial/financial dealings.

1JO 2:22; ROM 11:7-10.

(4) I have preached against Islam to even a room full of Muslims while church members were present.

(5) I have preached against secret societies like the Freemasons who affirm a false ecumenical god and whose spiritual ancestors orchestrated the death of the prophets and of Jesus Christ. **ACT 4:10-11.**

(6) I have preached on sexual matters, the positive and the negative, dealing with the

- joy of godly sex in marriage (**HEB 13:4**), adultery, fornication, various sexual perversions, genital mutilation, masturbation, etc.
- (7) I know for a fact that some saints have been uncomfortable with subjects like these and especially where children are present.
- B. A minister of Jesus Christ is responsible to *preach the word* (**2TI 4:2**). There is much more to the word of God than **JOH 3:16; ROM 9:13-16; EPH 2:8-9**.
- (1) All scripture is profitable (**2TI 3:16**), even the uncomfortable parts, and none of it is perverse. **PRO 8:8**.
- (2) Moses spoke and wrote frankly about very touchy matters, such as the details of the sexual perversions of Canaan in **LEV 18**.
- a. Israel was to have Moses' revelation central to their daily lives and diligently taught to their children. **DEU 11:18-21**.
- b. Every seven years the whole Law was to be read to men, women and children. **DEU 31:10-13**.
- c. The priests and Levites in Nehemiah's day defined the words. **NEH 8:8**.
- d. **LEV 18** was written for our learning and hope. **ROM 15:4**.
- e. The graphic record warns us against falling into such lusts. **1CO 10:11**.
- (3) Paul, my example, withheld nothing profitable as he preached the *whole counsel of God*. **ACT 20:20, 26-27**.
- (4) There have been times when I have in the past given parents the option of removing their children from the service when touchy issues have been addressed. For reasons such as the above, I may not do that again.
- C. I know that I preach in a manner sometimes that might well be considered caustic, base, unpolished and sometimes even a little risqué. I do this for various reasons.
- (1) The prophets, the apostles and Christ didn't mince words or cater to the sensibilities of the wicked or the "holier than God" crowd.
- a. Elijah mocked. **1KI 18:27**.
- b. John the Baptist and Christ called Pharisees names. **MAT 3:7; 12:34**.
- c. Jesus cared not that He had offended the Pharisees. **MAT 15:12-13**.
- d. Paul essentially used an epithet. **TIT 1:12-13**.
- (2) Experience has taught me that it is a fool's errand to try to pacify Pharisees.
- (3) Paul was *rude* in speech but not knowledge. **2CO 11:6**.
- a. rude: Of language, composition, etc. Lacking in elegance or polish...
- b. Deceivers are marked by good words, fair speeches, great swelling words of vanity. **ROM 16:17-18; 2PE 2:18; PSA 55:21**.
- c. *Smooth* does not equate with *right*. **ISA 30:10**.
- d. *Lightness* promotes *error*. **JER 23:32**.
- (4) God's word is as a *fire* and a *hammer*; it burns and breaks. **JER 23:29**.
- D. My style of preaching and leadership is probably not everybody's cup of tea.
- (1) I recognize that personal style must be in conformity with the instruction and models God has provided in the Scripture for preaching and leading, Christ and Paul being the best examples.
- (2) Some men are "...sons of thunder" (**MAR 3:17**), but not all.
- (3) I also recognize that if I try to be someone other than myself too much, I will not be myself, and will come across as less than genuine.
- (4) "Ezra, in this case, had plucked off his own hair, in holy sorrow for the sin; Nehemiah plucked off their hair, in a holy indignation at the sinners. See the different tempers of wise, and good, and useful men, and the divers graces, as well

- as divers gifts, of the same Spirit.” (Matthew Henry, commenting on **NEH 13:25**)
- (5) I know that I have said things from the pulpit which went over like flatulence in an oxygen tent.
- a. Remember that the Holy Spirit by the prophets, Christ and the apostles used what were considered offensive terms and illustrations.
EZE 4:12; MAL 2:3; PHIL 3:8.
 - b. Be cautious not to make the man of God an offender for a word.
ISA 29:20-21.
- E. I am thankful for the overall liberty that you have given me here to preach. There are many preachers who have not this liberty.