

LESSON 8

THE ROLE OF THE PASTOR IN CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Many churches do less than their best in the task of Christian education because the pastor of the church has an inadequate understanding of his role in the program. The church whose pastor understands the importance of his personal participation in this program and has a real comprehension of the program itself enjoys a great advantage in carrying out this part of its divine mandate.

The New Testament uses several terms to refer to the church office which has developed into what we normally call the minister or pastor today. Paul used the term "bishop" (1 Tim. 3:1; Tit. 1:7) to refer to this office. While this word has come to have a larger implication today, its original use was in a more limited sense. Paul also referred to the "presbyters" (1 Tim. 4:14) who likely were pastors, officers spoken of as preachers (1 Tim. 2:7; 2 Tim. 1:11). While the term "apostle" usually was limited to a particular group of persons, the word is sometimes used with reference to the minister of the church (Eph. 4:11). Pastors are called teachers (2 Tim. 1:11), evangelists (2 Tim. 4:5), pastors (Eph. 4:11), and ministers (2 Cor. 6:4). In every case, these men called out by God through the Holy Spirit had a particular relationship to the church as it performs its task.

1. Ministry of the Pastor

The pastor "ministers" to the congregation in many ways, most of which are not the concern of this study. In his ministry, the shepherding background of the word "pastor" comes to focus as he seeks to care for the sheep by feeding, guiding, leading, protecting, and sheltering them. Of course, "feeding" includes the idea of development and growth for service. While every believer has a ministering responsibility and each Christian is both shepherd and sheep, the pastor has a peculiar, specific role in shepherding (pastoring) the congregation.

In addition to his personal ministry to individuals, the pastor leads the church to engage in a fellowship of worship, proclamation and witnessing, nurture and education, ministry to others, and application of Christian principles to daily life. Thus, the pastoral ministry includes proclaiming the Gospel to believers and unbelievers. It includes care of the church members and other persons in the community.

When the pastor participates personally in the program of Christian education in his church, the church is aided greatly in carrying out its _____.

(divine mandate)

The word "pastor" includes _____, _____, _____, and _____ the flock.

(feeding, guiding, leading, protecting, sheltering)

In his pastoral ministry and as a part of his effort to lead the church to carry out its tasks, the pastor will be seeking to raise the quality of fellowship in the church. Success will depend upon an environment conducive to fellowship. Such an environment involves regenerate and responsive members who relate adequately to one another. It involves Christian concern for others. It involves certain aspects of church polity such as adequate communication within the congregation, an up-to-date accepted covenant, a well-planned constitution, policies and procedures, and the use of restorative discipline.

All of this points to the need for real leadership ability on the part of the pastor. This particular gift of the ministry is very necessary as the pastor works directly and through the church officers to lead the church in performing its tasks. He should be involved in determining the program of the church. His role is vital in developing the proper motivation and concern. The discovery of available leaders depends to a large degree upon the pastor. He is frequently the tool of the Holy Spirit to achieve responsible participation on the part of a large number of church members in the work of the church.

2. Relation of the Pastor to the Program of Christian Education

Jesus was a teacher. Paul was a teacher. But today many pastors do not regard the program of Christian education as an essential part of their ministry. They are preachers and pastors, and they take these functions to be the only important aspects of their calling. They have a blind spot with regard to the educational aspects of their tasks, and they fail to equip themselves for this work. The minister who is not equipped to teach and to supervise in the Christian education program of the church is like a soldier who is trained to meet only half the situations and opportunities that are likely to arise in the course of battle. He stands a fair chance of losing the battle.

Reasons for the pastor's relating to the Christian education program

1. For the pastor not to involve himself as an educator makes it easy and likely that the church will produce spectator members of an audience rather than disciples. This failure of the members to become disciples has drastic results.

The pastor ought to lead in the _____ of available leaders. He should help develop proper _____ and _____.

(discovery, motivation, concern)

The importance of the pastor's responsibility is demonstrated by the fact that both _____ and _____ were teachers.

