

Not My Flock: The Job of the Pastor

1. What is my responsibility as a pastor?

“Take Heed” and “feed” the flock God’s flock

Acts 20:28 “**Take heed** therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, **to feed** the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.”

vs. 29 “For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.”

vs. 30 “Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.”

The warning about wolves must indicate that “Take heed” relates to those who would bring in strange doctrine and try to draw away disciples after themselves.

2. My job as the pastor is to “oversee” that flock.

vs. 28 “...all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers...” This word, *overseer* is the Greek word *episkopos*; as we will see in a moment, this word is significant.

God gives each pastor a flock. That flock is **his** flock. Pastors are to **oversee** their own flock.

Paul taught a group of pastors because it was his flock; one does not teach those belonging to another flock, only those in his flock. Paul explains that these men were special:

vs. 25 “And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more.”

vs. 26 “Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men.”

vs. 27 “For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.”

vs. 31 “Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.”

For three years, these men had been under the tutelage of Paul. He had a long-running ministry to them, teaching night and day with tears. These men were pastors and leaders in whom Paul had invested much. So these men had listened to him, learned from him, and followed him. These pastors were HIS FLOCK. But each one of these men also had his own FLOCK. Times came when he warned them in tears; his relationship to them was serious and intimate; he passionately instructed them.

I may try to help, teach, and encourage some small group of pastors, but once I realize they do not want my instruction, I step away and let them pick their own leaders and their own instructors. Some say to me, “Why don’t you tell this guy.... or show that guy...” I do not because he is not in MY FLOCK. Perhaps I should plead; perhaps I should passionately weep before him in hopes of his following my instruction, but I have not. I offer my relationship freely, but only to those who seek it.

My job is not to correct other pastors — especially publicly. I may have mistakenly done this to those I love and felt I could instruct, yet sometimes I have been wrong. In those cases, I have backed off and stayed distant friends. I have even apologized for my impropriety in seeking to instruct a pastor with whom I did not have the “flock” kind of relationship.

3. WHEN DO I REBUKE FALSE DOCTRINE?

When it is infecting or endangering my FLOCK.

I try to just name the wrong doctrine. At times I may need to mention a name, but only when that name is a danger to my FLOCK.

KEEPING THE PRIOR INFORMATION CLEARLY IN MIND....

For me to go around spreading information that harms others or exposes sin is unscriptural. Unless it is endangering MY FLOCK, I need to stay out of it.

Proverbs 6:14 “Frowardness is in his heart, he deviseth mischief continually; he soweth discord.”

vs. 19 “A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren.”

Proverbs 16:28 “A froward man soweth strife: and a whisperer separateth chief friends.”

Proverbs 26:20 “Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out: so where there is no talebearer, the strife ceaseth.”

When the action of someone causes discord, it is wrong. For me to introduce information that causes division in your home or your church is wrong. If the information does not concern MY FLOCK, it is wrong to give it.

3 John 1:9 “I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not.”

vs. 10 “Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words...”

Some “rookies” would love to be the big shot and love the “preeminence.” They are nothing of themselves, so they challenge and attack those veterans of the ministry who have faithfully built and served the people of God for generations.

Sowing discord is the issue. Unless it is endangering MY FLOCK, I need not spread information that sows discord. For me to separate good friends is wrong... unless it is something going on in my FLOCK. I am to take the oversight of MY FLOCK not of your flock.

A thirty-two-year-old young man asked me some serious questions about his life. I found out what his dad thought and would not have involved myself had his dad and I not seen eye to eye. That young man is not my son. Though he is a member of my church, the matter was a personal one, not church related or doctrinal. I wanted to be sure that the things I said did not cause discord with his father. In the family sense, he is NOT MY FLOCK.

When a Bible college student calls me regarding dating, somewhere in the conversation I will dig out the opinions of dad and mom. That young person is their “flock” and I am a secondary influence. I do not have to agree with mom and dad. I can say, “Trust your parents” and keep my mouth shut — remembering he is NOT MY FLOCK

I am very careful about what I say regarding colleges. There are some good young people who attend those colleges at the request of their parents or pastor. NOT MY FLOCK.... Now, some of my own may be in that college, yet, I have guided them there and they have a pastor there, college administrators there, and other leadership there.

I have a shared responsibility with others. I am careful not to sow discord among brethren. I do not want my college students running around campus saying, "Well, that may be what the pastor here says, but my pastor says..." If this happened, discord would be sown, and I want no part in it. That college is NOT MY FLOCK, at least not entirely.

Proverbs 6:19 says God hates "he that soweth discord among brethren," — that statement is clear. God does not hate us when we get confused and our feeble brain misses some scriptural truth. We may be off a little, yet still be blessed. But, we cannot sow discord and be blessed. So, if the situation does not concern MY FLOCK, I will leave it alone.

If the situation is not affecting my church or troubling my family, I will stay out of it and leave it alone. If it is not hurting my college students, I will keep my distance.

4. A WORD STUDY

1 Peter 4:15 "But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters."

How about a brief word study?

Busybody — A Greek word allotriepiskopos: one who takes the supervision of affairs pertaining to others and in no wise to himself, a meddler in other men's affairs.

This is a simple word but illustrates my point well.

The root words are:

1. *allotrios* — belonging to another; foreign; strange; not of one's own family; alien; an enemy
2. *episkopos* — translated as bishop or overseer

Remember earlier when Paul wrote to the pastors in Ephesus to take oversight of the flock, their flock? That word overseer is the same root word used in busybody.

An overseer is a man charged with the duty of ensuring that others perform their duties properly — things done in HIS FLOCK. The *episkopos* is the superintendent, elder, or overseer of the church.... HIS CHURCH or HIS FLOCK.

The first part of the word means things belonging to another. The second part is basically the word pastor.

No child of God is to busy himself trying to pastor that which belongs to another — whether it be their children, their church, or their belongings. The things or events belonging to another are to be left alone. We are each given oversight of certain areas, those areas given to another are to be avoided. It is not our job to pastor the flock of another.

I do not write tickets, the police do that. I do not go to the church down the road and stand up to correct the pastor. I do not fight issues unless they are creeping into my church; if this happens, I am the overseer of MY FLOCK and I must address the situation. I do not try to straighten out the ideas in the flock of other men; that is what a busybody does, and that practice is forbidden.

Now, I realize some rookies have lifted themselves up as the source of all doctrinal purity, and they feel it their duty to correct pastors and church members all over the world; but, be sure it does not please God. If it is sowing discord, God hates it. If the flock belongs to another, God forbids it.

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