



# **Pastoral Training in the Church**

# Pastoral Training in the Church

Rocky Wyatt



**XL MINISTRIES**  
EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP



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Print: 978-1-928538-37-0  
eBook: 978-1-928538-38-7

First print edition 2021.  
First eBook edition 2021.

Cover art by Attila Juhas.  
Layout by Patty Brown.  
eBook design by Wendy Winn.

Scripture taken from the NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE,  
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Print & eBook Publisher  
XL Ministries, Inc.  
[www.xlministries.org](http://www.xlministries.org)  
[publications@xlministries.org](mailto:publications@xlministries.org)

## Dedication

To the faithful Elders at Countryside Bible Church that I had the privilege of serving alongside. They have sacrificially served our Lord and provided an excellent testimony of biblical leadership. They have also invested well in the training of men, including pastors.

## Foreword

The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. *2 Timothy 2:2*

That was Timothy's mandate, and if you are a pastor, it is still your mandate. This one verse identifies four generations of church leaders: Paul, Timothy, the faithful men Timothy would train, and "the others" who would in turn be trained by them. It is the image of passing the treasure of sound doctrine—the baton of the truth—to each sequential generation of church leaders.

Who bears the responsibility before God to ensure the next generation of leaders is equipped? Paul's instructions are clear: God has assigned the leaders of every local church the responsibility to identify and equip the next generation of the church's leaders. As this book demonstrates, many pastors and churches have completely abandoned that responsibility. Rather than using faithful seminaries as a resource to assist them in their duty to prepare the next generation of leaders, they merely write seminary recommendations and provide financial assistance. They may greet students at semester breaks, but rarely interact with them again. That is not only a flawed approach but an unbiblical one.

You may be reading this book because you are convinced that equipping the next generation of church leaders is your responsibility, but you need help beginning or strengthening the process. Or perhaps you are increasingly uneasy with the church's current hands-off approach to training men that fails to follow the New Testament pattern, but you are unsure what the alternative might look like. In either case, you will find this an invaluable resource.

From the first page, you will discover that Rocky Wyatt is passionate about training men for ministry in the context of the local church. And that passion is matched by decades of remarkable success in actually doing it. Those he has trained now serve as pastors across the country and are training others in their own churches. Rocky is equally passionate about and experienced in helping other pastors and churches carry out this mission, and that is what motivated this book.

In this brief but incredibly helpful book, you will learn a proven approach to pastoral training in the church. It produces men who are truly equipped to serve Christ's church. Most of my own pastoral staff were trained by this intensive internship model in addition to their seminary education.

Rocky and I served closely together in pastoral ministry for 17 years. For most of those years, he was my senior associate. He is a man of impeccable character, genuine love, practical wisdom, and authentic spirituality. He is also uniquely gifted to train men. I have observed the process you will read about firsthand—and have witnessed, and benefited from, the results. I have seen this approach benefit men in all situations: those unable to go to seminary, those about to attend or in the middle of their education, and those who have already graduated.

It is time for pastors and churches to reshoulder their Christ-assigned duty to identify and equip the next generation of church leaders. For that to happen, we must first exchange the hands-off training model for a more biblical one. This book provides a model that is extremely practical and thoroughly biblical.

Tom Pennington  
Pastor-teacher  
Countryside Bible Church  
Southlake, Texas  
August 2021

## Preface

The concept of pastors training pastors is not a new idea in the Christian faith. In fact, I suppose few Christian leaders would deny the value of pastoral discipleship. Nevertheless, the traditional process in our culture for training a man for ministry is often divorced from the life of the very church where he acknowledged his call to ministry.

You are likely familiar with situations where a man shares his desire for vocational ministry with his pastor and church leaders. Because of the obvious value of theology, they encourage him to go to a theologically sound seminary. This often means a move that is far from home. The seminary student generally lives in close proximity to the seminary for the three or four years it takes to complete his degree. Many churches generously participate in the financial support of this ministry candidate and certainly desire God's best for his life and ministry. In the typical scenario it is unlikely that this man will return to his home church following his seminary training.

The question is: If a man follows this pattern, does he receive sufficient training both academically and practically? There are many variables to consider when answering this question. It is possible that a man can find a church close to his seminary that provides the additional training necessary. There are increasing numbers of seminaries or extensions of seminaries that are linked to local churches. It would certainly be possible to gain the practical experience for ministry in this setting. But a tremendous number of men receive no significant personal discipleship as they proceed through their academic education, and then they transition to a full-time pastoral role upon graduation.

This book is not a rejection of formal academic training. While I do not think a seminary should provide the primary oversight for pastoral training, I do believe it is essential that a pastor is well-trained academi-

cally. After all, teaching and defending the truth will be his primary responsibility.

Pastoral training has not always been separated from the local church as it often is today. I don't believe that churches intentionally avoid taking the primary responsibility for overseeing the training of a man in their church. We have simply become accustomed to sending our men away, assuming that an educational institution adequately prepares them for a lifetime of ministry.

I don't believe educational institutions think they are sufficient, in and of themselves, for training pastors. In fact, I suspect most of them would be thrilled if the church took a much more active role in training.

Writing a book of this nature is a challenging task. There are times that I address the inadequacies of formal education. I realize these inadequacies are not reflected in every institution. I also address a number of dangers when training in the church. Again, many churches have recognized these dangers and are successfully training pastors.

When it is all said and done, I believe the church is designed by God to train men for pastoral ministry. I am advocating for the church to take seriously their discipleship responsibility for training men generally, as well as training men specifically for pastoral ministry. I believe they should assume the primary oversight for this training and should utilize appropriate resources that will benefit both the church and the man who is pursuing the pastorate.

Rocky Wyatt  
August 2021

## Acknowledgements

The XL Board of Directors: Brian Murphy, Chris Riser, Eric Ellis, Jonathan Anderson, Justin Turner and Bryan Chandler have all had a profound impact on my life and this work. They are all committed to pastoral training in the context of the local church. Their insight has been invaluable in the writing of this book.

Tom Pennington has been my pastor, mentor, and dear friend. I have gleaned so much from working with him at Countryside Bible Church for 17 fruitful years. His example of biblical leadership has profoundly impacted my understanding of eldership in the local church. I am deeply indebted to his contribution in my life and this work.

Barbara Kemp has been my Administrative Assistant for 20 years. She takes the rough draft that I produce and tirelessly works to edit it for others to read. She loves our Lord and has committed her life to His service.

My dear wife Pam has read my manuscript over and over again. She is diligent on checking references and providing insight on specific issues that I address. She has been a source of constant encouragement throughout this process.

I must end by expressing gratitude to my gracious Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. His provision for my redemption is something I will never fully comprehend. He has given me His word so that I can know His ways and learn to serve Him well. I can only hope that this book reflects His heart for training pastors.

## Author

**R**ocky Wyatt has served in pastoral ministry for over 40 years. He has been a youth pastor, associate pastor, and senior associate pastor. He spent 26 years at Countryside Bible Church training men for pastoral ministry throughout his ministry. In 1992 he started XL Ministries in order to develop a more formal process for training men in the local church. In 2020 he left his position at Countryside Bible Church in order to work full-time helping churches provide pastoral internships. He currently serves as the Executive Director of XL Ministries.

## Introduction

*Consider the following scenario:*

It is a very exciting day when a young man approaches his pastor to share his desire to go into ministry. What a privilege to see this individual grow up in the church, come to know Christ as Lord and Savior, begin growing in his knowledge of God, and ultimately start serving in the church. It is likely that the pastor knows both the man and his family quite well.

As the young man begins making his plans for the future, he wants to get his pastor's input on which seminary to attend. They talk about some different options and he settles on a school that has a great reputation for being sound in their theology. He will have to move several hundred miles away to be able to attend this seminary.

So now he begins the process of applying to the seminary and considering options for financial assistance. The church has graciously offered to provide some financial resources. He will also need to find a job when he gets to seminary.

He carefully reads the seminary's doctrinal statement and is able to affirm his agreement. He is required to submit several references. The church leadership is happy to participate. It is clear that this man has a heart for the Lord. He has served primarily in the children's ministry and has been extraordinarily faithful. They are confident in his testimony of faith and believe he would be a great candidate.

After a few weeks he receives the much-anticipated letter. The seminary has accepted his application and he can begin packing up for a big move. Soon he will be studying theology and preparing for the day when he can serve the Lord as a pastor.

When you think about it, in this scenario the seminary is at a bit of a disadvantage. They may have never met this candidate, or if they have, it

was likely for a very brief time. They cannot personally affirm his character. They have never seen him involved in ministry and they have probably not heard him teach. Nonetheless, based on the recommendation of men they may not know, they are assuming the responsibility to prepare this man for the pastorate.

While the sending church is very excited to have one of their men prepare for ministry, they lose the benefit of having this faithful man serve in their church. He will be gone for at least three or four years and it is very unlikely that he will return to his home church. They will probably not see him much, if at all, during his training. And because they are so far away, they will not be able to assist in his training.

When the man gets to seminary, he will probably look for a place to serve in a church. The options are often limited because so many men are competing for opportunities. It is highly unlikely that he will find a pastor who will be willing to disciple him.

It is remarkable how many men successfully complete seminary with very little practical experience in pastoral responsibilities. There are many professions that require practical experience. You would not want a doctor doing surgery on you who has only completed work in a classroom. That's why doctors have residency programs. They must have on-the-job training because they are often dealing with life and death situations. Pastors are dealing with matters of eternal consequence. They desperately need the training that can only be accomplished in the context of the church.

Far too many men enter the pastorate who have never taught an adult class five weeks in a row. They have never had to confront false teaching. Many have never done any supervised counseling. Very few have sat in on elder meetings. Most have never had to deal with bylaws and constitutions. They have likely never participated in a church budget process. They have probably never officiated a wedding or a funeral. The first crisis they respond to will probably be after they become a pastor.

Church ministry is difficult enough without being ill-prepared. Some men finish their academic training and begin in ministry only to find that they are not gifted for the pastorate. Many men end up leaving the ministry due to the difficulties they face. Sadly, some leave the church altogether. The impact on the church, the pastor, and his family is inestimable.

Not only are there many seminary graduates who lack significant practical experience, there are others whom God has gifted for pastoral ministry whose life situation does not accommodate the seminary model of training. They may have already accumulated too much education debt. They may be unwilling to incur debt for education. They may not be able to afford a major move, or they may not believe it is best to uproot their family with a move. Some may be unwilling to leave their home church to pursue seminary. How do we train these men for the pastorate?

We need to ask ourselves if the traditional pattern is the best or only way to train a man. Is this the pattern we find in Scripture? Are there things we could do differently to provide more options for men who are called to ministry? Are there ways the church can take a much more substantial role in training men? How can we benefit from available resources to best equip men to become pastors while maintaining our biblical responsibility?

In the following pages we will consider how our Lord trained His disciples. He established a very clear pattern of discipling men who would become key leaders as the church began.

We will also walk through the book of Acts and see the beginning of the church as the Great Commission is being fulfilled: people come to faith, God gifts them, they are taught all that God has commanded, they begin to fulfill the role for which God has gifted them—including becoming pastor/teachers, churches are started, and the process continues.

We will also look at the ministry of the apostle Paul. He provides a great pattern for training men for ministry. He was very intentional in his training and he also encouraged others to follow his pattern.

It is time for all of us to be reminded that the church should be primarily responsible to disciple men for ministry. The church can certainly use helpful resources, but they must not disregard their responsibility.

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# Chapter One

## The Pattern of Christ: Choosing Men

### The Call of the Disciples

Jesus' recruitment method could be reduced to these two words: "Follow Me." There is a great deal of meaning wrapped up in these words. If a person is to follow Jesus they must stop going their own way. This is a great picture of repentance and faith. Following the Lord is a day-by-day, moment-by-moment responsibility. Our decisions are no longer driven by personal preference or pleasure. This is where the concept of Lordship comes into play. The follower trusts that wherever Jesus goes is exactly where he ought to be and whatever Jesus instructs him to do is exactly what he ought to be doing.

Now as Jesus was walking by the Sea of Galilee, He saw two brothers, Simon who was called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. And He said to them, "**Follow Me**, and I will make you fishers of men." Immediately they left their nets and **followed Him**. Going on from there He saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and He called them. Immediately they left the boat and their father, and **followed Him**.

*Matthew 4:18-22 (emphasis mine)*

The next day He purposed to go into Galilee, and He found Philip. And Jesus said to him, "**Follow Me.**"

*John 1:43 (emphasis mine)*

And He went out again by the seashore; and all the people were coming to Him, and He was teaching them. As He passed by, He saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting in the tax booth, and He said to him, "**Follow Me!**" And he got up and **followed Him.**

*Mark 2:13–14 (emphasis mine)*

While the Bible does not record the circumstances surrounding the call of each disciple, Jesus makes it absolutely clear that the words **follow Me** are central to the call for all who would come to Christ.

And He was saying to them all, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and **follow Me.**"

*Luke 9:23 (emphasis mine)*

"If anyone serves Me, **he must follow Me**; and where I am, there My servant will be also; if anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him."

*John 12:26 (emphasis mine)*

"If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple. Whoever does not carry his own cross and **come after Me** cannot be My disciple."

*Luke 14:26–27 (emphasis mine)*

## The Credentials of the Disciples

At the beginning of the church, Peter and John saw God work in astounding ways. There were 5,000 men who believed the gospel. This created quite a stir, especially with the religious leaders. Peter gave his defense to the rulers, elders, and scribes. After he proclaimed the truth of the gospel, the people were amazed.

Now as they observed the confidence of Peter and John and understood that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were amazed, and began to recognize them as having been with Jesus.

*Acts 4:13*

The terms *uneducated* and *untrained* mean that they did not become teachers according to the normal practices of the day.

Peter and John were obviously unversed in the formal learning of the rabbinical schools, yet they spoke with a freedom and forthrightness that impressed their judges. How could untrained laymen like these so ably sustain a theological disputation with members of the supreme court? The answer was not far to seek: the judges took cognizance of the fact that they had been companions of Jesus. He too had sat at the feet of no eminent rabbi, yet he taught with an authority which they could well remember. People expressed the same surprise about him: "How is it that this man has learning, when he has never studied?" (John 7:15). None could match him in his sure handling of the scriptures, his unerring ability to go back to first principles for the confirming of his own teaching and the discomfiture of his opponents. And plainly he had imparted something of that same gift to his disciples.<sup>1</sup>

While these men were uneducated and untrained in the eyes of the religious authorities, neither was actually true. They had been educated by the Master, and as we will see in the next chapter, they had also been well trained by Him.

When we think of putting a group of men together to accomplish a substantial objective in a relatively short period of time, we would select those who would be most likely to gain the respect of those they would be dealing with. Yet consider the fact that Jesus selected Levi to be one of His disciples.

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<sup>1</sup>Bruce, F. F. (1988). *The Book of the Acts* (pp. 94–95). Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.

A publican disciple, much more a publican apostle, could not fail to be a stumbling-block to Jewish prejudice, and therefore to be, for the time at least, a source of weakness rather than of strength. Yet, while perfectly aware of this fact, Jesus invited to the intimate fellowship of discipleship one who had pursued the occupation of a tax-gatherer, and at a later period selected him to be one of the twelve.<sup>2</sup>

The apostle Paul reminds all believers that God chooses His disciples, and His choice is not based on their credentials!

For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, and the base things of the world and the despised God has chosen, the things that are not, so that He may nullify the things that are, so that no man may boast before God. *1 Corinthians 1:26–29*

The world is impressed with great personalities and academic credentials. It is dangerously easy to adopt expectations and standards that reflect the world's priorities.

That some of the apostles were comparatively obscure, inferior men, cannot be denied; but even the obscurest of them may have been most useful as witnesses for Him with whom they had companied from the beginning. It does not take a great man to make a good witness, and to be witnesses of Christian facts was the main business of the apostles. That even the humblest of them rendered important service in that capacity we need not doubt, though nothing is said of them in the apostolic annals.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Bruce, A. B. *The Training of The Twelve*, 21. Public Domain. Kindle Edition.

<sup>3</sup>Bruce, A. B., 33-34.

## The Cost of Discipleship

Jesus did not accept everyone who wanted to be a disciple. In fact, there were some who came to Jesus who would have seemed to the world like great candidates. Nevertheless, our Lord reminded them what discipleship requires, and they chose to walk away rather than follow Jesus.

As they were going along the road, someone said to Him, "I will follow You wherever You go." And Jesus said to him, "The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head." And He said to another, "Follow Me." But he said, "Lord, permit me first to go and bury my father." But He said to him, "Allow the dead to bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim everywhere the kingdom of God." Another also said, "I will follow You, Lord; but first permit me to say good-bye to those at home." But Jesus said to him, "No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." *Luke 9:57–62*

And someone came to Him and said, "Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may obtain eternal life?" And He said to him, "Why are you asking Me about what is good? There is only One who is good; but if you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments." Then he said to Him, "Which ones?" And Jesus said, "YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT MURDER; YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY; YOU SHALL NOT STEAL; YOU SHALL NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS; HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER; and YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF." The young man said to Him, "All these things I have kept; what am I still lacking?" Jesus said to him, "If you wish to be complete, go and sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." But when the young man heard this statement, he went away grieving; for he was one who owned much property.