(Jesus, Paul)

The pastor should relate to the education aspect of the church to help produce _____ rather than _____ members.

(disciples, spectator)

2. For the pastor not to involve himself frequently results in a drastic shortage of lay leaders and teachers.
3. Parents feel more responsible for their part in the Christian education of their families if the pastor is involved.
4. Those who accept responsibilities in the church are more likely to give a maximum of themselves to the task if the pastor is involved.¹
5. The pastor should look at the educational work of the church from the viewpoint of what it can do for the church membership. This work is the basic channel through which the church carries out a large part of its ministry.

How the pastor relates to the Christian education program²

The pastor relates to the program of Christian education in the church as director. In the majority of churches, he is the only full or part-time worker and must be the director of the educational program of the church. The churches which are experiencing great growth in numbers are those whose pastors have had the vision and disposition to dedicate time and energy to the educational program of the church. It is difficult for a church to advance beyond the vision of its pastor. A pastor who does not understand nor have an interest in this aspect of the work of the church will not have a successful ministry.

One important aspect of the pastor's relationship to the Christian education program of the church is that of encouraging. He will encourage by manifesting continuing interest in the total Christian education program. He will encourage by giving recognition to the members for their work in the program and for the time they give to it. He will encourage by advising, helping, and cooperating with the directors of different aspects of the program of Christian education.

Furthermore, the pastor is the most effective promoter of the Christian education program. His position as pastor and his participation in the total life of the church give him a tremendous advantage at this point. His preparation for the ministry and his opportunities to stay abreast of new methods enable him to function well in this promotional role. As he promotes he needs to be discerning. It is easier to promote

¹Smart, The Rebirth of the Ministry, pp. 94-98.

²Campbell, El Ministerio Educativo de la Iglesia, pp. 26-30.

Other reasons the pastor should be involved in Christian education are:

1. He can help enlist more _____ and _____;
2. Parents are likely to be more encouraged and responsible for Christian education of their _____;
3. Church leaders will probably be more _____;
4. The church ministry will be more _____.

(1. leaders, teachers; 2. families; 3. responsible; 4. effective)

In the majority of churches, the pastor is the _____ of the educational program.

(director)

READ THE REST OF THE TEXT ON THIS PAGE BEFORE DOING THE FOLLOWING EXERCISE.

A pastor can serve well in Christian education through his e _____ and p _____.

(encouragement, promotion)

attendance than good work. He promotes by means of his preaching as he makes teaching a part of it, as he leads the church in effective worship, and as he gives emphasis to Christian growth.

In all of this, the total ministry of the pastor is greatly benefited. His own efforts are multiplied and God blesses them. His relationship to the people is established on a firm and permanent basis. His preaching becomes more effective and reaches more people. His ministry is strengthened by the large group of co-workers that surround him, sharing his vision and joy in serving the church. His evangelistic opportunities are multiplied and extended. His members are better prepared to serve. The church of which he is pastor becomes a strong, active church and a mother of missions and new churches. His ministry is likely to produce joy and satisfaction, not only in the congregation itself but in his own heart.

3. The Pastor Functioning Within the Christian Education Program

Functioning in the church council

Unless the church has a director of Christian education on its staff, it is quite likely that the pastor himself will need to function as president of the church council. This involves him in working with the church program organization directors. This involves the pastor in the planning and the coordinating of the church's education program. It gives the pastor the opportunity to take the initiative for improvement. As he participates in the council, the pastor will need to maintain a balanced view of the total Christian education program. He must resist giving all of the emphasis to that part of it which has the greatest personal interest for him. He must be careful to develop the initiative of other church leaders within the council.

In the church training program³

Most churches experience difficulty in maintaining a continuing interest in training their members. At this point the pastor has a very important undergirding role. He, more than anyone else, can be the key to cultivating a positive attitude within the church toward training. He himself must have this attitude and be thoroughly convinced of the value of training in order to be able to convey it to the church.

