

My Personal Priorities — A Reminder to My Soul

Geoffrey R. Kirkland
Christ Fellowship Bible Church

I must set before my soul the personal priorities in my life and ministry. Because I too often forget my priorities and can easily become distracted by other good but less important items, I need to confront my soul with what God wants me do. In observing my personal priorities, I have listed five, here, for the purpose of this reminder.

1) Be intimate with Christ — *Meeting with God*

First of all, I must feed my heart with intimate communion with Christ. The unspeakable love of God, the grace of Christ, and the fellowship with the Spirit must stir me up to frequent times of intimate meeting with God. These times of meeting with God must include regular times of prayer. I must make every effort to protect these early morning times with God in prayer and in the reading and study of Scripture. To meet with God takes priority. I cannot give to my wife and children what I myself do not have. I must be warmly affected and kindled with love for Him in my own heart. To increase in my love for Christ and in my zeal for holiness takes priority in my life. I must meet with and love Him more!

2) Be pastoring my family — *Leading my family*

Second, God reveals in Scripture that I must pastor my family. I must shepherd them toward Christ, care for their souls, wash them in the Word, instruct them in Scripture, reprove when they've sinned, comfort through trials, re-anchor our hearts on Christ and re-focus our minds on heaven. God has called *me* to pastor my family. I am the family shepherd. I'm to lead, to serve, to nurture, to instruct, and to intercede for them. I am the spiritual head of the home to give oversight and to model Christlikeness and gospel-driven service toward each other. I must read Scripture with my wife and pray with and for her frequently. I must disciple each of my children and care for their souls vigilantly and tenderly.

3) Be feeding God's flock — *Feeding the flock*

Third, God has called me to pastor His people at Christ Fellowship Bible Church. Far from being just a job, it is an all-consuming, heart-gripping, supernaturally-humbling calling. God has sovereignly appointed me, by grace, to care for the souls of His blood-bought sheep. He has called me to be an undershepherd to be a representation of Christ in the way I serve, intercede, love, and shepherd God's people. To feed the people of God, I must preeminently be a holy man. I must also study God's Word voraciously. I must go down on my knees in prayer, sit in the chair in study, soar in the heavens with joy, and go far into my heart in personal application before I herald God's truth to the congregation. To feed the flock, I must study intently, constantly, ceaselessly, hungrily, and willingly. I must feed God's flock with God's Word always.

4) Be developing leaders — *Teaching the men*

Fourth, Christ came to earth and invested primarily in men, twelve of them primarily. He developed men, invested in men, trained men, modeled holiness and a life of prayer for these men. He taught them, comforted them, showed promises to them, and lived what He preached. He poured into faithful men who would be able to take the Truth and do the work of ministry when He would depart. He developed leaders. This is my calling. I must find hungry men, holy men, family men, disciplined men, self-controlled men, prayerful men, willing men. And when I find them, I must pray for and with them. I must teach and instruct them. I must develop them in godly character. I must teach them how to love their wives and children well. I must teach them to hold on to the faithful Word to teach sound doctrine and to fearlessly ward off wolves in sheep's clothing. To emulate Christ and to see the church mature, I must find Spirit-empowered, holy men to serve God together.

5) Be incessant in prayer — *Speaking to God*

Fifth, in reading the gospels, I find Christ to be a man wholly devoted to the spiritual discipline of speaking to God in prayer. As God, he spoke with His Father. As a man, he spoke with His God. As the Messiah, he lived in constant communion with God through prayer. Prayer saturated Christ's life and ministry. He incessantly devoted himself to times of communing with God. Often he sacrificed sleep to be alone with God. He would isolate himself from crowds -- even His disciples -- to be alone with God. He frequently engaged in early morning respites with the Father or even all-night wrestlings with God in prayer. I must speak to God for my sake, for my family's sake, for my church's sake, for the lost's sake, and for the glory of Christ. To speak to God in prayer demands humility, desperation, earnestness, persistence, faith. I must cry out to God without end as a humiliated man over the depth of my sin and fly to Christ as my only Refuge and Righteousness. I must plead the promises of God and pray desperately before I preach begging for His help. I must pray for the gospel to spread and for souls to be won.