

Four Priorities of Christ Fellowship Bible Church

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With the unending list of duties, counseling sessions, sermon preparation, meetings, and whatever else can crowd out a leader's time in the ministry, I find it often both helpful and practical to remind myself of some of the main priorities that I as a shepherd-leader must have as I minister to my flock. This keeps me on track. It is a regular checklist. It guards my heart and my time so that I give the time I have to the *right* things.

I. Pray Fervently

I firmly believe that the most important work of a minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ is to pray. A man who ministers the Gospel must be a man who is a prayerful man because of the Gospel's impact on his heart and soul. A prayerless man should never lead Christ's church. A man who cannot be alone with God cannot lead the people of God publicly. The minister's most productive time each week are those moments when no one is with him; when no one sees what he is doing; when no one is looking over his shoulder; he is simply alone with his God. He must bear his flock up *individually* in prayer. He must pray for purity of doctrine and purity of life. He must pray for his own family — his wife and children. He must pray for his leadership team. He must be a red-hot man of fervent prayer so that the heat of his prayerfulness is felt at a distance.

II. Preach Boldly

The man of God must be a courageous preacher of the Word of God. The pulpit is no place for chameleons. The man of God cannot shift and change at every wind of teaching and every cultural preference that wafts by him. He must take the true Word of God and preach all the Word of God with the authority of God as a servant of God to the end of the glory of God. He must preach biblically, boldly, passionately, urgently, fiery, practically, and zealously. A minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ is one who says: I would rather die than to be withheld from preaching. He is one who preaches regardless of how people respond and what people think. He is a messenger of God told by the Sovereign King to deliver the goods. He doesn't change, alter, or fabricate the goods. He simply preaches the message with boldness as a man captive to the truth of Scripture.

III. Shepherd Personally

The man who is called by God's grace to lead a group of saved sinners is repeatedly called a "shepherd" in the Scriptures. He is one who is to lead, guide, serve, support, feed, tend, rebuke, correct, carry, love, know, protect, and oversee. He is to know his flock. He is to care for them, feed them, protect them from enemies (from without and from within). The pastor is a shepherd.

IV. Train Intentionally

God reveals in His Word that ministers of the gospel are to pass on truth to other faithful men who can then turn and entrust that truth to others. This is the pattern of discipleship, mentoring, investing, and intentional training. This does not simply happen. There is no magical formula. It takes time, intentionality, deliberateness, sacrifice, and at times, wounds received by those who received such intentional training who falter from the faith. Nevertheless, our privileged and merciful calling given by the great God of heaven and earth is to make disciples. Yes this involves missions. Yes this involves baptism. Yes this involves teaching. But it *also involves a very intentional and ongoing discipling relationship where the believer learns to "obey all that Christ commanded"* (cf. Matt 28:18-20). This sort of training is essential for godly leadership. Sadly, this element of pastoral leadership is neglected by many. But may shepherds rise up who disciple other disciples who will in turn disciple other disciples.