

The Kind of Man a Faithful Pastor/Elder Must Be

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I. A PARDONED MAN

The man must be saved. God's grace must have pardoned him and atoned for his sins. The wrath of God must have been propitiated in and through the work of Jesus Christ on his behalf. He must enjoy the grace of God in salvation, bathe in the riches of Christ as his treasure, and strive to walk humbly and purely before God as he continues in the grace of God and in the mercy Lord Jesus Christ through the strength of the Holy Spirit.

2. A PRAYERFUL MAN

A faithful church leader must commune with God in regular, frequent, and private prayer. A shepherd must seek and savor opportunities to quiet himself with God. To be alone with God excited this godly shepherd. To be diligent in prayer is to confess private sins, to adore the greatness of God, to meditate and marvel at the glory of the gospel, to thank God for His undeserved blessings, and to take hold of God in begging for supernatural strength and Spirit-endowed power in the ministry.

3. A PREOCCUPIED MAN

A shepherd has one preoccupation, namely, caring for his sheep. Nothing else concerns him; nothing else conflicts him; nothing else distracts him. To shepherd God's flock requires that the man of God be preoccupied with God's flock. Yet the motivation to care for God's flock grows from a robust and rock-solid drive for God's glory. The preoccupation for God's glory drives the shepherd to occupy his mind, time, talents, efforts, and resources to serve His flock.

4. A PRIORITIZED MAN

God's shepherd must carefully prioritize his time. He cannot lazily sit back and allow the sheep to suffer. He cannot allow distractions to remove him from his foremost calling. He must prioritize his time and ensure that he carries out the few essentials rather than the dozens of profitable tasks. If one busies himself with many helpful items and yet ignores the meeting with God in prayer, the studying of the Scriptures, and the personal shepherding of God's flock, then he most certainly has misplaced priorities.

5. A PURE MAN

Pursue purity! This counsel that Paul gave to young Timothy must resonate with every man serving in the ministry of the Lord. Purity is preeminent. God loves to use pure vessels for His glory and His purposes. God cannot bless false shepherds, impure leaders and unholy elders. To pursue purity should be regular, constant, zealous, persistent, and delightful. Men must guard their eyes and their hearts. Men who serve Christ and serve His sheep must ensure that all impurities – and even the ‘appearances of evil’ – find no place in their lives. No man of God can protect himself too much from defilement.

6. A PREACHING MAN

A faithful pastor must be one who fits the qualification of being ‘able to teach’. He must be an able man with the Word of God. He must know the Scriptures. He must give himself diligently to working through the Bible and the Bible must work itself through him. He must know the Word and be competent to instruct with the Word. He must hold to sound teaching and refute all those who contradict. Faithful shepherds preach the gospel! Biblical elders can instruct and guard and protect sound, healthy, strong doctrine. The elders must give themselves unquestionably to the Word of God with more frequency and regularity than they do to sports, to news, to headlines, and to other hobbies. The Word must captivate this man. The care for, protection of, instruction of, and guarding of the flock should ever rest on the shepherd’s soul.

7. A POINTING MAN

A faithful and diligent undershepherd will always point to the Chief Shepherd. Jesus presented Himself as the Good Shepherd who lays down His life for His own sheep. He knows His own and He calls them by name. A godly pastor will ever point the sheep to the ultimate Shepherd for their sustenance, joy, satisfaction, and salvation! He points with tenacity and with ever-present pathos to the glory of God revealed in the face of Christ! Just like the Spirit of God who points believers to Christ, so all God’s shepherds must point all believers to the beauty of Christ. Christ’s shepherds should always have, as it were, a finger pointing to the text of Scripture and with the other hand, a finger pointing upwards to the risen and exalted Christ! Point to Him!

“Take heed to thyself. Your own soul is your first and greatest care. You know a sound body alone can work with power; much more a healthy soul. Keep a clear conscience through the blood of the Lamb. Keep up close communion with God. Study likeness to Him in all things. Read the Bible for your own growth first, then for your people. Expound much; it is through the truth that souls are to be sanctified, not through essays upon the truth. Be easy of access, apt to teach, and the Lord teach you and bless you in all you do and say. You will not find many companions. Be the more with God. My dear people are anxiously waiting for you. The prayerful are praying for you. Be of good courage; there remaineth much of the land to be possessed. Be not dismayed, for Christ shall be with thee to deliver thee.”

– Robert Murray M’Cheyne