*Matthew 19:16–22*

## Conclusion

With just two words Jesus extended a call to men to become His disciples. These two words made it clear that this would require a radical life change: leave all of your personal plans and pursuits behind and commit to follow the Lord wherever He leads. Jesus did not select those whom the world would have approved. They were not highly educated. They did not bring specific skills to the table that would be of great benefit to the Lord's work. And yet the Lord chose them.

There were others, some who had great resources, who came to Jesus with a superficial desire to follow Him. Jesus explained the commitment and cost of discipleship and they changed their minds. Jesus discouraged the people the world would be most likely to pursue.

It is essential that we remember the pattern of our Lord in selecting and equipping men. And we must consider how we can follow His model. After all, it would be a sad thing if our effort to equip men for ministry is more a reflection of what appeals to the world rather than a reflection of the pattern our Lord established.

# Chapter Two

## The Pattern of Christ: On-the-Job Training

The words *follow Me* imply that there is a relationship. If you follow someone consistently, you see them in every life situation. You have the opportunity to benefit from their teaching. When they face difficult circumstances, you learn from their response. You learn about their priorities and disciplines.

Can you imagine what it would have been like to walk side-by-side with Jesus as one of His disciples? You would have seen people in the midst of life's most tragic circumstances begging Jesus for help. And then there would be many religious leaders who tirelessly tried to trap Him in His own words. There were also some religious leaders who were intrigued by Jesus and wanted to learn from Him. Talk about an amazing education.

Walking with Jesus also exposed sinful thinking and attitudes of the disciples. The disciples were essentially in class every day. They had the opportunity to learn about ministry before eventually participating in that ministry and then ultimately being sent out to fulfill their own ministry.

### Learning from Jesus

Consider the different learning opportunities the disciples benefited from as they walked with Jesus and heard His teaching. How did Jesus teach them and what were His objectives in their training?

## **Jesus Provided Instruction through His Teaching and Example**

From the very first day they met Jesus until the last day the disciples spent with Him, they were exposed to His teaching. They listened as Jesus spoke to the multitudes and they enjoyed personal interaction on topics that they struggled to understand. Jesus' teaching shaped the disciples' understanding of God, the Scriptures, Himself, and ultimately the gospel.

Jesus was constantly teaching in the synagogues (Mt 4:23). He also taught at many outdoor events like the Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5-7), the feeding of the 5,000 (Mt 14:13-21), and the feeding of the 4,000 (Mt 15:29-39). He would often illustrate truth with real-life scenarios like the poor widow who gave all that she had to live on (Mk 12:41-44), the blind man (Jn 9), and the withered fig tree (Mk 11:12-25).

Not only did the disciples hear Jesus teach, they were able to watch how He lived in relation to what He taught. This was not theoretical teaching; it was eminently practical. When Jesus taught the disciples that they did not have to worry about their physical needs because of the great love and care the Father had for them (Lk 12:22-31), He also demonstrated His confidence in His Father's daily provisions. Jesus spoke of a new commandment that the disciples love one another as Jesus loved them (Jn 13:34-35). They would soon see the ultimate picture of sacrificial love!

But Jesus did not simply teach the disciples generally, He was also intentional to provide targeted instruction to prepare them for their future ministry leadership.

### *Instruction About the Dangers of Ministry*

The commitment to be a disciple is substantial. The life that follows is equally challenging. Jesus illustrates by describing the disciples as sheep in the midst of wolves (Mt 10:16). It does not take a great deal of thought to understand the gravity of the situation. Sheep do not stand a chance against a pack of wolves. Nonetheless, the disciple must be prepared to face the wolves. The disciple can also expect to be hated. The world hated Jesus and will hate His disciples as well (Jn 15:18-19).

As the disciples walked with Jesus He warned them about some of the specific dangers they would face. Sadly, some of their greatest op-

position would come from religious leaders. Jesus cautioned the disciples to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod. This leaven is called hypocrisy (Mk 8:14-15; Lk 12:1). Jesus describes the scribes as those "...who like to walk around in long robes, and love respectful greetings in the market places, and chief seats in the synagogues and places of honor at banquets, who devour widows' houses, and for appearance's sake offer long prayers" (Lk 20:45-47). He says they will receive a greater condemnation.

Jesus advises His disciples that the religious leaders will despise them. In fact, they will hate them so much that they will throw them out of the synagogue. All the while they will believe that their actions are actually honoring to God (Jn 16:1-2).

The disciples had the privilege to see first-hand how their Lord was treated on this earth. When Jesus reminded the people who were in the synagogue of Old Testament history and how God often worked with Gentiles, they tried to throw Him off a cliff (Lk 4:25-30). When Jesus forgave sins He was called a blasphemer (Mt 9:2-7). The religious leaders were absolutely hostile when Jesus healed on the Sabbath (Mt 12:10-15; Lk 13:10-17). At the Triumphal Entry the religious leaders had had enough; it was time to eliminate Jesus.

In every generation there will be those who oppose the teaching of Christ. Oftentimes the opposition will come from those who have a form of religion, but not biblical Christianity. As Jesus walked with the disciples He was able to point out both the error and those who were propagating the error.

The knowledge the disciples gained through instruction was illustrated in real life. This training was not only beneficial when the disciples walked with Jesus, it was critical as they continued ministry when Jesus was no longer walking by their side. The book of Acts is a historical account of the faithfulness of these disciples in the midst of great opposition.

### *Instruction About Compassion*

Being a pastor is not exclusively standing behind a lectern teaching. Teaching is absolutely critical to our work, but our teaching must be motivated, at least in part, by compassion for people.

Consider the time when Jesus was traveling through Samaria. He could have gone another way. When he encountered the Samaritan

woman He could have ignored her, which would have been the culturally appropriate thing to do. He knew her history so He could have belittled her. But no, Jesus showed compassion. He was kind, yet honest. He knew her wickedness, but also the grace that she desperately needed (Jn 4:7-42). What a great lesson for the disciples. It was shocking to them that Jesus spoke with this woman. What an excellent example for the disciples to learn about God's love for people.

After Jesus called Levi to be His disciple, Levi gave a reception for his friends—a group of tax collectors. The scribes and Pharisees were in disbelief that Jesus would associate with such people. Jesus explained that He came to care for the sick and needy. He came to call sinners to repentance (Lk 5:27-32).

As Jesus traveled around the country and saw the tremendous needs of the people, He had compassion for them. The people were “distressed and dispirited like sheep without a shepherd.” The needs were so great and the workers so few that Jesus encouraged the disciples to pray that God would send more workers into the harvest (Mt 9:35-38).

Jesus had compassion for those who were hungry (Mk 8:2-3) and for those who had lost loved ones (Lk 7:11-16). He genuinely cared about people's physical challenges, but primarily He cared for their spiritual condition.

How vital it is that we help young pastors to see people as our Lord sees them. Biblical shepherding is compassionate shepherding. As Christians we must follow our Lord's pattern, demonstrating concern for the physical difficulties people face without losing sight of their spiritual needs.

#### *Instruction on Prayer*

Prayer was a significant part of Jesus' life. He demonstrated, through His pattern of life, how important prayer was in His relationship with the Father (Mt 14:19,23; 26:36; Mk 6:46; Lk 3:21; 5:16; 6:12; 9:18).

We have examples of Jesus praying in private as well as in public. He would go away to spend the entire night in prayer. The High Priestly prayer is recorded for us in John 17. And Jesus also instructed the disciples on how to pray (Mt 6:5-13).

When He was facing His last hours in this life, Jesus prayed an agonizing prayer. He also instructed the disciples to watch and pray. Each time

He returned the disciples had fallen asleep (Mt 26:36-46). No doubt this was another lesson that remained with the disciples the rest of their lives.

#### *Instruction on Servanthood*

From the very beginning of Jesus' ministry, it was clear that He came as a Servant. Mark 10:45 says that Jesus did not come to be served, but to serve. Jesus took on humanity and became a bondservant (Phil 2:5-8). When Jesus came to the end of His life on this earth, He washed the disciples' feet (Jn 13:13-17).

At one point the disciples were arguing about which of them was the greatest. Jesus used this teaching moment to explain that the one who is greatest must actually be the servant of all (Lk 22:24-30; Mk 9:35; 10:44-45). This teaching was certainly not what they expected! When Jesus washed the disciples' feet He instructed them to wash one another's feet (Jn 13:13-17). In other words, they needed to sacrificially serve one another.

Isaiah 53 is a vivid picture of the suffering Servant: the One who humbled Himself and became obedient to death, even death on a cross (Phil 2:8). He demonstrated how to live as a servant and instructed His disciples to live in the same way.

#### *Instruction that Would Be Understood Later*

If you are a parent, you understand how this works. There are some things that you explain to your children that they will not comprehend until later in life. In a similar way Jesus would teach the disciples about things that they would come to understand at a later date.

When Jesus said, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up,” the disciples did not understand. It was not until after the resurrection that they remembered what Jesus said. Then they understood the meaning (Jn 2:19-22).

The disciples did not understand the Triumphal Entry until after Jesus was glorified. Then they remembered these events and understood their purpose (Jn 12:12-16).

Part of training is teaching things that our disciples may not fully understand until later. That is why a person needs to be instructed. Their knowledge and experience will develop over the course of time.

### *Instruction Concerning What Is to Come*

The disciples had certain expectations about the future that were not accurate. Jesus had to correct their thinking and help them understand that God's ways and man's ways are often different.

The disciples enjoyed a very special relationship with the Lord. They were not expecting that Jesus would suffer and die. Jesus reminded them repeatedly of what was coming (Mt 16:21; 20:17-19; 26:1-2; Mk 9:31-32; 10:32-34; Lk 9:43-45; 18:31-34).

Jesus told the disciples that He must leave, but the Holy Spirit would be coming (Jn 14:16-17, 16:7-11).

Jesus also explained to the disciples some of the events that could be expected on this earth in the future (Mt 24-25; Mk 13; Lk 21).

We do not have the ability to prophesy concerning what is to come, but we can certainly help our disciples understand what the Bible says we can expect in the future. We must teach them to live in anticipation of our Lord's glorious return (Jn 14:3; 1 Thes 4:13-17). We must also remind them that things on this earth are going to deteriorate substantially (2 Tim 3:1-5). A proper perspective of the future can protect a person from getting discouraged in the ministry.

### **Jesus Prioritized Interaction with His Disciples**

Jesus not only instructed His disciples through His teaching and example, but He also prioritized interacting with His disciples so He could discern and deepen their understanding and more carefully shape their character.

### *Jesus Responded to the Disciples' Questions*

One of the great opportunities the disciples had was to ask Jesus questions. What a privilege to be able to bring up issues with the Lord and learn how He would respond!

When Jesus spoke in parables the disciples were often confused and asked for clarification. On one hand they wondered why Jesus would use parables at all. On the other hand they struggled to understand the meaning of some of the parables (Mt 13:10, 36).

The disciples had questions about many things, including:

- Why do the scribes say that Elijah must come first? (Mt 17:10)
- Why couldn't we drive out the demons? (Mt 17:19)
- Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? (Mt 18:1)
- How often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? (Mt 18:21)
- What will there be for us since we left everything to follow you? (Mt 19:27)
- How did the fig tree wither? (Mt 21:20)
- When will be the end of the age? (Mt 24:3)
- Are you addressing this parable to us or to everyone else? (Lk 12:41)
- Did this blind man sin, or his parents? (Jn 9:1-2)
- Why wasn't this perfume sold and the money given to the poor? (Jn 12:4)
- Lord, who is going to betray you? (Jn 13:21-25)
- Lord, where are you going and why can't I follow You now? (Jn 13:36-38)

The disciples benefited immensely from being able to walk with Jesus and ask questions in the midst of the ministry. Certainly, they must have learned volumes as they encountered various circumstances and were able to get clarification from the Lord while they were still in training.

### *Jesus Asked His Disciples Questions*

Students have the privilege to ask the teacher questions, and the teacher also has the opportunity to ask the students questions. These are both great benefits in a discipleship relationship.

At one point Jesus asked the disciples who people said that He was. They replied with various answers they had heard. And then Jesus asked the disciples who they thought He was. Peter gave an excellent response to this question (Mt 16:13-16).

On another occasion Peter was asked about whether Jesus paid a certain tax or not. Jesus asked Peter what he thought. And then the Lord had Peter get the money to pay the tax from the mouth of a fish (Mt 17:24-27).

Philip was trying to sort out the difference between knowing Jesus and knowing the Father. In his confusion he asked Jesus to "show us

the Father.” Jesus responded with two questions: “Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how can you say, ‘Show us the Father?’” (Jn 14:7-9).

As Jesus was approaching the end of His ministry on this earth, He asked the disciples, “Do you now believe?” (Jn 16:31-33).

We cannot forget the questions that Jesus asked Peter after His resurrection. No doubt Peter had suffered greatly because he denied the Lord, and then the Lord asked Peter three times if he loves Him (Jn 21:15-17).

Once again, we see the value of on-the-job ministry training. Walking with the Lord, serving alongside the Lord, being taught by the Lord, having the opportunity to ask questions and to be asked questions—these are all extremely helpful in the process of getting prepared for ministry.

## Jesus Corrected His Disciples

Jesus spoke into the disciples’ lives as He walked side by side with them. He was able to see their strengths and weaknesses and to appropriately address them.

The disciples encountered a disturbing event in the course of their ministry travels. A Canaanite woman who had a demon-possessed daughter was crying out to Jesus. This was clearly irritating and frustrating the disciples. The disciples begged Jesus to send her away. After an interesting conversation between the Canaanite woman and Jesus, He healed her daughter and commended her for her faith, contrary to what the disciples thought should happen (Mt 15:22-28).

When some children were brought to Jesus so that He could lay His hands on them, the disciples rebuked them. Jesus instructed the disciples to “Let the children alone, and do not hinder them from coming to Me; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these” (Mt 19:13-15).

The disciples were indignant when a woman poured a very expensive perfume on Jesus’ head. They considered this wasteful. Jesus explained to the disciples that this woman had done a good thing, preparing Him for burial (Mt 26:7-13).

Peter had a glorious conversation with the Lord. Jesus was asking who people were saying He was. After they responded to that question,

He asked the disciples who they believed Jesus to be. Peter declared that Jesus is “the Christ, the Son of the Living God” (Mt 16:16). Shortly thereafter Jesus explained to the disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, suffer, be killed, and raised on the third day (Mt 16:21). Peter’s response was not at all what it should have been. He actually rebuked Jesus and declared that this would never happen. Jesus’ response to Peter must have been emblazoned into Peter’s memory for the rest of his life. Jesus said to Peter, “Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me; for you are not setting your mind on God’s interests, but man’s” (Mt 16:23). There is no question that this event had a profound impact on the rest of Peter’s ministry. Simply reading the epistles Peter wrote is enough to see how much Peter learned from this difficult event.

There are many other examples of Jesus correcting the disciples, such as when the disciples wanted to be the greatest (Mk 9:33-34), when they wanted to call down fire on those who would not receive Jesus (Lk 9:51-56), when Peter insisted that he would not fall away (Mk 14:29-31), when they fell asleep in the garden (Mt 26:40-45), and when Peter struck the servant with a sword (Lk 22:50-51).

Our strengths and weaknesses can be addressed when a person knows us well enough and sees us often enough to be aware of them. Apart from a significant discipleship relationship, it can be dangerously easy to be ignorant of areas that need to change in our lives. The result can be catastrophic to the future pastor, his family, and the church.

## Serving with Jesus

### Jesus Gave the Disciples Responsibility for Ministry

Equipping a man for ministry requires both knowledge and practice. Jesus taught the disciples and engaged them in ministry. It was definitely on-the-job training. Jesus gave them authority over unclean spirits and the ability to heal all kinds of disease and sickness (Mt 10:1). He appointed them to preach (Mk 3:14). After the resurrection He defined the mission they were responsible to carry out (Mt 28:18-20; Acts 1:8).

It is essential to understand that Jesus did not educate the disciples and then send them off to the ministry. He walked with them and worked with them. He gave them responsibility in ministry while He provided

the oversight. They did not get it all right, but Jesus was able to correct them and protect them.

### **Jesus Gave Some Disciples Additional Opportunities**

It is important to understand that all of the disciples did not have the same opportunities and/or responsibilities as the others. Jesus specifically chose twelve men to be His disciples, knowing that one of them was a betrayer (Jn 13:17-21). Of the twelve who were with Jesus, there were three that received additional, unique opportunities.

One of the synagogue officials named Jairus approached Jesus because his daughter was near death. He begged Jesus to come and see her. Jesus was delayed due to His ministry to an ill woman. Messengers came from Jairus' home to inform him that his daughter had died. Jesus only allowed Peter, James and John to accompany Him to Jairus' home. They were allowed to enter the room where the child had been placed. While those in attendance mocked, Jesus brought the little girl back to life (Mk 5:35-42).

Jesus only took Peter, James, and John to the Transfiguration. They had the opportunity to see Jesus in His radiant garments, and they also had the privilege to see Moses and Elijah (Mk 9:2-9).