The pastor can protect the place of church training activities in the church calendar. He can lead

³Harris and Staff, Administering Church Training, pp. 28-32.

List several ways the total ministry of the pastor is benefited by the educational program.

(Compare your list with the text.)

As president of the church council, the pastor should--

1. Lead in _____ and _____ of the church's education program;
2. Lead in _____ the program;
3. Maintain a balanced _____ of the entire Christian education program;
4. Develop the _____ of other church leaders on the council.

(1. planning, coordination; 2. improving; 3. view; 4. initiative)

the church to build its training program. Some areas in which his leadership and influence must be brought to bear are:

1. Providing capable leadership. The pastor should work closely with the church nominating committee in consultation and public support of its task.
2. Expanding and strengthening the organization of the church training program.
3. Enlisting the church members in training.
4. Providing the necessary space for meeting training needs.
5. Helping through personal counseling to train leaders as they develop.

This participation in the training program affects positively the pastor's own ministry. Normally, it will build up the Sunday evening service and mid-week prayer group. It will also undergird his efforts in evangelism by providing personal soul-winners and by conserving more effectively the results of evangelism. The entire church ministry will move forward more effectively as the pastor involves himself in the church training program.

In the development of curriculum

The pastor is the key figure in leading the church to a proper appreciation of the value of curriculum. Few church members have an adequate concept of what curriculum is. Quite likely, the pastor will need to orient the church council as to the elements and needs of providing adequate curriculum, materials, and activities. He is the one who probably must convince the church that a worthy education program with the right kind of curriculum is a major part of the church work. Good curriculum will do more to make the church true and strong and effective than almost anything else to which he can give his attention. He and his library are frequently the best resource materials many teachers will have in developing their curriculum content. The pastor is also the best connecting link between the church and denominational sources which provide curriculum recommendations.

List the areas in the training program in which the pastor should exert leadership and influence.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

(Compare your list with the text.)

*The pastor will probably need to orient the church council in providing adequate
c _____, m _____, and
a _____.*

(curriculum, materials, activities)

In outreach and evangelism⁴

The pastor will set the example by personal soul-winning and by preaching evangelistic sermons concluded by a definite invitation. He is also the key figure in making every aspect of the education program evangelistic.

The pastor should be thoroughly familiar with the steps in reaching new people in the Bible school and thoroughly dedicated to enrolling a large number of unsaved people of every age group. He should know how to lead his Bible school teachers and officers in evangelism, for this is the group most likely to follow his example in personal visitation and soul-winning. The hour the pastor spends in teachers and officers meetings is probably one of the most important hours he spends with church members outside the worship service.

Bible school teachers, officers, and members must be indoctrinated in evangelism. They need to be thoroughly convinced as to the results of sin, the need of every person for a Saviour, and the plan of salvation itself. The Bible school is to be dedicated to the task of reaching all age groups, from children to elderly people, for Christ. While the pastor should be the first to protect the children from all who would force a profession of repentance, he himself should be involved in decision services within the Bible school and encourage the teachers in personal work with the children. The parents of children of the Bible school are excellent prospects to be reached for Bible teaching and a personal decision to follow Christ.

In supervising the program of Christian education⁵

Many Christian education leaders and workers in Baptist churches react negatively to the term "supervision," having a mental vision of some sort of police action. However, supervision, which involves those activities and efforts designed to increase the effectiveness of the Christian education program, is totally necessary to the continuation and improvement of this phase of church life. The pastor should be deeply involved in it.

Supervision deals with the quality of the process. The quality of the product depends upon the goals set and the curriculum. Again the pastor will be constantly active with the church council and leaders in each aspect of Christian education to diagnose the education

⁴Jasper N. Barnette, The Place of the Sunday School in Evangelism (Nashville: Convention Press, 1945), pp. 49-64.

⁵Frank M. McKibben, Improving Religious Education Through Supervision (Nashville: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1931), pp. 15-54.

