

Pastoring the Pastor

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Preacher: Rev. Murdo M Campbell

[0 : 00] Well, if we could, with the Lord's help and the Lord's enabling, if we could turn back to that portion of Scripture that we read. 1 Timothy chapter 5.

1 Timothy chapter 5, and if you read again in verse 17. Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching.

For the Scripture says, you shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain, and the laborer deserves his wages. 1 Timothy chapter 5.

In his commentary on this section of Paul's letter to Timothy, the American preacher and pastor, John MacArthur, he writes these very provoking words.

He says, Sadly, he says, the history of the church has been marked by a defection from biblical truth due to the church's leadership.

[2 : 19] Paul's call for a restoration of biblical eldership is one the contemporary church desperately needs to heed, since many, if not most, of the problems facing the church today can be traced to the failures of its leadership.

And that's the point that Paul is putting to Timothy here in this section. Paul is saying to Timothy, An effective leadership will have effective elders.

An effective leadership will have effective elders. Therefore, Timothy, you must pastor the pastors. You must pastor the pastors.

But as we see from these verses, pastoring the pastors is what you could maybe describe as a double-edged sword. Because faithful pastors are to, first of all, receive double respect.

But sometimes, as Paul mentions, they need double rebuke. Faithful pastors are to receive double respect. But sometimes they need double rebuke.

[3 : 30] And there are two headings this evening. Double respect and double rebuke. Double respect and double rebuke. Look, first of all, at double respect. Look at verse 17.

Paul says, Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching. For the scripture says, You shall not muzzle an ox when it threads out the grain, and the laborer deserves his wages.

Now, as you know, Paul wrote this personal and very pastoral letter to gently guide Timothy through some of the pastoral problems. He was facing. And as he preached and pastored a congregation in the seaport city of Ephesus, we said before that Paul, he was guiding Timothy through some of the pastoral problems he was going through.

And we've set them out in five Ps. Problems, prayer, positions, passion, and pastoring. You know, I always think that it's good for us to set the scene, because when we understand the purpose, and when we understand the progression of Paul's letter, we see how pastoral he really is.

The first P was the problems in the church. They were because the elders were soft on sin. They were loose on the law. They were glossing over the gospel. And there were so many problems that, as we know, Timothy, he wanted to throw in the towel and just walk away altogether.

[4 : 59] But Paul, as this father figure in Timothy's life, he says to him, stay there. Stand firm. Stay focused. And with the problems in the church, Paul emphasized the importance of prayer.

Pray through your problems. Pray for one another. Pray for those in authority over you. And pray for those who are in positions of leadership.

Pray, pray, pray. But then, as Paul explains in chapter 3, those who were in positions of leadership, they were actually the problem. And Timothy's pastoral problems were actually positional problems, because there were erroneous elders, there were disobedient deacons, who were in these positions of leadership within the church.

But Timothy needed to have effective elders. He needed to have devoted deacons in positions of leadership so that they'll encourage the members to be mission-minded in their membership. Then in chapter 4, we saw that Paul emphasized, and he exhorted Timothy to have a passion for truth. Always stand on the truth. Have a passion for truth by criticizing and condemning all the demonic doctrine of these erroneous elders and disobedient deacons.

[6 : 17] Because if you don't, says Paul, it'll only get worse. If you don't deal with it, Satan will silently and subtly get a foothold, and he will open the floodgates, and there will be no turning back.

So now, having addressed all these pastoral issues, the problems in the church, the importance of prayer, the positions of leadership, and the passion for truth, in these concluding chapters, Paul encourages young Timothy with the fifth and final P, pastor people patiently.

Pastor people patiently. Because as we said last Wednesday evening, the church is a family. It's not only a body, the body of Christ. It's not only the bride of Christ, but the church is a family.

And as a family, the church is to love one another, and the church is to look after one another.

Because as Jesus said, the greatest witness to the watching world is that we love one another, and that we look out for one another.