When Jesus came to the last days of His life, He took the disciples with Him to Gethsemane. He told His disciples to sit while He went to pray. And then "He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee" (Mt 26:36-37).

God's plan for each of the disciples is unique. Of course, they had different personalities and different gifts. They would ultimately serve in different places and in different ways. Jesus equipped each of them for the work that was set before them.

### **Jesus Protected His Disciples**

One of the benefits of receiving pastoral discipleship training is the protection that is afforded the disciple. Ministry is a hard road. There are many minefields. To serve alongside a mentor can provide a measure of protection that you would not otherwise enjoy. Of course, working alongside Jesus takes this idea of protection to an entirely new level!

Remember when the disciples were in a boat with Jesus and a great storm developed. Jesus was sleeping through the storm. When the disciples woke Him up, they were in an absolute panic. Jesus "rebuked the winds and the sea, and it became perfectly calm" (Mt 8:23-26).

There was another time when Jesus sent the disciples on a boat by themselves. Once again, they encountered a great storm. It was the middle of the night when Jesus came walking on the water! Initially the disciples were terrified. When they realized it was Jesus, Peter actually stepped out of the boat into the water. Jesus had to rescue him. When Jesus entered the boat, the seas were calmed (Mt 14:22-33).

In His High Priestly Prayer, we learn that Jesus guards those who are His own so that they will not perish (Jn 17:12). When Jesus was being arrested He made certain that His disciples would not be arrested with Him (Jn 18:8-9).

Not only did Jesus protect His disciples from the circumstances of life, He also protected them from the religious leaders.

The Pharisees were disturbed that Jesus' disciples were not fasting. Jesus provided an explanation to the Pharisees (Mk 2:18-20). When the disciples were walking through the grain fields on the Sabbath they picked some of the heads of grain to eat. The Pharisees accused them of doing what was unlawful. Jesus answered their objection (Mt 12:1-7). The disciples were accused of breaking the tradition of the elders by not washing their hands when they ate bread. Once again, Jesus provided their defense with a scathing rebuke of the religious leaders (Mt 15:1-14).

Conflict in ministry is inevitable. While the disciples were learning how to deal with people in the various circumstances of ministry, Jesus protected them. At the same time, they were learning from Jesus how to stand up against those who wrongfully brought accusations against them.

### **Sent Out by Jesus**

#### **Jesus Sent the Disciples on Missions**

Jesus sent the disciples out to share the gospel. He painted a very vivid picture of the dangers they would face. In some towns they would not be welcome. There would be those in positions of authority who would op-

pose them. At the same time, there would be those who would respond favorably to the truth. Jesus gave them authority to accomplish significant things on their ministry trip. Jesus also assured them of the great care their heavenly Father would have for them (Mt 10:1-11:1).

While Jesus sent them on some very exciting missions, He also gave them some other missions that were more mundane. When Jesus was preparing for the Triumphal Entry, He instructed His disciples to go to the village where they would find a donkey with her colt. They were to untie the donkey and colt and bring them to Jesus. If anyone questioned them, they were to say “the Lord has need of them” (Mt 21:1-3; Mk 11:1-3). When it was time for the Passover, Jesus gave specific instructions to the disciples so they could make appropriate arrangements. A man carrying a pitcher of water would meet them and they must follow him to his house and ask the homeowner where the guest room is, where Jesus can eat the Passover with His disciples (Mk 14:12-14).

It is helpful for those training for ministry to understand and experience being involved in the exciting ministries of the church. It is such a privilege to share the gospel, teach God’s Word, and encourage young believers in the faith. There are also many responsibilities in ministry that are essential, but not nearly so exciting. After all, there are basic administrative duties that, left undone, could be quite detrimental to the overall ministry. These are the things that few people see. It is unlikely that you will receive accolades for doing them; nevertheless, without them the ministry would not be accomplished.

## Jesus Entrusted the Ministry to the Disciples

Before His betrayal and death Jesus prayed for His disciples (Jn 17). He was anticipating the transition when He would leave the earth and entrust the ministry to them. In His prayer He rehearsed what He had accomplished with the disciples, He prayed for them, and He made it clear that He was sending them as the Father had sent Him.

- He manifested God’s name to those whom God gave Him (6)
- He taught them about what God had given Him (7)
- He gave them God’s words (8, 14)

- He prayed that God would keep them in His name (11)
- He asked the Father that they would be unified (11)
- He guarded them while He was with them (12)
- He wanted them to have His joy (13)
- He prayed that God would keep them from the evil one (15)
- He prayed that they would be sanctified in the truth (17)
- He was sending them as the Father had sent Him (18)
- He sanctified Himself that they also may be sanctified (19)

Jesus had nearly finished His primary mission on earth. The cross would be the culmination. During the time of His ministry, He invested heavily in the lives of twelve men. One was known to be a traitor from the beginning. He would now send His disciples out to carry on the mission of the church. After His resurrection He explained the mission.

And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”  
*Matthew 28:18–20*

Their mission was to emulate their Master. Evangelism takes place but it is not an end unto itself. Discipleship is essential – that is, equipping others to carry on the ministry. The disciples are to make disciples who will in turn evangelize and make disciples. The things that they have been taught they must pass on to others. Jesus trained leaders to carry on the ministry. So, the apostles will train leaders to carry on the ministry. As disciples are trained, new churches begin and evangelism continues.

Jesus’ prayer in John 17 is not solely for the disciples. He also prayed for the believers that would come after them.

“I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me.”

*John 17:20–21*

We must seriously consider how we can emulate the Master. What were His priorities? Who did He spend time with? Who did He train? How did He teach them? What opportunities did He provide them? What did He accomplish?

## Conclusion

Life-on-life ministry training is what Jesus provided for the disciples. They walked together; they talked together; they faced challenges together. Their ministry training included instruction, but the instruction was intimately associated with the practical aspects of ministry.

Jesus taught them many lessons and they asked Jesus lots of questions. There were times when the disciples responded with perfect answers. There were other times they seemed to completely misunderstand Jesus' teaching. Jesus graciously protected them from the attacks of the religious leaders. Jesus also allowed them to fail and He kindly restored them.

Jesus only spent a few years with these disciples, and yet He prepared them for a lifetime of ministry. Of course, one of their group ended up as the betrayer—which Jesus knew all along. History shows us at least some of the impact the disciples made on this world, and the impact was immense.

If we were to judge the effectiveness of the disciples' ministries by how their lives ended, the story would be tragic. The Bible only records the account of the death of James. If the historical record is accurate, all the apostles with the exception of John died rather ignoble deaths. But that is not how we measure their lives. It is not by how they died, but by how they lived.

Jesus did not equip these men to have pleasant lives on this earth. He did not prepare them to be accepted or favored by the world. He actually painted a very grim picture of what life would be like on this earth for His followers. The training Jesus provided was real-life. It was battle-ground training. The disciples had a front-row seat as they watched how Jesus was treated. Jesus made it abundantly clear to the disciples that they would be treated in like manner. They loved Jesus and learned from Him and served Him. When He left this earth, they continued to live in

light of the training they had received. Their impact on this world is immeasurable.

There are so many lessons we can learn from the life of our Lord as it relates to training pastors. Jesus was seldom alone. He invested heavily in the lives of the disciples, giving them opportunities to serve and grow while still providing oversight and protection for them. They had the privilege to see Him in many life situations. He also had the privilege of seeing them in many life situations.

There is a place for classroom instruction, but keep in mind that discipleship is life-on-life. It is knowing someone well enough to be able to speak into their lives. It is allowing them to be close enough so they can see you in real life. They must be able to hear your teaching and see how you follow the Lord.

In the next chapter we will see how the disciples, having been equipped and sent out by Jesus, emulated their Lord by faithfully training others to carry on the ministry.

# Chapter Three

## Expanding Leadership in the Early Church

### Acts: A Picture of Expanding Leadership

Jesus began His mission by saying “Follow Me.” He called people to be His disciples and He equipped them for ministry. He entrusted the ministry to the apostles, who were to continue making disciples (Mt 28:18-20; Acts 1:2, 8). In the book of Acts the church began. It became immediately clear that the gospel was for all people: Jew and Gentile, man and woman, young and old. The apostles began by proclaiming the message of a risen Savior and the response was significant; thousands of people believed (2:41, 47; 4:4; 5:14; 6:7; 8:12; 9:42, 11:21; 17:12, 34; 18:8; 21:20).

One of the things that bewildered the religious leaders was the disciples’ lack of formal education and training (4:13). They did recognize the fact that these men had been with Jesus. The disciples were not trained in Rabbinic fashion, but they were trained. As stated in the prior chapter, Jesus taught them consistently the truths that we have in the Scriptures. Not only were they well taught, they also had a great deal of practical experience.

The disciples learned well what Jesus meant when He said, “Remember the word that I said to you, ‘A slave is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they kept My word,

they will keep yours also” (Jn 15:20). Throughout the book of Acts the disciples faithfully preach the word and are consistently opposed. The threats and beatings only make them more determined to proclaim the truth of the gospel (4:19-20, 29; 5:28-29, 40-42).

As we read through the book of Acts, the apostles follow the same pattern that they learned from the Lord Jesus. Throughout the book we learn of more and more people who are assuming roles of leadership. We see how they serve together, travel together, and assist one another. The development and growth of leaders is the result of the church functioning as the church! God calls people to Himself and gifts them. They participate in the church and associate with Christian leaders. They grow in their understanding of the truth and ministry and as a result progress in their service to the Lord. To sum it up in a very simple way, they are fulfilling the Great Commission that was entrusted to them. Disciples make disciples – including discipling those who would become pastors. There is no indication that the church is responsible to disciple general members of the congregation but another institution or organization is essential to train those who pursue pastoral ministry.

Consider the many people we are introduced to in the book of Acts, particularly leaders raised up in local churches. In Acts 4:36 we meet Barnabas, known as the “son of encouragement.” When most believers continued to be afraid of Saul after his conversion, Barnabas came alongside him and brought him to the apostles (9:27).

In Acts 6 the apostles had to deal with a dilemma. Because of the rapid growth of the church, leaders were needed to make certain the widows were properly cared for. At this very early stage of the church they were instructed to select men of “good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom...” (6:3). They selected “Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch” (6:5). The Scriptures record more information about the ministries of two of these men: Stephen and Philip. It is important to note that Christian leaders were being developed in the very early stages of the growth of the church.

Philip was one of the seven men chosen to care for the needs of the widows (6:5). He also served as a preacher. He preached to the Samaritans with great success (8:4-8). Philip was uniquely selected to preach the

gospel to the Ethiopian eunuch (8:26-39). He continued preaching to all the cities, including Caesarea (8:40).

Stephen’s ministry was short-lived, but it was profound. He was described as a man “full of grace and power” (6:8). A group of men opposed Stephen’s teaching. He boldly confronted them with the truth of God’s word, preaching a powerful message that culminated with his death (6:8-7:60).

Saul, who we know as Paul, was a well-educated man, having been trained under Gamaliel. While his education was religious, it was not theologically sound. As a result, he became a great persecutor of the church (22:3-5).

Saul was given spiritual life on the road to Damascus. Jesus said, “... for he is a chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel; for I will show him how much he must suffer for My name’s sake” (9:15-16).

After the persecution began, the church was scattered. As a result, the gospel was spread to new areas. Unnamed believers travelled to Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch preaching the word to the Jews. Some men from Cyprus and Cyrene came to Antioch preaching the Lord Jesus to the Greeks, and a large number believed (11:19-21).

When the Jerusalem church heard of the outreach to the Gentiles, they sent Barnabas, a non-apostolic representative, to visit Antioch and observe the ministry. He was a great encouragement to those who were ministering the gospel to the Gentiles (11:22-24).

Barnabas headed for Tarsus to meet with Saul. He took Saul to Antioch where they spent a year with the church and taught considerable numbers (11:25-26). The prophet Agabus indicated that a great famine would be coming to the entire world (11:28). Barnabas and Saul received a collection from the *disciples* and took it to the *elders* in Judea (11:29-30).

There were a number of leaders in the church at Antioch: Barnabas, Simeon, Lucius, Manaen, and Saul. As they were serving the Lord and fasting, they were instructed to set apart Barnabas and Saul for the work which God called them to (13:2-3). It is of note that these men were sent out by the church as they began their first missionary journey.

The ministry was continuing to expand. Barnabas and Saul returned to Jerusalem at the end of their mission. They took John with them (12:24-25). They traveled to Salamis where they were proclaiming the word to

the Jews. John was assisting them (13:5). When Paul and his companions left for Perga, John decided to head back to Jerusalem (13:13). We are not told why John chose to return to Jerusalem, but this did create a rift between Barnabas and Paul.

Paul and Barnabas continued to serve the Lord together (13:42-43). The Jews rejected the message so they began their ministry to the Gentiles (13:46). In the midst of their sufferings, Paul and Barnabas appointed elders in every church (14:23). In Acts 14:28 it states that Paul and Barnabas spent a “long time with the disciples.”

Paul and Barnabas engaged with the Jerusalem church concerning the issue of circumcision. Both the apostles and the elders participated in these discussions (15:2).

The church, including the apostles and elders, decided to send men with Paul and Barnabas to communicate the decision concerning circumcision. They sent Judas called Barsabbas and Silas. They are described as leading men among the brethren and prophets (15:22; 32). We know nothing more about Judas. Silas is mentioned often in the Scriptures.

On the second missionary journey, Barnabas wanted to take John Mark along. Paul considered him a deserter and had no desire to include him. They disagreed so vehemently that Barnabas took Mark and headed for Cyprus while Paul chose Silas and headed for Syria (15:36-41). It is important to note that all of these men continued to serve the Lord.

When Paul came to Derbe and Lystra, he met a disciple named Timothy. We are given a brief introduction to Timothy (16:1-3). We will see the tremendous impact Paul had on Timothy when we consider the pastoral epistles.

Paul and Silas continued on the second missionary journey together. They suffered considerable mistreatment and had to move from one city to the next (ch 16-17). Timothy was also part of this missionary trip (17:15).

We are introduced to Aquila and Priscilla in Acts 18:2. Paul traveled with them to Syria (18:18). Priscilla and Aquila helped Apollos, a disciple of John, who was mighty in the Scriptures. He needed to understand the way of God more accurately (18:24-26).

Paul sent Timothy and Erastus to Macedonia while he stayed in Asia for a while (19:22). Gaius and Aristarchus were Paul’s traveling companions (19:29) on the third missionary journey.

Paul set sail for Syria accompanied by Sopater of Berea, Aristarchus and Secundus of the Thessalonians, Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy, and Tychicus and Trophimus of Asia. These had gone on ahead and were waiting in Troas (20:4-6).

Paul met with the Ephesian elders. He encouraged them and gave some final instructions as they continued to shepherd the flock (20:17).

Paul reported about his work to James and all the elders in Jerusalem. The leaders were concerned about the accusations that were being made about Paul, so they encouraged him to take a vow and purify himself, which he did (21:18-24).

On Paul’s trip to Italy he was accompanied by Aristarchus, a Macedonian of Thessalonica (27:2).

The book of Acts provides a history of the beginning of the church. The apostles faithfully preached the word in the midst of great opposition. Thousands upon thousands of people responded to the gospel. The apostles continued to disciple believers. They traveled together, served together, taught together, and suffered together. As a result, people were saved, believers discipled, pastors equipped, churches planted, elders appointed, and the cycle continues. The book of Acts is a picture of the Great Commission in action.

There was not a process outside the context of the church that was necessary to equip men for leadership, including pastoral leadership. When the church functions as God has ordained, leadership is developed as part of the process of discipleship. When you read through the book of Acts, notice how much life-on-life activity was taking place. Seldom did Christian leaders travel alone. They were constantly training other leaders.

It is dangerously easy for Christian leaders to live lives that are relatively isolated from the church they serve. They try to accomplish ministry at “arm’s length.” That is not an accurate picture of biblical discipleship. We must be with people. They must see us as we live life. While some discipleship training can take place in a classroom, it cannot be isolated to a classroom. Consider the investment Jesus made in the lives of His disciples. Consider how leadership was developed in the book of Acts. Are we willing to invest in the same way in order to train pastors for the next generation?

## The Pastoral Epistles: Instruction for Expanding Leadership

Paul was an apostle, but uniquely so, since he did not walk with Jesus during His earthly ministry. Paul came to know the Lord on the road to Damascus. He called himself the least of all the apostles because he persecuted the church of God (1 Cor 15:8-9). Paul was the author of what are known as the pastoral epistles—1st and 2nd Timothy and Titus. These letters were written to provide guidance, encouragement, and warning to young pastors. Timothy was ministering in Ephesus and Titus in Crete.

While the apostle Paul did not walk with the Lord when He was on this earth, he did continue to follow the pattern that our Lord established in discipling leaders. He also encouraged young pastors to follow the same pattern. These letters explain the biblical principles for expanding church leadership that are pictured in the book of Acts.