In evangelism the pastor must set the example by personal _____-_____. He should preach evangelistic sermons concluded with a definite _____.

(Compare your answers with the text.)

The pastor should lead teachers in the Bible school in _____ training.

(evangelism)

Supervision deals with the quality of the _____.

(process)

situation in order to discover what is right and wrong in the factors entering it. They will trace the causes of inefficiency and poor results to their source. Furthermore, remedies will be sought and applied.

Supervision is not administration's spying and finding fault, but rather the total effort of the church to do a better job. Supervision comes from the denominational level in recommendations and studies to improve the level of work. It is done best on the local church level. Supervision is needed because of the importance of Christian education in the church. It is needed because of the demand for trained, capable leaders who will become better trained and more capable as they receive sane, sympathetic guidance through supervision.

Supervision is not always easy to provide. Many churches and pastors do not take it seriously because they lack a vision of the real results available through Christian education. The extensive use of untrained leaders with no tradition of accepting supervision complicates this task. This makes the pastor the key figure in introducing and maintaining a program of supervision as part of the Christian education program.

In beginning this aspect of his work, the pastor can and probably should seek help from denominational leaders trained in Christian education. He should not work independently in supervision but always through church leaders, particularly through the church council. The idea of supervision should be understood by all in order that a right relation might exist between those who supervise and those who are to be supervised. Supervision should always be carried out with tact and sympathy and according to a plan which all have come to accept. Supervision can only be successful when improvement of the work being done has become a major objective of real value to those involved.

4. Conclusion

Each pastor will develop his own role of participation in the Christian education program of the church. These guidelines in this lesson will help. The important matter is that he be involved, deeply involved as an active participant. His participation is costly in time and effort to him but will pay rich dividends.

Are these statements concerning supervision true or false?

- _____ 1. Supervision is the total effort of the church to improve the education program.
- _____ 2. Supervision includes the administration's spying and criticism.
- _____ 3. Supervision is usually easy to provide.
- _____ 4. Supervision is needed because of the necessity for trained, capable leaders.

(1. true, 2. false, 3. false, 4. true)

In beginning supervision of his Christian education program, a pastor can usually receive help from denominational leaders trained in _____.

(Christian education)

Home Study Exercise

Basic activity (Levels 1, 2, and 3). After reading the study guide text, answer the following questions.

1. On what ministry does the word "pastor" focus? _____

2. How does a pastor work through church officers in leading a church? _____

3. What biblical precedent indicates that the pastor is responsible for Christian education? _____

4. Give five reasons the pastor should relate to the Christian education program. _____

5. What is the pastor's role in the program of Christian education? _____

6. How is the total ministry of the pastor benefited by the educational program? _____

7. As president of the church council, what are the pastor's responsibilities? _____

8. List five responsibilities of the pastor in church training activities. _____

9. What are the pastor's responsibilities in curriculum development? _____

10. List four activities of the pastor which will help develop an evangelistic church. _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
11. What does it mean to supervise the Christian education program? _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
12. Where can the pastor receive help in improving his Christian education program? _____
- _____

Supplementary activity (Levels 2 and 3).

Read pages 71-83 in A Church on Mission by McDonough.

1. Explain the meaning of "pastoral ministries" and give a biblical example to illustrate your answer.
2. Discuss effective pastoral ministries in the eighties.
3. List and explain the four pastoral tasks.
4. Discuss the pastor-deacon relationship in pastoral ministries.

Advanced activity (Level 3).

Define the steps which need to be taken in your church by the pastor in developing a more effective educational program and pastoral ministries.

Seminar Discussion

1. What is meant by pastoral ministry and what is the pastor's relation to it?
2. What is the role of the pastor in the Christian education program?
3. Why is it important for the pastor to lead in an effective training program for members?
4. What is required for a church training program to be effective?
5. Explain the function of the pastor as supervisor of Christian education.
6. Invite Levels 2 and 3 students to explain how a church should extend its pastoral ministries.