The apostle Paul is very clear that it is God who chooses and gifts a man to be a pastor. He self-identifies as “an apostle of Christ Jesus according to the commandment of God our Savior” (1 Tim 1:1) and “by the will of God” (2 Tim 1:1). He also states that he has been entrusted with the glorious gospel (1 Tim 1:11). Paul acknowledges that it is God who has put him into service (1 Tim 1:12), appointing him as a preacher and an apostle of the gospel to the Gentiles (1 Tim 2:7; 2 Tim 1:11).

Jesus told His followers “follow Me.” Paul encourages his fellow believers and disciples to imitate his life. In 1 Timothy Paul shares some of his testimony. He refers to himself as the foremost of sinners. He also explains that God saved him so that “Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience as an example for those who would believe in Him for eternal life” (1 Tim 1:12-16). Paul encourages Timothy to suffer for the gospel (2 Tim 1:8, 2:3). He tells him to “retain the standard of sound words which you have heard from me” (2 Tim 1:13). Paul acknowledges that while the false teachers had chosen to go their own way, Timothy followed Paul’s “teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, patience, love, perseverance, persecutions, and sufferings...” (2 Tim 3:10-11).

Outside of the pastoral epistles Paul often emphasizes this same pattern. He encourages the Corinthian believers to imitate his life as he imitates Christ (1 Cor 4:16, 11:1). He asks the Philippian believers to follow his example and observe others who walk according to the same pattern

(Phil 3:17). He specifically asks them to practice what they have learned and received and heard and seen in Paul’s life (Phil 4:9). Paul commends the Thessalonian believers for imitating his suffering with the joy of the Holy Spirit (1 Thes 1:6) and he reminds them that they were aware of the need to follow Paul’s disciplined example because he was a model for them (2 Thes 3:7-9).

While Paul was set apart for gospel ministry in a very unique way, all men who serve as pastors must also be called and gifted for this purpose. Paul reminds Timothy about his calling and the affirmation of the church (1 Tim 1:18, 4:14, 6:12; 2 Tim 1:6). Timothy is encouraged to guard that which has been entrusted to him (1 Tim 6:20; 2 Tim 1:14). In Ephesians 4:11 Paul reminds us that it is God who appoints all leaders in the church.

Both Titus and Timothy are instructed to be well-versed in the Scriptures. Paul tells Timothy that if he instructs believers in the truth he will be a good servant of Christ Jesus who is nourished on the “words of the faith and of the sound doctrine” (1 Tim 4:6). He is also to pay attention to both his life and teaching (1 Tim 4:16). It is essential that the preacher is teaching what is accurate and that he is living out what he teaches. He is to “retain the standard of sound words” that the apostle Paul entrusted him with (2 Tim 1:13), and he is to “guard, through the Holy Spirit” the treasure he has been given (2 Tim 1:14). Paul emphasizes the importance of being diligent students and accurate teachers of the word (2 Tim 2:15, 3:15-17, 4:2). They are to “prescribe and teach” the things that are consistent with sound doctrine (1 Tim 4:11; Tit 1:9, 2:1).

Pastors must be diligent students of the word so they can instruct believers concerning the Christian life. They must also be able to deal with the constant onslaught of false teaching. It is remarkable how many times Paul refers to false teaching in these brief letters (1 Tim 1:3-4, 6-7, 19-20; 4:1-3; 6:3-5, 20-21; 2 Tim 3:1-9, 13; 4:3-4; Tit 1:10-16; 3:9-11). We must never undervalue the need for pastors to be well-grounded in doctrine.

Paul reminds his disciples what they can expect as they serve the Lord. Paul asks Timothy to join with him in his suffering. He also makes it clear that the suffering he faces is directly related to his ministry (2 Tim 1:8-12). As a soldier can expect suffering, so a good soldier of Jesus Christ can expect the same (2 Tim 2:3-4). Paul’s suffering, including imprisonment as a criminal, is a result of gospel ministry. Yet Paul is confident

that this will not restrict the gospel ministry in any way. In fact, Paul is willing to endure anything in this life for the advancement of the gospel and the salvation of souls (2 Tim 2:8-10). Paul even goes so far as to say that anyone who is committed to godly living will be persecuted (2 Tim 3:12). This must be the case, knowing that the gospel light confronts a sinful world. With this idea of suffering in mind, Paul exhorts Timothy to “endure hardship” (2 Tim 4:5).

Paul instructs both Timothy and Titus on the qualifications for leaders (1 Tim 3:1-13; Tit 1:5-9). In 1 Timothy 3:15 Paul says he is providing this information so that they will “know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God.” In Titus 1:5 Titus is instructed to appoint elders in every city as Paul had directed him.

As God grows His church, He gifts men who will become the leaders. These men are identified by the biblical qualifications that we have been given. As pastors, we disciple these gifted men so they can fulfill their biblical responsibility.

And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.

*Ephesians 4:11-13*

God is the One who gives the leaders to the church, but as we have seen in the book of Acts and now in the pastoral epistles, leaders are equipped through the discipleship ministry of the church. Leaders in the church ought to always be looking for and identifying men who are potential leaders. The church must be prepared to equip men in the church for the ministry of the church.

The apostle Paul was very intentional in training men for ministry. As we have seen, this means that men have to be carefully taught doctrine. They have to serve alongside others who can disciple them. They need to experience ministry and be guided in ministry. They should enjoy some of the great joys of ministry; they must also understand the incredible challenges in ministry.

Paul would often describe the ministry as a fight. He tells Timothy to “fight the good fight” (1 Tim 1:18) and later he instructs him to “fight

the good fight of faith” (1 Tim 6:12). When Paul finished writing his last letter, these are some of the last words that he records:

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.

*2 Timothy 4:7-8*

Paul came to the end of his life knowing that God allowed him to participate in training men who would carry on the ministry. Paul disciplined men to be pastors and he instructed them to train more pastors.

Paul reminded Timothy that, even though he was young, he was to be an example in “speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity” (1 Tim 4:12). He also reminded Titus that he must be an example “of good deeds, with purity in doctrine, dignified, sound in speech which is beyond reproach” (Tit 2:7-8). Living out faithful testimonies provides a pattern for believers to follow and prevents the unbeliever from leveling true accusations against Christian leaders.

Paul also instructed Timothy to carry on the same pattern of training men for ministry.

You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

*2 Timothy 2:1*

Paul first exhorts Timothy to “be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.” This is an interesting statement. What exactly does it mean to be *strong in grace*?

Reading this letter, it does appear that Timothy struggled with some insecurities. Paul already told him to “kindle afresh the gift of God which is in you” (2 Tim 1:6). Paul reminds Timothy that God has “not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline” (2 Tim 1:7). Timothy has faced suffering in his service and Paul assures him that this suffering is according to the power of God (2 Tim 1:8). Paul also encourages Timothy with the fact that God saved him, not by works, “but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim 1:9).

When we come to 2 Timothy 2, Paul emphasizes the fact that our strength is not innate. Because of this, none of us are sufficient for the

task. Our strength comes to us from the “grace that is in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim 2:1). Grace is the divine favor that comes upon the children of God. It can never be deserved and can never be earned. It is the provision of God that comes to us through Christ. He alone is sufficient for the task that God puts before us.

Paul lays the challenge before Timothy. As Paul has poured into his life, so he must invest in the lives of others. It is clear that Paul wants Timothy to actively and intentionally train leaders for the church.

The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. *2 Timothy 2:2*

Paul impressed upon Timothy his sacred responsibility to train faithful men who will be able to teach other faithful men. It is undeniable that if we fail in this task, the impact to the church will be immeasurable.

Our Lord set the example. While He accomplished many things during His stay upon this earth, there were clearly two primary tasks He fulfilled. The cross is certainly the focus of His purpose. Without His sacrificial death and resurrection, everything else would be meaningless. He also actively and thoroughly trained men for their critical responsibilities in the leadership of the church.

The book of Acts provides a clear picture of the importance of leadership development in the life of the church. The apostles carried on their mission, proclaiming the gospel and discipling men for ministry. This is the only way the church could expand from a small group of believers to thousands. It began in a relatively small geographic area and began to spread across the known world.

The apostle Paul understood the need to disciple leaders in the church. Not only does he charge Timothy with the same responsibility, he provides very clear instructions on how this should be done. In the following chapters we will consider the practical responsibility we have to train pastors for future generations.

# Chapter Four

## Biblical Qualifications for the Pastorate

### Identifying Qualified Men

The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. *2 Timothy 2:2*

This verse provides the pattern that is essential for every church. Pastors/elders must be constantly about the business of identifying faithful men who can be entrusted with the great truths of Scripture and who will in turn teach other faithful men. This is how the ministry is perpetuated. This is the fulfillment of the Great Commission.

Many churches have very little to do with identifying and equipping leaders in the church, for the church. Ironically, when it comes to training men for pastoral ministry, many churches feel like they are satisfying their biblical responsibility by providing a recommendation for a seminary and possibly providing some financial support. Churches must take a much more active role in training men for leadership, including pastoral leadership.

There has been a strong influence in our culture that may give church leadership the impression that they are not capable of equipping men for

pastoral ministry. Yet when you look at the Scriptures, the church is the place where leadership is developed. Pastors are responsible to disciple future pastors. Just as Paul instructed Timothy, we are to “be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim 2:1), knowing that God will be more than sufficient for the task that He has placed before us.

The apostle Paul gave both Timothy and Titus a list of specific qualifications that they should be aware of when considering a man for the position of overseer/pastor. They were given this information because it was their responsibility to identify and equip men for this ministry.

It is a trustworthy statement: if any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires to do. An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but gentle, peaceable, free from the love of money. He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity (but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?), and not a new convert, so that he will not become conceited and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil. And he must have a good reputation with those outside the church, so that he will not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

*1 Timothy 3:1-7*

...namely, if any man is above reproach, the husband of one wife, having children who believe, not accused of dissipation or rebellion. For the overseer must be above reproach as God’s steward, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, not fond of sordid gain, but hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, just, devout, self-controlled, holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.

*Titus 1:6-9*

Consider the qualifications for an overseer (equivalent to pastor/elder):

Above reproach	Gentle
The husband of one wife	Peaceable
Temperate	Loving what is good
Self-controlled	Free from the love of money
Sensible	Not fond of sordid gain
Just	A good manager of his household
Not self-willed	Keeping his children under control with all dignity
Prudent	Having children who believe (who are faithful)
Respectable	Not a new convert
Devout	A good reputation with those outside the church
Hospitable	Able to exhort in sound doctrine
Able to teach	Able to refute those who contradict
Not addicted to wine	Holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching
Not accused of dissipation	
Not accused of rebellion	
Not pugnacious	
Not quick-tempered	

A man’s character will be revealed as he is being disciplined in the context of the church. When he is serving alongside a Christian leader, the leader has the opportunity and responsibility to get to know him well. He will get to know him inside and outside the church. He will also have the opportunity to get to know his family. There is no such thing as the mass production of pastors. It is an intentional, methodical process. The leaders of the church must be intensively involved in the training process because they are the ones who must one day affirm a man’s call and giftedness for ministry.

The ability to teach is a requirement for those who will be pastors/elders. It is amazing how many men are sent to seminary without any affirmation of their ability to teach. In fact, they will often not have an opportunity to have their teaching evaluated until their last year of seminary.

It is important to consider what it means to be able to teach. Keep in mind that all the elders in a church are required to be able to teach.

But for the primary teaching elder, a substantial part of his role will be teaching.

The elders who rule well are to be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching.  
*1 Timothy 5:17*

So, what is required for a man to be qualified as one who is able to teach? There are certain non-negotiable requirements that are associated with being able to teach:

- He must be theologically astute.

Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.  
*2 Timothy 2:15*

- He must be able to teach sound doctrine and defend the faith.

...holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.  
*Titus 1:9*

- He must always be ready to instruct the church. He must also be able to patiently minister to people in the midst of their circumstances.

...preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction.  
*2 Timothy 4:2*

- His teaching and lifestyle must match.

Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things, for as you do this you will ensure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you.  
*1 Timothy 4:16*

- He must be able to gently correct those who are in opposition so they can repent.

The Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth...

*2 Timothy 2:24-25*

- He must be able to disciple other faithful men.

The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.  
*2 Timothy 2:2*

Being able to teach is first and foremost about knowing what the Bible teaches and being able to communicate what it teaches in an understandable way. It must first be applied to the preacher's life. Then he can communicate it to fellow believers as well as to the unsaved. Protecting the flock from false teaching is a major responsibility, so he must always be learning and he must constantly be prepared to clearly defend doctrine.

It is important to note that the Bible does not establish guidelines for "able to teach" that reflect how often a man should teach, how large a group he should be able to teach, how formal or informal the setting should be, etc. Specific teaching needs and opportunities will vary from church to church. We must be careful to qualify a man based on what the teacher must be capable of accomplishing if he is a pastor/elder. We must also keep in mind that Paul was very clear that not all teachers would have the same abilities or responsibilities (1 Tim 5:17).

Paul reminds us that Timothy was identified and affirmed by the church.

Do not neglect the spiritual gift within you, which was bestowed on you through prophetic utterance with the laying on of hands by the presbytery.  
*1 Timothy 4:14*

For I am mindful of the sincere faith within you, which first dwelt in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am sure that it is in you as well. For this reason I remind you to kindle afresh the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands.  
*2 Timothy 1:5-6*

The process for training men for pastoral ministry is that faithful men who are serving the Lord identify and train faithful men for this same purpose. Faithful men are identified as they are discipled and as they begin using their gifts in the ministry. This is not intended to be a quick process. The church leaders and the congregation ought to know someone well enough in many contexts to affirm their giftedness and qualifications for ministry.

As Paul writes this letter, he reminds Timothy that there have been many defectors. All who were in Asia turned away from Paul, including Phygelus and Hermogenes (2 Tim 1:15). Hymenaeus and Philetus had gone away from the truth, saying the resurrection had already taken place (2 Tim 2:17-18). Demas loved this present world and deserted Paul (2 Tim 4:10). With this in mind, Paul wants Timothy to understand that it is essential to train faithful men who will be able to continue teaching more faithful men. Godly leaders are critical for the growth and health of the church.

When Paul instructs Timothy concerning elders, he includes this warning:

Do not lay hands upon anyone too hastily and thereby share responsibility for the sins of others; keep yourself free from sin.

*1 Timothy 5:22*

This is a serious reminder. Gospel ministry is extremely important and is not to be entered into lightly. There is a great responsibility placed on the church to carefully evaluate a man and only affirm him if he meets the biblical qualifications.

In James there is a great reminder that the one who teaches will incur a stricter judgment (Jas 3:1). In Hebrews we are reminded that church leaders will give an account for their care of the souls that God entrusts to them (Heb 13:17). These are weighty matters that should be of great concern and interest to the church.

Many churches and pastors are rightly very excited when a man expresses a desire for ministry. But this excitement should never be an excuse to fail to properly evaluate a man's character and gifting.

It is also important to understand that the qualifications for the office of pastor/elder in Titus 1 and 1 Timothy 3 do not encompass all the requirements given in Scripture. There are other passages that emphasize specific responsibilities that are associated with this position.

- A shepherd's heart is critical to the office, as well as a man's motives for serving.

Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as your fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed, shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock. *1 Peter 5:1-3*

- A potential pastor/elder must be obedient to the Great Commission.

And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." *Matthew 28:18-20*

- He must be a diligent student of God's Word.

Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth. *2 Timothy 2:15*

- He must pay attention to his own soul and he must be prepared for battle. There will be opposition outside the church and opposition inside the church.

"Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them." *Acts 20:28-30*

This is not an exhaustive list. It is intended to be a reminder that a man might meet the qualifications in Titus 1 and 1 Timothy 3 and still not be qualified to be a pastor/elder. There are many responsibilities that fall on the shoulders of those who are in leadership. They must be considered when determining if a man is qualified for the office of pastor/elder. Training pastors in the context of the local church provides the opportunity for further evaluation of these qualifications so the one who is trained can ultimately be whole-heartedly affirmed by the local church and its leaders.

## Chapter Five

### Seminary Training

To be clear, my concern for training men for pastoral ministry in the local church is not an assault on higher education. There are a number of very good seminaries with godly men who faithfully teach God's word. There are men I respect greatly who serve in quality seminaries, and I have many friends who have benefited immensely from their seminary training.

My concern is that many churches have completely abrogated their responsibility to train men for pastoral ministry. They limit their responsibility to writing a letter of recommendation to a seminary and possibly providing some measure of financial support.

Seminaries can also, intentionally or not, give the impression that churches don't have what it takes to train men for pastoral ministry. Seminaries often recruit some of the greatest academic minds—men who have concentrated their studies in specific theological disciplines. A pastor is not likely able to compete academically at the same level.

Nonetheless, the biblical model clearly establishes the church as the primary place where we are to train men for ministry. The church is responsible to identify faithful men and, ultimately, to affirm their giftedness and qualifications. This can best be accomplished by discipling them in the context of the church. This does not mean that seminary cannot be used, but it does mean that it is carefully considered in relation to a much broader and more defined ministry training plan.

There are various different seminary models, so addressing benefits and dangers can be a bit of a hazard. There can always be exceptions and I do not intend to paint everyone with the same stroke.

## Benefits of Theologically Sound Seminary Training

There are many benefits to such training:

- You might be studying under some of the most academically gifted men in their field.
- A variety of classes are provided that will likely include topics such as theology, preaching, biblical languages, counseling, discipleship, etc.
- There is a general consistency in the doctrinal positions of the professors.
- Oftentimes the professors either are or have been pastors.
- There is a genuine commitment to provide students with excellent training in their doctrinal studies.
- The relationships developed with both professors and students can last a lifetime.
- Graduation assures a church of the quality of academic training you have received.
- Graduation assures a church of the breadth of the instruction you have received.
- Churches will have a good idea of your doctrinal position based on the school you attend.
- Many churches will not consider a man for pastoral ministry without a seminary degree.
- It is unlikely that any single pastor would be so well-equipped that they would be strong in all the disciplines that are taught in a seminary by the variety of faculty.
- There are church-based seminaries or extension campuses that make it possible to stay involved in your church while attending seminary.
- Some seminaries allow local church pastors to participate in some of the instruction.

- Some seminaries have designed their degree program so that a man can stay in his church and fulfill a great deal of his graduation requirements through distance classes. You might have to be on campus for just a few weeks a year.

We live in a time when there are many options available for accomplishing our academic objectives. This actually makes it much easier for churches to assume the primary responsibility for training men without the need to completely abandon the possibility of formal education.

## Dangers of Traditional Seminary-Focused Training

Some of the weaknesses of the traditional seminary model are actually being addressed in some of the newer models. When I say “traditional seminary model” I am speaking of a brick and mortar seminary, where typically the student leaves his church, moves his family to a new location for 3-4 years, then graduates and pursues a pastoral position.

Some of the challenges with this model are simply related to the practical realities of attending seminary:

- The cost of attending seminary is substantial. Many students finish school with debt. Some may not be able to attend due to the cost.
- Many men who are gifted for pastoral ministry do not have the ability to make a major move and spend several years in full-time school.

Other dangers of this academic model of training include:

- Many seminaries are under the oversight of secular institutions in order to be accredited. Therefore, the number of classes and hours required are not always driven by what is essential for pastoral ministry, but by what is necessary to meet accreditation standards.
- A man may believe that his ability to excel academically is an affirmation of his calling. This can be tragic when he assumes a pastoral position, only to find that God has not gifted him for this role.

- A man may not receive input as he participates in ministry, only as he learns about ministry. When he does receive feedback, it is not typically in real ministry settings but in the context of a seminary class.
- Churches that send their men to a seminary to be trained seldom have them return to their church.
- Church leadership may have no role in affirming the giftedness and qualifications of a man.
- Pastors can easily fail to be responsible to actively teach faithful men to teach faithful men.
- Men miss out on the opportunity to be discipled by a pastor, experiencing both theological training and practical experience.

## Limitations of Seminary Training

I am sure that all seminaries would desire their men to be serving in church roles that would help them be equipped for ministry while studying, but this is not always practical. How many positions are available in the general area of a seminary for men to be legitimately trained by the pastor and elders of a church? Many men, in an effort to serve somewhere, spend their seminary years teaching children's classes. While it is helpful for pastors to have this experience as well as a heart for the variety of ages in the church, teaching only in that venue for the duration of seminary training is probably not going to adequately prepare a man for future pastoral ministry.

While developing a solid theological foundation is vitally important, there are many other things that are also essential, including developing shepherding skills, learning how to live as a servant, learning how to administrate a church, functioning well with an elder board, dealing with the difficult circumstances that are always part of church life, ministering to people who are suffering, learning how to suffer well, and working side by side with a pastor and elders who can impart wisdom in the process of training. There are many things that can only be learned by being actively involved in a church that takes training seriously.

Our culture has followed the secular trends, such that churches often won't consider hiring a man for pastoral ministry without a seminary

education. Consider how many New Testament leaders would not be considered for ministry opportunities because they don't meet the cultural expectations of traditional education. After all, this was one of the concerns expressed by the religious leaders of Jesus' day.

While preaching is one of the primary responsibilities of a pastor, oftentimes the preaching classes are offered during the last year of seminary. Students are typically evaluated in the seminary classroom setting. They are almost never evaluated teaching a class in a church setting. While I have often heard seminary students refer to other students in their preaching classes who were not able to teach, I have never heard of one who was encouraged to drop out of seminary for this reason. After all, if the preaching class is in the last year of seminary, they have already invested a huge amount of time, money, and effort to prepare for the pastorate.

If a man leaves his church to attend seminary, how can a church ultimately affirm his giftedness and qualifications for ministry? As a general rule, the next step after seminary is a pastoral position.

There are many things that can only be accomplished in the context of the church. The seminary cannot, in the best-case scenario, provide the practical training that can only be received in the local church.

There are some seminaries that have recognized these challenges and are providing avenues to benefit the church by offering seminary classes remotely. Some seminaries are providing distance locations for training so men do not have to move away from their home church to attend seminary. Some seminaries offer extension classes with a moderate amount of time required on campus. Others have designed two-way communications so that classes can be taught from one location to a variety of locations, giving men the opportunity to benefit from this academic education without leaving their churches.

Of course, we must keep in mind that just because a church can benefit from a seminary in their area, and possibly even on their church campus, does not mean the church is providing the practical training and discipleship that are necessary to equip a pastor. Academic training often takes such precedence that, while pastoral discipleship may be encouraged, there is very little effort to make certain a man is experiencing all the areas of ministry that will profoundly help him in the pastorate.

It is also important to note that seminary training is not biblically required for a man to become a pastor. Don't misunderstand. The reli-

gious leaders in Jesus' day described the disciples as uneducated and untrained men. It is true that they were not trained in the rabbinic tradition, but they were both taught and trained. When I suggest that seminary is not biblically required to become a pastor, I am not suggesting that we should put uneducated and untrained men in the pulpit. I am suggesting we train them in the same manner the Lord trained the apostles, and the apostles trained their disciples, which is the pattern we have been given to train disciples. Seminary may be part of this training but it is not biblically mandated.

A man does not necessarily have to go to seminary to gain these truths and have them firmly lodged in his heart and mind. God's 'apostolic succession' is faithful men training faithful men in the unadulterated gospel. Multiplying faithful men is God's time-honored method.<sup>1</sup>

At the same time, if a pastor can train a man in the context of the church and still provide academic opportunities where the man can benefit from gifted theologians who can richly bless him with the great truths of Scripture, this could be a great opportunity!

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<sup>1</sup>*Dear Timothy*, Founders Press, Edited by Thomas K. Ascol, p. 315, Section written by Steve Martin

## Chapter Six

### Pastoral Training in the Church

The pattern of Scripture is that men are trained for ministry as we faithfully fulfill the Great Commission. We must be busy sharing the gospel. By God's grace, people will be saved. God will gift individuals to fulfill every role needed for the health of the church. Through the discipleship process we teach our fellow believers all that God has commanded. Those who are called by God for pastoral ministry will demonstrate both giftedness and the biblical qualifications that God has established. As they mature in their faith and are affirmed by the church, they will eventually be able to assume the pastoral role. For this to work as God has designed, the church and its leaders must take seriously their role in biblical discipleship.

#### The Importance of Sound Leadership in the Church

##### Biblically Qualified Leadership

It is extremely important to have biblically qualified elders, both for the health of the church as well as the training of men. The elders will play a critical role in both training and modeling what it means to be a leader in the church. They will also be affirming the call and giftedness of a man. This necessitates that they are qualified for this task.

The process for selecting elders in many churches is based on recommendations from the congregation and a church vote. Unfortunately,

ly, many times the identification and selection of elders is not based on biblical qualifications. It is actually based more on the length of time in the church, business acumen, personality, etc. If you are a theologically sound pastor with elders who are not qualified, your first job is to train your elders.

### Theological Depth of Leadership

The pastor and elders must be theologically astute. When you assume responsibility to train someone, you must have the theological knowledge and resources to be of benefit to the trainee. This responsibility is such that many choose to avoid it altogether by allowing others to impart the theological training. It is certainly not wrong to use appropriate resources when training, but consider again the pattern in the Bible.

The apostle Paul was very clear with Timothy. He told him that he must “retain the standard of sound words” that he had heard from Paul (2 Tim 1:13). When Paul says *retain* he is emphasizing the need to possess or hold on to. The pastor must learn theology for the sake of his own ministry and for the purpose of equipping others for ministry. Furthermore, Paul instructs Timothy to “guard, through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us, the treasure which has been entrusted to you” (2 Tim 1:14). He is to keep watch over and protect both the integrity of the gospel message and all of Scripture.

As you read the epistles Paul wrote to Timothy it is clear that Timothy is feeling somewhat overwhelmed with the ministry responsibilities. Many men have turned from the faith. Paul continues to suffer immensely because of his faith and, in 2 Timothy, Paul is preparing to die. Timothy is facing his own suffering and ministry challenges. In the midst of it all, Paul did not excuse him from the weighty responsibility to know the Scriptures and train faithful men. In fact, he passionately appeals to Timothy to stand strong in the ministry and invest well in the lives of faithful men.

As pastors, we must be committed to train men for leadership. Such a commitment necessitates a serious effort to continue learning and growing in our knowledge and understanding of Scripture. Of course, when you think about it, these are wonderful pursuits!

### Unity in Leadership

Unity is a principle that is often addressed in Scripture. When Jesus prayed His High Priestly Prayer, He emphasized the importance of unity (Jn 17:22-23). The apostle Paul reminds us that we are to have unity of mind so that we can be committed to the same purpose (Phil 2:1-4). Paul also warns the Corinthian believers about division and appeals to them for unity (1 Cor 1:10). He reminds the Colossian believers to bear with one another and forgive each other, and he reminds them that love is the perfect bond of unity (Col 3:13-14).

Consider the responsibilities that the Lord entrusts to those who are leaders in the church:

And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; *until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.*

*Ephesians 4:11–13 (emphasis mine)*

Notice the importance of the *unity of the faith* in the building up of the body. We will always be striving to have unity in the body of Christ. After all, there is generally quite a diversity of people who attend church. Some are committed Christians, some are immature, some are new believers, and there are those who have professed faith but are not truly Christians. As a result, we are always pursuing unity, but also dealing with conflict. But unity in leadership is essential. A man learning about pastoral ministry ought to be able to attend elder meetings and see godly men demonstrating godly attitudes and actions. They need to see how a biblical elder board functions so they can model that wherever they go into ministry.

It is essential to understand the difference between unity and uniformity. The Bible emphasizes the importance of a plurality of elders (Acts 14:23; Tit 1:5). The wisdom of Proverbs reminds us that plans are better established when there is a multitude of counselors (Prov 15:22). Elders will have different personalities, experiences, and giftedness. Unity does

not mean they think exactly alike. If this were the case, there would be no need to have more than one elder. Unity has to do with our ultimate purpose of bringing glory to God and being willing to work through the most complicated circumstances in a God-honoring way.

### **Commitment from Leadership**

Church leadership must be willing to spend appropriate time and energy to invest in the life of the man being trained. Biblical discipleship is not just a class. It is life-on-life teaching. Jesus spent volumes of time with His disciples. The apostles followed this same pattern. Paul describes his relationship with those he served in the following verses:

But we proved to be gentle among you, as a nursing mother tenderly cares for her own children. Having so fond an affection for you, we were well-pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God but also our own lives, because you had become very dear to us.  
*1 Thessalonians 2:7-8*

If we are going to train men in the church, we will have to impart both the gospel and our own lives. Training men is seldom convenient. It is not as though most pastors are looking for more work to fill up their schedules. Nevertheless, a pastor who wants to train must be willing and eager to give up conveniences and time in order to allow a man to be discipled alongside him.

### **The Importance of a Clear Plan for Training**

As with any ministry, a plan must be carefully developed to meet its objectives. It is very important to invest sufficient time to thoroughly prepare to offer training.

When Jesus taught on the sacrifice that was required for those who would follow Him, He illustrated the need for careful thought and planning in two ways. If you want to build a tower, you must carefully consider the costs involved. Failure to do so could lead to great embarrassment when you are only able to finish part of your project. The second illustration concerns a king who is considering going out to battle. He had

better carefully consider the odds of winning the battle before it begins. If the odds are against him, he better seek terms of peace (Lk 14:31-32).

When it comes to training a man for ministry, the stakes are very high. It would be a terrible mistake to start training a man and not finish. We do not want to fail a man on his theological training. This would have terrible implications. We also cannot fail to give input into a man's life or fail to provide opportunities for shepherding, administration, teaching, etc.

There are various different assignments and responsibilities that will be part of pastoral training, including theological training, teaching, shepherding, and administration. Within each of these broad categories there are many other specific areas of ministry training that must be considered.

### **Theological Training**

A prospective pastor's theological training must include Bible knowledge, systematic theology, biblical counseling, and apologetics. Language training would also be a very helpful tool. Within each of these categories the leadership of the church must determine what will be included. When this is developed, assignments will have to be arranged and scheduled over the course of the training so a man can fulfill the various aspects of his training. At the end of his training, the trainee must be able to demonstrate an ability to handle the Scriptures well.

It would also be advantageous for a man in training to read a number of theologically sound resources that will benefit him in the ministry. These could include books on theology, practical Christian disciplines, missions, biographies, current theological or social issues, etc. These would need to be scheduled over the course of a man's training. It would benefit the man to write a report on the books he reads, and it would help the overseeing pastor to know how well the trainee is understanding what he is reading.

Another consideration would be written assignments. It is extremely important for the prospective pastor to develop very clear biblical convictions on a number of issues. Position papers might include topics like benevolence, prayer, the practice of spiritual gifts, discipleship in the church, missions, marriage and divorce, music in the church, etc.

## Teacher Training

If a church is going to seriously commit to train leaders, including pastors, they must have a process to help men learn whether they are gifted to teach. A teacher training class that is offered periodically would be very helpful. This training should start with the very basics of preparation. It should also help students learn about resources that are useful in lesson preparation. A student should have the opportunity to practice putting a lesson together. Initially the student could turn in their lesson manuscript for input. When a person is first learning to teach, it can be risky to put them in front of a class. It is safer to have them teach to a couple of people who can evaluate their lesson. If they show promise, maybe they can be permitted to substitute teach a class. There should always be a leader present who can provide an evaluation of the lesson. Don't ever start a person in pastoral training who has not shown giftedness in teaching.

A pastor in training will continue to need input on their teaching. It may not always be possible for a church leader to be in the class so that he can offer input. With the technology we have today, it is fairly simple to record a lesson so someone can listen after the fact and give input. Teaching is such a critical responsibility of a pastor. This should be an area that is consistently and carefully evaluated.

## Shepherding the Flock

Shepherding is another essential area of ministry. Within the context of the church there are many arenas in which this can take place. A trainee could shepherd the students in a class they teach. This could include phone calls, having them over to their house, meeting for coffee, etc. Oftentimes a church will have shut-ins that need to be cared for, new people that need to be contacted, and people in the hospital that need to be visited.

Shepherding also includes some of those more difficult situations, like church discipline. It is important for a new pastor to understand the biblical precedent for church discipline. He needs to understand the specific steps of discipline and how to accomplish them as Scripture has instructed, keeping in mind that there are some legal vulnerabilities that should be avoided to whatever extent possible.

It is also common for churches to have conflict between church members or attenders. It is helpful for trainees to learn how to deal with some of these complicated interpersonal challenges that we often face in the church.

Crisis situations require special care in our shepherding, such as learning how to care for people during special times of loss like the death of a spouse or child. It can be very helpful for a trainee to walk down this road with an experienced pastor prior to facing these moments for the first time when he is in the pastorate.

It has been my observation that often a man will be a great student who loves to study but has to discipline himself to engage with people, or he is really great with people but struggles to spend the necessary amount of time studying. We are trying to help him find the proper balance. He is required to be both a diligent student and a faithful shepherd.

## Sharing the Gospel

The Great Commission begins with evangelism. A pastor in training needs to recognize opportunities for evangelism that come through his daily ministry. This can include preaching the gospel from the pulpit, counseling, hospital visits, weddings, funerals, etc. He also must seek opportunities to share the gospel through the course of his normal interactions with people at the grocery store, in the neighborhood, etc.

Part of fulfilling the Great Commission is teaching our congregation how to evangelize and providing opportunities for them for this purpose. Once again, seeing this modeled by a pastor and elders can be extremely helpful when discipling a man for the pastorate.

## Experiencing Elder Meetings

We don't want a new pastor to attend his first elder meeting when he is the pastor. A training church needs to be willing to allow young men to attend the elder meetings. Each elder body will have to determine how this will work. A man who is training to be a pastor may be an observer who is not allowed to participate in the meeting. He may have to leave the meeting during the closed portion. He may be a participant and be allowed to stay for the duration.

He needs to learn how biblical elders function. He needs to learn some of the variables that may be different with elders of different churches. Some of those differences would include the process for identifying men for eldership, the required preparation for eldership, who is the chairman, how the agenda is developed, what issues, if any, need to be taken to the congregation. He needs to understand the value of bylaws and constitutions and minutes. He needs to learn how elders can come to agreement when they have differences. He needs to learn that a church is governed by a plurality of elders, not by a single man. He needs to learn about patience in the decision-making process.

### General Ministry Opportunities

There are many areas of ministry that are part of most churches. Churches must have leadership. They will likely have one or more pastors, elders, and deacons. We would expect a church to have services that include preaching, Scripture reading, prayer, and music. They will also practice the ordinances of communion and baptism. Churches will often have ushers and greeters who assist with the services. It would be great for a pastoral trainee to gain experience by being involved in each of these arenas. It is amazing how many trainees have never had the opportunity to teach a class on baptism, lead communion, do the Scripture reading in the service, etc.

A man in training could learn a great deal by reading his church's doctrinal statement, constitution, bylaws, minutes, and any other governing documents. It would be of great benefit for him to understand that there are legal requirements that he must be aware of when leading a church.

Different churches handle their finances in different ways. A man should learn how to manage a budget, what the annual budget process looks like, who is responsible for counting contributions, and how records are maintained. He should learn what is appropriate for him to know and what is inappropriate, as it relates to congregational giving. Churches need to have proper checks and balances for tracking monies, turning in receipts, and writing checks.

It is helpful for a trainee to know about those who serve in the background but are so necessary for the ministry to take place. This includes

those who care for the facilities and grounds, those who manage the technology, etc. These may be paid staff, volunteers, or a combination.

Often churches have ministries that are specific to children, youth, and adults. They may provide counseling, hospital visits, care for shut-ins, visitors, and benevolence. Most churches have child protection policies and security plans. It would benefit a trainee to learn something about each of these areas.

As the church leadership considers the various ministries that make up their church, they can determine how much exposure a man needs in each area. The first part of his training will likely include a lot of observation. He can sit in on a variety of ministries and learn about them from ministry leaders. He can attend elder meetings and have discipleship meetings with the pastor. He could also review documents like the constitution, bylaws, child protection policy, security guidelines, etc.

When it comes to events like crisis counseling, major illnesses or death, most people want their pastor to come shepherd them. Oftentimes it is perfectly appropriate for the trainee to go with the pastor to observe how he cares for people.

When people are preparing for weddings and funerals, they generally select a pastor they have a relationship with. Again, the trainee can shadow his pastor through this process. He can probably sit in on premarital counseling, observe the rehearsal, and watch at a distance as the pastor officiates the wedding. He can also go with the pastor to meet with a family that is preparing for a funeral. It is extremely valuable for the pastoral trainee to learn appropriate etiquette at both weddings and funerals.

There are some areas of ministry that a trainee can participate in with a ministry leader and then can engage in the ministry by himself. This could include hospital visits, shepherding visitors, assisting ushers, etc.

When it comes to teaching, a man in training might start by teaching in a youth or college class. But if he is preparing to become a pastor he will need to be able to teach at an adult level. Appropriate involvement and progression must be based on the trainee's ability to teach the word. Eventually it would be very helpful for a man to be able to fill the pulpit.

When training, you can expect a progression that goes from primarily observation of ministry to active and substantial participation. When a man begins training he will likely require a considerable amount of in-

put, but as he progresses, he will be able to bless the leadership by taking a load of responsibility.

## The Importance of Honest Input

This may seem like a given, but it is not as easy as you might think. Jesus was an encourager to the disciples, but He also brought correction into their lives. Without correction, they would never have learned some of the critical lessons that defined their later ministries.

Consider the lessons the disciples were taught on servanthood. Jesus modeled servanthood throughout His life. He came not to be served, but to serve (Mk 10:45). Even though the disciples saw Jesus consistently live as a servant, they still ended up in an argument about which of them was the greatest (Mk 9:33-35). Jesus corrected their thinking when they were having this discussion, and then he drove home this teaching when He washed the disciples' feet (Jn 13:4-17).

Jesus also taught consistently about suffering (Lk 9:22; Mt 16:21, 20:18-28; Lk 18:31-33). Although the disciples heard Jesus talk about His own pending suffering, they did not comprehend what was to come. This is evident when Peter rebukes Jesus for talking about the suffering He would face (Mt 16:22). Peter was soundly rebuked by the Lord for His response (Mt 16:23). When you read 1 & 2 Peter, it is obvious that Peter learned well that being a Christian will mean suffering. He works hard to communicate this truth to his fellow believers.

When you read 1 & 2 Timothy you will notice that Paul is bringing encouragement and correction into Timothy's life. Paul reminds Timothy of his call to ministry and he exhorts him to fight the good fight, even as others are abandoning the faith (1 Tim 1:18-19). He reminds Timothy what it means to be a good servant of Christ Jesus (1 Tim 4:6). He also tells him not to neglect his spiritual gift (1 Tim 4:14) and to persevere (1 Tim 4:16). He is also told to guard what has been entrusted to him (1 Tim 6:20). He encourages him to kindle afresh the gift that God has given him and not to have a spirit of timidity or be ashamed of the testimony of the Lord or Paul. Rather, he should join with them in suffering for the gospel (2 Tim 1:6-8).

When we are training a man for ministry, it is generally not helpful for the man if we always affirm the things that he does well and neglect to discuss areas that need improvement. For instance, if a man teaches a lesson that is biblically accurate yet fails to address the main point of his text, how will you address this? Some would focus on the fact that what he taught was biblically accurate and leave it at that. But if you are going to help the man, you must help him appropriately teach the text. You can encourage him with the fact that what he taught was biblical, but you must also address the fact that he missed the point of the text.

If a man lacks gentleness in his shepherding, he needs to understand this so that he can change. If he is administratively inept, he is going to need to improve in this area. Administration may never be his strong suit, but most pastors have to be able to provide some level of administration.

The trainee needs to learn how to receive correction. This will, in part, demonstrate if the man is gifted for pastoral ministry.

Give instruction to a wise man and he will be still wiser, teach a righteous man and he will increase his learning. *Proverbs 9:9*

The pastor must be able to bring correction in a way that pleases the Lord.

Like apples of gold in settings of silver is a word spoken in right circumstances. Like an earring of gold and an ornament of fine gold is a wise reprovener to a listening ear. *Proverbs 25:11-12*

In a biblical discipleship relationship, the disciple must be willing to hear correction and respond appropriately. The mentor must be able to wisely bring correction into a person's life. Biblical correction is deeply concerned about the honor of the Lord and the spiritual well-being of the one being corrected.

When providing pastoral training, you may need to provide correction in any number of areas. It could be related to personal disciplines, shepherding skills, administrative abilities, etc. The goal is to help a man to use his gifts in the best possible way in his service to the Lord.

## Practical Considerations

### Financial Commitment

What financial commitment is required if a church is going to engage in pastoral training? There is actually no financial commitment that is required. A church that has limited resources can still provide the training a man needs. That is not to say that you cannot invest financially to assist a man in his training. It is just to remind pastors that churches with limited resources can and should be involved in training men for ministry.

Training can certainly be designed so that a man can maintain his employment and still be equipped for ministry. I have often told men who wanted to be trained in the church that I would not be able to pay them, but I also would not charge them. There is a tremendous benefit to a man who is trained by his pastor, even if he cannot be paid.

There are churches that have money to invest in training men for ministry. This can make it possible for a man to work part- or full-time for the church. For churches with a limited amount of resources to invest, I encourage them to purchase study resources for the trainee. This might include Bible study software as well as commentaries and other study tools. I generally encourage the pastor in charge of the trainee to direct the expenditure of funds on resources that would be of greatest benefit to the trainee's long-term ministry. When a man has finished his training, he needs to have a solid library that will benefit him for the duration of his ministry.

### Length of Training

Training must be designed for a specific length of time. There are a number of factors that will need to be considered. Is the trainee a seminary graduate, or will he be training in the church at the same time he attends seminary? Will he be working a secular job during his training? How much experience has he had teaching? How theologically astute is he? What specific objectives must be completed for him to fulfill his training responsibilities?

It helps to break the assignments down by month. This makes it easier to determine how long the training should take. It also makes it possible to monitor the progress of the trainee.

It is my opinion that a pastoral internship will typically require about two to three years. There are obviously many variables that must be considered.

### Administering a Pastoral Internship

The success of a training ministry can often be attributed to great advance planning and proper administration. Pastoral training is essentially as diverse as the church. After all, the intent is to equip a man theologically and practically to be able to do the work of the ministry in the life of the church.

We have already addressed the basics of preplanning. Once the training has been designed and scheduled, it has to be managed. Someone has to be the primary person who is discipling the trainee. This would generally be a pastor. They will be investing spiritually in the man's life, monitoring his personal, family and ministry life. They will need to make sure assignments are being completed and are done well. They must be willing to bring correction into the man's life.

### Specific Requirements

There are many variables that must be considered when developing a pastoral training program. Will seminary be part of his training? Are there specific classes available that would benefit the trainee? What Bible knowledge will be essential for him to have before you would affirm him for ministry? What practical experience would you want included in his training? What books would you want him to read? What Bible verses would you want him to memorize?

When training comes to an end, the trainee should be able to properly defend the truth of the Scriptures. This is often demonstrated in an ordination exam. A man has to be able to handle the Scriptures well. He should have a substantial amount of Bible knowledge and he should be able to answer systematic theology questions with his Bible in hand. He should also be able to apply the text of Scripture to counseling and apologetics questions.

The trainee will need consistent help and input to be prepared for an ordination exam. Just because a man has been given assignments does not mean he is ready to pass an ordination. This will take a great deal of

practice. The practice needs to be with someone who can provide helpful input.

When we send a man into the ministry, we must be certain he knows the truth and can defend it. We also want to make sure that he has demonstrated giftedness for ministry by being fully engaged in ministry under the supervision of gifted and qualified men.

### **Expectations**

There are many internships that are offered in churches. Some are very helpful in training a man for pastoral ministry. Others are more designed to meet specific needs in a church and offer a man the opportunity to gain experience rather than provide intentional training.

For instance, a church might invite a young man to come for the summer to participate in an internship. It allows the man to gain some experience in ministry, earn some money, and benefit the church. The internship lasts a few months. The man might be working with the youth ministry. If the church does not have a youth pastor, this meets a very important need in the church.

This type of internship can certainly benefit the man and the church. The church gets a youth pastor for a few months. The intern will likely receive some remuneration that helps him continue his studies, the youth group can be greatly blessed, and the intern gains some helpful experience. The area of ministry the intern is exposed to is generally very specific. And the intern seldom gains any theological training in this internship. While this internship can be of benefit to the intern and the church, it does not really provide the training that a man needs to equip him for pastoral ministry.

A true pastoral internship is much more developed and intentional. It is based on a discipleship relationship with the pastor and elders and includes education and practical experience. It is not simply an internship designed for someone to improve their leadership skills. This training is for a man who really believes that God has called him to pastoral ministry and has demonstrated that he is likely gifted for this role.

By thoughtfully developing an internship plan, it will be relatively easy to demonstrate what is expected of a man who enters this train-

ing. The intern will also have a clear understanding of the church and church leader's role in the training. By breaking down assignments on a monthly basis, the intern is able to carefully consider his own life situation and whether or not he can commit to and fulfill the responsibilities of the internship. He can also anticipate a start date and an end date, with a clear understanding of what must be accomplished to successfully complete the training.

# Chapter Seven

## Benefits and Pitfalls of Training in the Church

**T**raining pastors in the church is a biblical mandate and should be a wonderful blessing. But it also comes with its challenges. It is easy to begin a training ministry with the best of intentions. But without much prayer and careful preparation, it can end up being counterproductive for the man being trained, the pastor, and the church.

### Benefits for the Church

- Training pastors in the context of the church is an act of obedience to our Lord. The New Testament is quite clear. Christians must be committed to sharing the gospel. As God saves individuals, He also gifts them to serve in the body of Christ. The leadership of the church faithfully teaches them all that God has commanded. As they grow in their walk with the Lord they will serve according to their giftedness. This will include those God has gifted for pastoral ministry.

And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." *Matthew 28:18–20*

- The church has the opportunity to follow the pattern of our Lord and the apostles.

And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.

*Ephesians 4:11–13*

The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

*2 Timothy 2:2*

The church is the God-ordained place for pastoral training to be accomplished. It affords the opportunity to be both theologically and practically trained. If a church is equipped to train men for the pastorate, they are certainly able to train teachers and lay elders.

- The church has the privilege of watching a young man grow up in the church, come to faith, express an interest in pastoral ministry, begin training, grow in his ability to teach and shepherd, and begin serving as a pastor.
- Biblical churches can train men, regardless if they are large or small. In fact, small churches are often able to provide more opportunities for a man to fully engage in ministry. It is also more likely that those who are trained in ministry will be serving in smaller churches.

- When a church assumes the responsibility to train a man for pastoral ministry, they will often hire him to serve in their church when he is trained. Other times they might want to plant a church under his leadership or send him to the mission field. Or they might send him out to serve in another church. His résumé will not only include what should be very stringent doctrinal training, it will also include his participation in virtually every aspect of ministry in the church.

Don't underestimate the value of training men who may serve on your church staff. I have met with many pastors and elders who have followed the typical pattern when a man in the church believes he is called to ministry. They help him select a good seminary, provide a recommendation and some financial support, and send him away to school. Several years later the church is looking to hire another pastor. The man they sent away for training is going to a different church. Now they have to find a man that some other church sent away that might be willing to take their pastoral position. They have to count on other people's recommendations because they only know the man superficially. They hope and pray that he will be a good fit. Only time will tell!

When you train a man, you know him well and he knows you well. You know his strengths and weaknesses. You know his qualifications and giftedness. You have observed his love for God and love for the people. He already knows the church and has served the people. How much better and safer to bring pastors on staff that you have trained.

## Benefits for the Pastor and Church Leadership

- The pastor and elders must stay sharp on their theology. The responsibility of the pastor and elders is immense. This responsibility should remind the leadership of the church of their need to remain theologically astute so they can invest well in the life of a man pursuing pastoral ministry.

- The pastor can delight, as Paul did, in discipling leaders. He often spoke of people as being his “joy and crown.”

Therefore, my beloved brethren whom I long to see, my joy and crown, in this way stand firm in the Lord, my beloved.

*Philippians 4:1*

For who is our hope or joy or crown of exultation? Is it not even you, in the presence of our Lord Jesus at His coming?

*1 Thessalonians 2:19*

- There is a tremendous blessing when God uses us to disciple others. If the ministry is going to continue, we must train some who will carry on the ministry. No doubt this was one of Paul’s great joys. The ministry was going to be multiplied, even after his death, because of those God allowed him to train for pastoral ministry.
- As the man grows in his ministry skills, he can be a significant blessing to the pastor by taking some of the workload. He will also be a great blessing to the church as he assumes teaching, shepherding, and administrative responsibilities.
- After completing his training, the church and church leadership will be able to affirm the prospective pastor’s giftedness, character, and preparation for ministry.
- If the church is in need of additional staff, you have already equipped a man for this purpose. The transition is smooth and you do not have the challenge of hiring someone you barely know.
- It is also beneficial to train pastors so that when it comes time for the pastor to transition out of full-time ministry, or should the Lord take him home, the church has trained men who can step into this role.

## Benefits for the Individual Being Trained

- It is a benefit for a man who is called to ministry to remain in his church to prepare for ministry. The church knows

him best and, ultimately, should be the place where the leaders and church affirm his call, giftedness, character, and preparation for service.

- When a man remains in his church, he already knows and loves the people he will be serving, and they know and love him.
- A man does not have to spend tens of thousands of dollars on academics to be obedient to God’s call for his life.
- A man can still benefit from seminary training while participating in the church. The church can benefit from the expertise of the seminary professors and the seminary can have confidence that the church is assuming responsibility to make sure a man’s theology is put into practice.
- In the event a man believes that he is called to ministry, but does not demonstrate the giftedness, the church can appropriately deal with these issues early in his training so he can be directed to other areas of service that are consistent with his giftedness. While this can be very disappointing to the man, it spares him, his family, and the church from the consequences of calling a man whom God has not called.
- When a man is being trained in the church, he becomes a testimony for others to follow who believe that God is calling them to ministry.
- A discipleship relationship in the church will allow a prospective pastor to work side by side with the pastor and elders. He can attend meetings, participate in shepherding, assist with administration, learn about budgeting, learn how to do weddings and funerals, sit in on counseling, minister in the midst of tragedies, assist with the benevolence ministry, provide leadership oversight, etc. Proper training will expose a man to virtually every avenue of ministry.
- The trainee will be able to ask questions as he participates in ministry, even as the disciples did with Jesus. The leadership will also have the opportunity to ask the trainee questions. This assures them that he is learning what is essential for ministry.

- Initially the pastoral candidate will walk alongside the pastor so that he can observe the ministry as it takes place. As time goes on, the trainee can assume the responsibility for any number of ministry assignments, with the oversight of the church leadership.
- The trainee can be carefully and consistently evaluated so that he can learn to excel in his leadership responsibilities.
- The trainee will develop life-long relationships that will likely be very helpful when he faces the challenges of ministry over the course of his life.

## Pitfalls to Avoid When Training in the Local Church

### Challenges with Pastoral Leadership

- It is difficult when a pastor has insecurities that cause him to be threatened by the giftedness of the trainee. Keep in mind that anyone in ministry must have some measure of insecurity. By that I mean none of us are capable of accomplishing the work that is set before us. Our confidence and trust are only in the Lord. We become sinful when we choose not to fulfill God's commands because of our insecurities.
- If pastors and elders are not sufficiently trained in theology, they will not have the necessary tools to train a man for ministry. Their first priority must be their own training. A solid grasp of Bible knowledge and theology is a non-negotiable when we are training a man for the pastorate.
- A pastoral internship generally requires two to three years. If the overseeing pastor transitions out of his position during the internship, the intern can face great hardship and uncertainty.
- There are times when churches face difficult circumstances, even division. It is one thing to have discord in the church, but when the discord is in the leadership this can create some serious complications when training a man.

- A pastoral internship requires consistent oversight. If the leadership of the church neglects this duty, the intern can suffer immensely. There are times when a pastor will have overwhelming responsibilities that cannot be disregarded. It is important to create a plan so that when those times come, others can assist in the oversight of the intern's assignments.
- If the church leadership is not willing to address issues in the intern's life and/or work, both the church and the intern will likely suffer.
- There are some topics that churches might need assistance teaching. There are several ways this can be addressed. Many classes are available both online and in person that can provide instruction on virtually any and every topic that a church might want to offer to a trainee.

### Challenges with an Intern

- An intern may not fulfill the obligations of their internship in a responsible manner. There must be a plan to address carelessness or irresponsibility on the part of the intern. It is not helpful if the pastor has to continually press the intern to get his assignments in on time. As the Scripture says, he who is faithful in little is faithful in much (Lk 16:10). Paul reminds us that it is required in stewards that they be faithful (1 Cor 4:2). The leadership must have an action plan that brings consequences to an intern if they are not fulfilling their duty. This can ultimately lead to probation or removal from the internship.
- It is always possible that an intern will start the program and have a passionate desire to become a pastor, but it is clear over time that they are not gifted for this role. The church leadership must shepherd the man through this difficult adjustment in life. It can be tragic, with eternal consequences, when we allow men to pursue ministries for which they are not gifted. The sooner we address these issues the better.

- There may be a time when an intern is diligent and serving well in his internship, and then he encounters personal tragedy or very difficult circumstances. The church leadership may need to adjust assignments and even extend the internship so the man can deal with whatever the Lord has brought into his life.

## The Consequences of Inadequate Training

Inadequate training, whether in a seminary or a church, can be devastating and far-reaching. On one hand, you can have education without the practical training the church can offer. On the other hand, you can have an overwhelming amount of practical training with inadequate theological education. Failure in either area can be very detrimental.

- A prospective pastor must understand the importance of his own personal walk with the Lord. As Paul reminded Timothy, he must watch his life and doctrine (1 Tim 4:16). Failure in this arena generally impacts a man's family, the church, and often the community.
- A lack of excellence in teaching is damaging to the body of Christ. I am not speaking primarily of oratory skills. A man must know how to exposit the text and communicate it in an understandable way (2 Tim 4:2). A training church must be a teaching church. The primary pattern ought to be verse-by-verse exposition. It is extremely important for an intern to learn to carefully exposit Scripture in its context. It is also essential that he learn to teach the whole counsel of God. A pastor who is careless in handling the word of God risks teaching bad habits and will likely negatively impact his own flock.
- The prospective pastor must learn to shepherd his flock well. Carelessness in this regard can be damaging to the flock (1 Pet 5:1-4). The Scriptures warn about the shepherds of Israel who were irresponsible with members of their flock (Jer 23:1-4).
- Oftentimes a pastor does not invest well in training men for leadership. This failure can result in a lack of wise men

participating in the teaching, shepherding, and decision making of the church. Pastors must recognize that godly shared leadership is essential for the health of the church (Tit 1:5-9; 1 Tim 3:1-15).

## Conclusion

The tragedy of inadequate training can be far-reaching. Not only does it impact the prospective pastor, it will impact his family and any church where he ends up serving. How many churches have suffered horrific splits that can be attributed to poorly trained or unqualified pastors?

A biblically qualified and well-trained man, both theologically and practically, will have the potential to impact many lives for eternity. He knows sound doctrine, he understands the ministry of the church, he depends on qualified leadership to work with him, he is committed to train others to pastor the flock, etc. Only God knows the impact he will make, by the grace and power of God.

# Chapter Eight

## Embracing Local Church Training

### A Pastor's Heart

It seems like an oxymoron to think that a man could be a pastor and not have a heart to train. After all, when we talk about training, we are really talking about discipleship at various levels. If we are called to equip the saints for the work of the ministry, that would include all areas of ministry, including the pastorate. And who would not want to train men to pastor? What a privilege to equip the next generation for serving our Lord.

Training requires an investment of time in a few. Our Lord demonstrated how this is done. While He ministered to the masses, He was still committed to intensely train a few. There were twelve he called as His disciples. Of those twelve He uniquely invested in three. A pastor must be willing to invest a considerable amount of time in a few people without disregarding the rest of the church.

If a pastor is to train young pastors, he must be willing to open his office, his home, and his life to trainees. Jesus walked day by day with His disciples. They had the opportunity to see Him in every circumstance. He taught them each day, He asked them questions and answered their questions. He knew their strengths and weaknesses. He gave them opportunities for ministry and provided correction when they needed it. He had great patience as they often stumbled. He was honest with them and sometimes very direct, but was always forgiving. He protected them

in the midst of difficult circumstances and defended them from their accusers. His life was a pattern for the disciples to follow.

Jesus painted a very clear picture of the challenges and opposition that we would face in ministry. His apostles affirmed these realities. Nevertheless, they were very excited to be called to the task of ministry and to suffer for the Lord.

So they went on their way from the presence of the Council, rejoicing that they had been considered worthy to suffer shame for His name. *Acts 5:41*

When we train men for ministry, we do not want them to become pessimistic towards the church, but we also don't want them to be overly optimistic. Ministry is a spiritual battle. There are times when it is brutal. But at the same time, it is such a blessing to serve our Lord Jesus Christ. It is the delight of the pastor to help a young pastor understand a biblical perspective of the Christian life and ministry. We want new pastors to be well-prepared.

Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier. *2 Timothy 2:3-4*

Pastoral ministry is definitely not for the faint of heart! A pastor who loves the Lord must long to train men so they will be well-prepared to serve the Lord. He must have a desire to help a man grow in his faith and service. Training is not fulfilling a task; it is investing in the life of a man and the work of the Lord.

The church is generally the place where men recognize that God is calling them to ministry. What a privilege it is for the church to shepherd a man from the time he considers vocational ministry through training and affirmation. It is sad that so many churches are quick to send their men away for academic training and completely miss out on the opportunity to personally invest in the life of potential pastors. It seems as though we ought to be more jealous for the opportunity to disciple young pastors. The pastor, church leaders, and congregation miss out on so much when they send a man away. The man also misses out on the very intentional training that can take place in the life of the church.

A pastor who chooses to train men for ministry must understand that biblical discipleship requires him to expose his life to the trainee. The one who is being trained will see his pastor when he is doing great and when he stumbles. He should learn from his pastor what it means to lead with humility. He will be able to participate in some of the great joys of church ministry, but he will also see the heartaches that a pastor must deal with. The training may only last a few years, but the relationship will last a lifetime.

## Answering the Call to Ministry

Maybe you are a young man who is interested in being discipled by an older, mature pastor. You long for that kind of shepherding.

Many men who believe they are called to ministry are very careful to consider potential educational opportunities for theological training. Theology is very important. And yet many do not consider what church they will attend and what training will be available in that church. Is there a pastor who will disciple them? Will the elders of the church be committed to providing helpful exposure to ministries that will prepare the student for pastoral work?

The seminary can provide a wonderful place for study and relationships. You can benefit from some of the brightest theologians. But if you are preparing to become a pastor, you need to seek opportunities where you can be exposed to real-life ministry, and where real-life ministry will expose your strengths and weaknesses. You need to experience ministry, not just learn about it. It is critical that you learn from working in the church and that the church can learn about you. A day is coming when the leaders of a church ought to be able to affirm your giftedness, character and experience. This is the "diploma" that the Scriptures speak about.

Finding a good training church that will invest wisely in your life is extremely important. It will be worth the effort to find such a place and will likely influence if, where, or when you go to seminary.

## Identifying Potential Pastoral Trainees

In 1 Timothy 3:1 it is clear that a man should aspire to the office of overseer. This is certainly one of the identifying markers for a potential train-

ee. But not everyone who aspires to the office is actually gifted for the task. As pastors and elders, we must be careful and patient when selecting men to train in the context of the church. We need to know a potential candidate long enough to have a reasonably good idea of their character and giftedness.

For instance, an elder must be able to teach. It is dangerous to start a man in training before helping him learn how to teach and giving him opportunity to demonstrate some giftedness to teach. It is much better to spend whatever time is necessary to be reasonably sure he has a capacity for teaching.

It is also unwise to start a man in training who has not already served faithfully in some ministry of the church. Unfortunately, there are men who struggle to find their way in life. As a default, they decide becoming a pastor is what they ought to do. Beware of men who express a desire to become a pastor, yet they have not been faithfully serving the flock. A man who is gifted for ministry will be pursuing opportunities for service because God has gifted him for this purpose.

You have to be very careful about bringing people into the church to be trained, especially if you don't have a reasonable history with them. It is beneficial for a potential trainee to have been discipled in the church, or at least to have been in the church for many months or years before considering them for training. You want to make sure the potential leader is doctrinally sound and demonstrates Christian character. You want to see how they love the flock and desire to serve them. If a man is not serving well before he becomes a trainee, don't think he will do better if he is in an internship. Keep in mind that it is easier to get a man into training than it is to get him out!

Be aware of those who want to come to the church just for the training and experience they can get. You want to train men who want to be in the church for training and experience because they genuinely love the Lord and sincerely love the people they are serving. You want them to invest well while they are in your church, even if their time there is limited.

Don't confuse giftedness with personality. Just because a person is dynamic and a great communicator does not mean they are gifted for the pastorate or they will faithfully serve the Lord. At the same time, a quiet and soft-spoken person is not necessarily humble. There is no substitute for taking time to get to know someone. And the best way to get to know someone is to spend time with them in as many contexts as possible.

Jesus came to this earth as a suffering Servant (Is 53; Phil 2). Throughout His ministry He made it abundantly clear that His children are to identify with Him in suffering and are to be committed servants. Anyone interested in training for ministry ought to expect suffering and be determined to sacrificially serve.

It is important to remember that you do not always have to have someone in pastoral training. Let the Lord raise up men in His timing. You just want to be ready when God does raise someone up so that you can legitimately provide quality pastoral training.

## Utilizing Resources for Pastoral Training

Perhaps you are excited about the possibility of training men in the context of the church but are a bit overwhelmed with all that is involved. None of us want to start such a ministry and then not fulfill it in a responsible way.

My appeal to you as a pastor is that you will take the primary responsibility for training men for ministry. I am not suggesting that you must accomplish everything that is necessary without the benefit of great resources.

For instance, I have tried to communicate that I am not opposed to theologically sound seminaries. I am opposed to the church relinquishing their responsibility to train men by sending them to a seminary and assuming that is sufficient training. The biblical record paints a clear picture of biblical discipleship that includes training men for the pastorate in the context of the church.

The church certainly will know the man who is interested in ministry better than the seminary. The church will know his background and experience in ministry. They will also know if he is clearly gifted for pastoral ministry or if he is at the stage where he is investigating whether or not he is called. It is the church leadership who should ultimately lay hands on a man, affirming his call to the pastorate.

I believe most seminaries would be thrilled to see churches and church leaders take a much more active role in training men. What a blessing it would be for professors to have the opportunity to instruct men in doctrinal truth while being assured that the trainee's pastor is diligently discipling him in the application of that truth in the life of the

church. How much better would it be if a young man was receiving considerable practical training and input regarding his teaching early in his training so that seminary classes were just helping him to excel. Men can be taught about wedding and funeral etiquette in a classroom, but how much better for them to be able to watch and assist their pastor in these duties. Church polity is important to learn, but what a great benefit to sit in on elder meetings, budget meetings, church meetings, etc.

Many seminaries and professors are developing ways to make theological training more accessible and affordable. For those who attend a traditional seminary, the challenge can be to find a church in reasonable proximity where they can be discipled by a pastor and church leaders. When scores of men are looking for the same opportunities, the options can be limited.

Some seminaries have worked to overcome this dilemma. With the use of technology, they can have campuses at several different churches that are all taught by the same instructors. This technology allows the students to interact with the professors through two-way live communication. Many of the pastors in these churches have the opportunity to participate in the teaching. This reduces the number of men on a single campus and makes it more reasonable for the trainee to be discipled in the church.

Some seminaries offer an array of different opportunities. Many classes are recorded so they can be watched at any time and in any place. Some offer degree programs that can be completed, for the most part, off campus. A student might have to be on campus 2-3 weeks a year.

There are professors who have taken it upon themselves to provide academic training through online classes. You can even receive language training without attending a traditional seminary.

With this in mind, when the church considers training a man for ministry, they will have to work with each student individually to determine the best training protocol. For many men, a degree will be important to them. It will likely afford them more opportunities than not having a degree. But keep in mind that it is not biblically mandated for pastoral training.

It may be that a church can provide a substantial amount of doctrinal instruction within the context of the church. The church and trainee could determine what classes would be helpful that the church does not feel capable of offering and could select specific courses that would ben-

efit the trainee without requiring all the classes and expenses of traditional seminary.

Don't underestimate what can be accomplished in the church. The pastor ought to have the capacity to impart a considerable amount of theological education to a trainee. This could be done through the pulpit ministry, classes and/or through personal discipleship. It might be surprising how many churches have lay elders or other leaders in the church who have the theological training to assist in preparing a man for ministry. They can be great resources in a pastoral discipleship ministry. A church might find that there are like-minded churches in close proximity that have men who can teach specific areas of theology who would be willing to partner with them.

There are more books and online resources than ever in the history of mankind. The church can certainly identify great books, have men read them and interact with others concerning the content. They could also benefit from numerous classes and seminars that are available online.

The church can design an internship that incorporates theological study questions and biblical knowledge that must be mastered while a man is in training. Truthfully, a church can work with a man so that he is exposed to an amazing amount of theology and they can help him to retain what he learns so that it actually benefits him in the ministry.

It is hard to emphasize the benefit a man receives when he can learn academically and practically at the same time. How much better prepared would he be when he enters that first pastorate?

# Chapter Nine

## Leaving a Legacy

**W**hen we are young it is hard to comprehend the brevity of life. But as we age and life quickly passes by, we realize that our time is extraordinarily short. The Scriptures remind us to be aware of how rapidly time will pass by.

Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away. *James 4:14*

“LORD, make me to know my end and what is the extent of my days; let me know how transient I am. Behold, You have made my days as handbreadths, and my lifetime as nothing in Your sight; surely every man at his best is a mere breath.” Selah.

*Psalm 39:4-5*

Man is like a mere breath; his days are like a passing shadow.

*Psalm 144:4*

With this in mind, we must determine to make the most of the time the Lord has given us on this earth. There is no time to waste! What will we establish as priorities in our lives? What precisely do we want to accomplish over the course of our lives?

When our Lord came to the end of His life on this earth, He made the following statement:

“I glorified You on the earth, having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do.” *John 17:4*

As you consider the life of our Lord, there were two great priorities that were evident in His life. He came to redeem mankind by way of the cross. And He trained the men who would carry on the ministry of the church. He obviously accomplished many other things while He was on this earth, but these defined His life.

When the apostle Paul came to the end of his life he made this statement:

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing. *2 Timothy 4:7-8*

In what sense did Paul finish the course? The Lord set Paul apart for ministry to the Gentiles. God used him to evangelize the lost, plant churches, and train leaders. When Paul came to the end of his life, he charged Timothy and Titus to equip leaders for the church (Tit 1; 1 Tim 3). While there were many who deserted Paul in his last days, there were also many who were continuing to faithfully proclaim the word. Paul trained men for the next generation. He knew when he was preparing to die that there were faithful men who God allowed him to train who would carry on the ministry.

As a pastor, what is one of the greatest legacies we can leave? We must train the next generation to carry out the Great Commission. How tragic it would be for us to be so consumed with the here and now that we fail to invest in those who will be our future leaders.

O God, You have taught me from my youth, and I still declare Your wondrous deeds. And even when I am old and gray, O God, do not forsake me, until I declare Your strength to this generation, Your power to all who are to come. *Psalm 71:17-18*

How do we best impact those who will come after us? We must train leaders who will faithfully carry on the ministry when we finish our course.

For He established a testimony in Jacob and appointed a law in Israel, which He commanded our fathers that they should teach them to their children, that the generation to come might know, even the children yet to be born, that they may arise and tell them to their children, that they should put their confidence in God and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments, ... *Psalm 78:5-7*

It is dangerously easy to think primarily of our generation. After all, the future generation will be someone else’s problem. But that should not be how we think. We must seriously consider how we can best impact the next generation while we are still here.

When the apostle Paul came to the end of his life he could leave with great anticipation, knowing he would be seeing the Lord. And he could leave with gratitude for the work the Lord accomplished in and through his life. He knew the ministry was being multiplied because of those he had the privilege to train.

When writing to the Philippians, Paul encouraged them to continue in their service to the Lord so that when he came to the end of his life he would have reason to glory because of the work the Lord was accomplishing in and through their lives.

Do all things without grumbling or disputing; so that you will prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world, holding fast the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I will have reason to glory because I did not run in vain nor toil in vain. *Philippians 2:14-16*

Later in this same letter Paul refers to the believers as his joy and crown.

Therefore, my beloved brethren whom I long to see, my joy and crown, in this way stand firm in the Lord, my beloved.

*Philippians 4:1*

When writing to the Thessalonians he calls them his glory and joy.

For who is our hope or joy or crown of exultation? Is it not even you, in the presence of our Lord Jesus at His coming? For you are our glory and joy. *1 Thessalonians 2:19–20*

When he writes the second letter to Corinth, he says they are his reason to be proud in the day of our Lord Jesus.

For we write nothing else to you than what you read and understand, and I hope you will understand until the end; just as you also partially did understand us, that we are your reason to be proud as you also are ours, in the day of our Lord Jesus.

*2 Corinthians 1:13–14*

It is such a privilege to be a child of God and also to be gifted by God to serve as a pastor! We are blessed beyond measure. As we serve the Lord in this life, we ought to often be thinking of the life we will one day enjoy with the Lord, and also the need to prepare others to carry on the work on this earth.

Paul was conflicted when he considered the joy of being with the Lord and the need to accomplish work here. There should be such a tension in every pastor's heart.

For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. But if I am to live on in the flesh, this will mean fruitful labor for me; and I do not know which to choose. But I am hard-pressed from both directions, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for that is very much better; yet to remain on in the flesh is more necessary for your sake. Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy in the faith, so that your proud confidence in me may abound in Christ Jesus through my coming to you again. *Philippians 1:21–26*

Once again consider the following words of the apostle Paul:

And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith,

and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.

*Ephesians 4:11–13*

Our role is to equip the saints for the work of service. Certainly, training men to be pastors and teachers is critical to the life of the church. God has entrusted that responsibility to us.

As Paul anticipated death, some of his parting words to Timothy were:

The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

*2 Timothy 2:2*

The life of the church depends on this perpetual responsibility of spiritual leaders. Faithful men must continue to entrust God's truth to those who will commit to do the same.

The goal for now is fruitful labor. We need to be busy preparing the next generation to faithfully serve the Lord!

# Appendix

## XL Ministries Pastoral Internship

As you have read this book, I hope you have been encouraged to faithfully train men for ministry, including those for the pastorate. Since 1992 I have worked with a group of men committed to helping churches develop training programs for this purpose. We are part of an organization called XL Ministries. We do not charge churches or interns. Our materials are free of charge. We are an organization that desires to partner with like-minded churches to assist them in training men. This training is under the authority of the local church elders. Following is some information regarding this ministry. You can also view our website at [xlministries.org](http://xlministries.org) and you can follow us on Instagram @xlministries.

### What Is XL Ministries?

XL Ministries, Inc. is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting eXcellence in Leadership through quality Christian training. We are primarily focused on providing intense two- to three-year pastoral internships within the context of the local church. The apostle Paul gave clear instructions for pastors to give attention to training more pastors:

And the things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, these entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also.

*2 Timothy 2:2*

XL Ministries was started in 1992 by three youth pastors who had seen a number of men quit or fail in the ministry as a result of poor or incomplete training. Although many of these men had seminary or Bible school education, they did not have sufficient hands-on training to deal with the difficulty and complexity of working in the church.

The founders of XL realized that this hands-on training is most effective when supervised by an experienced pastor. In this way interns can be exposed to the rigors, failures, and triumphs of ministry in an environment that is protective of both the interns and those with whom they work.

Most internships of this type last about three months—a time barely sufficient to become oriented in a church, much less be involved in multiple aspects of ministry. A two-year program was proposed: one year to watch and work with the pastor, and the second year to individually oversee much of the ministry. Thus, the basic structure of XL Ministries began to take shape.

In the first three years XL completed *The Youth Ministry Training Manual*, developed an intense two-year training program, and trained a number of interns. To date, XL has developed over fifty different resources and has graduated interns serving across the United States, as well as internationally.

The focus of ministry training during the initial years was on youth pastors. Over time the training efforts have expanded. Current internship training encompasses men in all positions of pastoral ministry, as well as missions.

XL's desire is that trained men would get involved in other local churches, encouraging the flock to follow Jesus and to provide opportunities for others to receive practical training in pastoral ministry.

## What Is Required of Churches?

XL Ministries is committed to helping churches provide extensive internships for those who are called to pastoral ministry. In order to provide an XL internship, the church leadership must first meet with an XL representative. We will be working together as a team and we want to answer as many questions as possible related to the internship training. Following that meeting, the church must fill out an application. It is important

that we are theologically aligned and that the leadership of the church understands the level of commitment they are making.

A church that is approved to provide the XL internship does not have to always have an intern. It is also possible for a church to have more than one intern at a time. Allow God to provide the man, or men, in His perfect timing.

XL Ministries partners with the church. It is essential to XL that the quality of the internship is maintained. At the same time, the intern is completely under the authority of the church leadership. It is XL's desire to support the church by providing a structured internship and assisting the church as needed.

The church is not required to pay an intern. This internship can be accomplished while also working a full-time job. Some churches are able to provide financial assistance. This of course benefits both the intern and the church.

The XL Ministries internship is designed specifically for training men who are pursuing pastoral ministry or missions. The requirements of this internship are substantial. We do not recommend using this internship for men who simply want to improve their leadership skills.

Before a man can apply to participate in the XL internship, he must have demonstrated an ability to teach. Our program is designed to refine a man's teaching, not to determine if he is able to teach. The intern application process requires an affirmation from someone in the church leadership that they are reasonably certain that the man is gifted to teach.

## What Is Required of Interns?

As a potential intern considers applying for the XL internship he should be aware of the following specific requirements. Interns must:

- Be doctrinally aligned with both XL Ministries and the training church (*XL's doctrinal statement is found at [www.xlministries.org/what-we-believe](http://www.xlministries.org/what-we-believe)*)
- Not be a new convert
- Have the character that would qualify them to be an elder (Tit 1; 1 Tim 3)
- Have been serving in some capacity in a church for the prior two years

- Receive the training in an XL training church
- Have consistent biblical disciplines
- Not have consistent sin patterns
- Have demonstrated a gift for teaching that has been affirmed by a leader in the church
- Be teachable
- Turn in assignments on time
- Complete all the memory work
- Be willing to commit two years for the internship if they are not in seminary, or three years if they are in seminary
- Demonstrate giftedness for ministry throughout the course of the internship
- Pass an ordination exam at the end of the internship

## What Will the Internship Look Like?

XL has developed internships for youth ministry, associate roles, lead pastors, and missions. The internships are designed according to whether a man is in seminary, has finished seminary, will attend seminary, or is not likely to attend seminary. XL will coordinate with the overseeing pastor to make certain the internship reflects all that will be of greatest benefit to both the intern and the church.

An intern is carefully evaluated throughout the course of the internship. The overseeing pastor or his designee will provide a written evaluation each time the intern teaches. They will also evaluate the intern anytime they oversee an activity, event, retreat, etc. Additionally, they will give a quarterly evaluation that includes general categories like spiritual disciplines, shepherding, teaching, administration, etc.

The internship includes the following assignments:

- Memorize a substantial amount of biblical knowledge, which will include each book's theme and outline, plus key dates, chapters, verses, and people
- Write answers to over 70 systematic theology questions
- Write answers to questions related to biblical counseling
- Write answers to questions related to apologetics

- Memorize Scripture verses
- Write theological papers
- Read designated books and write reports
- Teach on a regular basis
- Shepherd those who have been missing from services
- Participate in evangelism
- Regularly attend elder/leadership meetings
- Participate in a baptism class or process
- Assist in a new member's class or process
- Participate in counseling
- Conduct or assist in a wedding
- Conduct or assist in a funeral
- Participate in premarital counseling
- Actively disciple one or more people
- Make hospital visits
- Visit those who are shut in
- Attend staff meetings
- Get exposure to children's ministries
- Get exposure to youth/college ministries
- Get exposure to adult ministries
- Complete administrative assignments – overseeing special events, etc.

Approximately one year into the internship a man must go through a mock candidating session. The overseeing pastor will arrange for a number of people from the church to constitute a panel that will interview the intern for a pastoral position. A representative from XL will participate as well. This is typically a two-hour interview. Specific instructions are provided for this event.

At the end of the internship the leadership of the church will act as an ordination examination panel for the intern. A representative from XL will also participate. This is a two-hour examination on the intern's theology. It includes specific questions on Bible knowledge, systematic theology, counseling, and apologetics. Specific instructions are provided for this exam.

The intern must successfully pass the ordination exam in order to complete his internship.

## How to Begin and Implement the XL Internship

Prior to a church filling out an application to provide the XL internship, an XL representative will meet with the church leadership to present this ministry. It is essential that the church leadership understands and is committed to providing this intensive training.

The church fills out an application to offer the XL internship.

Then the church needs to have an internship candidate. XL does not provide interns to churches. It is ideal when a young man grows up in the church and believes that God is calling him to pastoral ministry. He is well known to the church and he knows the church well. Or, it may be that a church is close to a seminary or Bible college and is able to bring in interns that are pursuing their education. We recommend that such students participate in the life of the church for a minimum of six months before beginning the XL internship. Moving too fast often leads to disappointment and conflict.

Someone in church leadership must listen to the potential intern teach and affirm that he seems to be gifted to teach. Again, it is better to go slow and be as certain as you can. If you get several months into the internship and the intern is not gifted to teach, you will have to ask him to resign from the internship.

Now that you have a man who has a desire to pursue pastoral ministry or missions, and you have affirmed that he can teach, it is time for him to complete the XL Internship Application, including a series of essay questions. At the request of church leadership, XL will send the potential intern a packet of material that explains in detail the internship and includes the application.

When the application is complete with appropriate references and essays, the intern submits them to the overseeing pastor. The pastor reviews the application, references, and essay questions. The overseeing pastor sends a message with any concerns and/or his affirmation of the applicant, along with the application, letters of reference, and essay questions, to [applications@xlministries.org](mailto:applications@xlministries.org). We will review the application. If there are any questions we will discuss them with the overseeing pastor. If everything is favorable, we would approve the man to participate in the XL internship.

Once the applicant is approved, his specific internship schedule is provided with the assignments that will be due over the course of the internship. A check-off form for tracking the assignments will be provided by XL. The overseeing pastor or his designee will carefully monitor the progress of the intern.

Keep in mind that the great benefit to the intern is the time he can spend with the leadership of the church. It is essential that the overseeing pastor sets regular meetings with the intern. We recommend that you meet at least every other week. Following are some of the things you might accomplish in these meetings.

- Review any evaluations. All evaluations must be signed by the person giving them as well as the intern.
- Discuss any pertinent ministry issues. It is helpful for the intern to learn about the exciting things as well as the challenging issues in ministry.
- Discuss current theological issues.
- Review the intern's Bible knowledge.
- Review the systematic theology papers the intern has turned in.
- Have the intern practice answering the systematic theology questions with only a Bible in hand.
- Present some counseling questions to the intern and have him work through them.
- Discuss apologetics.
- Discuss evangelism.

We also encourage the overseeing pastor to allow the intern to join him on appropriate appointments. Mentoring means spending a lot of time together. Jesus modeled this perfectly for us. Have the intern in your home. Demonstrate what a biblical marriage and a biblical family look like, etc.

It is vital that the overseeing pastor or his designee fulfills his responsibilities in the following areas:

- Review monthly written assignments. Make notes on the assignments of any additions or corrections that you review with the intern.

- Confirm that the intern is keeping up on Bible knowledge memory work.
- Review Bible memory work on a consistent basis. This can be done by the overseeing pastor or by a designated individual or individuals.
- Regularly provide a written evaluation when the intern teaches. The intern should teach a minimum of once a month when they begin the internship and this should increase as the internship progresses. It is important that the intern provides you a copy of his lesson notes. He should also include a list of all the resources that he used in his study.
- Provide a written evaluation any time the intern oversees an event or activity.
- Make certain the intern is systematically fulfilling the other required assignments.
- Expose the intern to as many general areas of ministry as possible.
- Every three months the overseeing pastor is to fill out a quarterly evaluation on the intern. This evaluation is more general. It reviews the intern's spiritual disciplines, family life, administrative skills, shepherding, etc.
- In the first year you should help the intern practice for his mock candidating.
- In the second year it is critical that you begin practicing for the ordination exam. This will require an extensive amount of time and can be done by the overseeing pastor and/or his designees.
- In the last four to six months of the internship, it is requested that the intern be allowed to teach several weeks in a row, along with numerous other assignments, in order to help him understand what normal ministry is often like.

XL will send a reminder when it is time to submit a quarterly evaluation.

After you have filled out the quarterly evaluation and reviewed it with the intern, please send it along with all of the assignments and evaluations from the quarter. This should include:

- Written assignments with corrections and notes from the overseeing pastor
- All other evaluations for the quarter
- A current check-off form that shows the progress of the intern to date

Send this information to [assignments@xlministries.org](mailto:assignments@xlministries.org) shortly after the end of each quarter.

A representative from XL will coordinate with the overseeing pastor regarding the schedule for the mock candidating session (year one) and the ordination exam (year two or year three).

When the intern successfully completes all assignments and passes his ordination exam, he will be presented a plaque from XL Ministries.

## What Does XL Provide?

XL Ministries provides the structure for the internship, including:

- Educational requirements
  - Biblical theology
  - Systematic theology
  - Counseling
  - Apologetics
  - Book reports
  - Position papers
  - Scripture memory
  - Theological terms
- Evaluation process
  - Teaching evaluation form
  - Event evaluation form
  - Quarterly evaluation form
- Practical ministry assignments
  - Teaching
  - Leadership
  - Shepherding
  - Administration

XL Ministries also provides assistance before, during, and after the internship, including:

- Help identifying gifted and qualified men through our application process
- Ordination training curriculum with all assignments for Bible knowledge and questions for systematic theology, counseling, and apologetics
- Assignment check-off form
- Assistance and structure for the mock candidating session
- Assistance and structure for the ordination exam
- Answer guide for the ordination training
- Review of all assignments and evaluations for each intern
- Assistance to the church with any challenges they might face with an intern
- Documentation of internship records, so that we can provide a recommendation for the intern when they are looking for a job
- Quarterly update from XL Ministries plus a newsletter a couple of times a year, sent to the overseeing pastor and the intern
- Scholarship funds may be available for the intern to help build their library, with the overseeing pastor directing the expenditure of these funds
- Scholarship funds may be available to help interns with living expenses
- A plaque when an intern successfully finishes the internship

For further information visit [xlministries.org](http://xlministries.org).

At the end of the day, whether you use seminary, XL Ministries, or any number of other great resources available to you, as a pastor take responsibility for discipling the men that God brings into your life who are called to ministry. This is both your responsibility and privilege.

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Pastoral training hasn't always been separated from the local church body. Far from being a recent concept, pastors training pastors used to be the rule rather than the exception. The path for a young man responding to the call of ministry today, however, typically follows a different trajectory: Both he and his home church may invest in formal training that requires him and his growing family to move away for several years. While his theological knowledge deepens, he misses out on the practical experience of budget balancing, administration, event planning, conflict resolution, elders' meetings, class teaching, hospital visits, biblical counseling, one-on-one discipleship with a seasoned shepherd, and much more. He often finds limited opportunity for ministry at his temporary local church, and upon graduation, may never return to his home church after securing a job elsewhere.

**PASTORAL TRAINING IN THE CHURCH** invites readers to consider the pattern for training found in Scripture. Walking through the gospels, it demonstrates the value of life-on-life, on-the-job training from Christ's earthly ministry with His disciples. The book also examines the early church in its expansion, along with the pastoral epistles that offer both instruction and qualifications for leadership. The benefits as well as the limitations of seminary training and training within the church are straightforwardly addressed. The author leaves churches with a warm encouragement to markedly intensify their involvement in the process of training men, along with providing opportunities and resources for how to specifically accomplish this task.

*In this brief but incredibly helpful book, you will learn a proven approach to pastoral training in the church. It produces men who are truly equipped to serve Christ's church. ... It is time for pastors and churches to reshoulder their Christ-assigned duty to identify and equip the next generation of church leaders.*

*—Tom Pennington, Pastor-teacher, Countryside Bible Church*

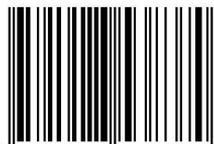
**ROCKY WYATT** has served in pastoral ministry for over forty years, including twenty-six years at Countryside Bible Church in Southlake, Texas, where he trained men for pastoral ministry. He founded XL Ministries in 1992 to help formalize the process within the local church. Since 2020, he is serving full-time as XL's Executive Director, partnering with churches to train men within the body.



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