All people will know that you are my disciples if you have love for one another. Therefore, as those who have been adopted and accepted into the family of God, as those who have been named and numbered as the children of God, with God as our Father, the church as our Mother, Jesus as our elder brother, and all of us, brothers and sisters in Christ, as a church family, we're to love one another, and we're to look after one another.

[7 : 47] We're to show care, and concern, and compassion towards one another. We're to bear one another's burdens and baggage through prayerful, practical, and pastoral care.

We're to pastor people patiently. We're to pastor people patiently. And last week, from the first half of the chapter, we considered the importance of pastoring widows patiently, pastoring them to be godly and not gossipy widows.

But now Paul, once again, draws attention to the role and responsibility of elders from verse 17 onwards. And there he reminds and reaffirms to Timothy that an effective leadership will have effective elders.

An effective leadership will have effective elders. Therefore, Timothy, you must pastor the pastors. And of course, the pastors in the congregation are not just what we would call the minister. The pastors are all of the elders because they are the pastoral team for the congregation. What's more, there's no hierarchy within the eldership.

[9 : 03] It's not minister, session clerk, all the other elders. There's no hierarchy. It's all equality. Equality within the eldership. But as Paul distinguishes here in verse 17, he says there is a difference between a ruling elder and a teaching elder.

A ruling elder is what we would refer to as an elder. That's what we would call them. They are to pastor the people within the parameters of the Word of God. But I'm also an elder.

You might not think of me as an elder, but I am an elder. That's what the Bible calls me. I'm a teaching elder. I've been trained and taught to teach. That doesn't mean I know everything.

It certainly doesn't. Nor does it mean that I'm above everybody else. It doesn't mean I'm above any of the other elders or the congregation. As I've said, the only reason I stand in a pulpit is because the Word of God is to be above everyone.

It's the Word of God that is to be elevated, not the man. It's the Word that must be above the people. We must always sit under the Word of God. And you know, Paul here, he distinguishes and differentiates between the ruling elder and the teaching elder when he says that a teaching elder labors in the Word and doctrine.

[10 : 22] He labors in preaching and teaching. And so there's no hierarchy. It's all equality within the eldership where together we serve alongside one another as a pastoral team in the congregation.

But here, Paul, in chapter 5, Paul isn't revisiting and he's not repeating what he said in chapter 3 because in chapter 3 he spoke about the qualifications of eldership.

Paul has already taught us in chapter 3, he taught that effective elders will be conscious. They will be conscious about their Christian commitment, their Christian character, conduct, and conversation.

But in this section, in chapter 5, Paul teaches Timothy that in order to have an effective leadership with effective elders, you must pastor the pastors.

In order to have an effective leadership with effective elders, you must pastor the pastors. And you know, attending the church development track, that's something that was made aware of and reminded of.

[11 : 36] And that's why, in many ways, I wanted us, as office bearers, I wanted us to begin that monthly book study on faithful leaders by Rico Tice. Because as Paul explains and emphasizes here, in order to have effective leadership, with effective elders and devoted deacons, we must pastor the pastors.

Therefore, it's important to meet together. It's helpful to meet together, as we do once a month, to discuss our role and our responsibilities as office bearers.

It's important for us to consider the prayerful and the practical and the pastoral responsibilities we have as office bearers. But of course, these things are only helpful if you attend them.

And a book study on leadership is only useful if you read the book. Because like many things in life, you only get out of it what you put in. And you only benefit from it if you make time for it, if you put effort into it.

And you know, that applies to every area of our life. As Christians, there needs to be commitment. It takes time, takes effort, takes commitment. And by the way, gents, we meet again this coming Tuesday, half past seven.

[12 : 59] So I hope you're all there. But you know, it's good, it's good to pastor the pastors and meet together about these things. But Paulie also says that an effective leadership with effective elders must be counted worthy of double honor.

He says in verse 17, let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching. Now, Paul is not saying here that elders and ministers must be put on a pedestal where they're seen and they show off to, they're shown off to everyone else in the congregation.

That was, I would say, certainly a mistake of the past where elders and even ministers were elevated to a position that was completely unbiblical.

Because as Paul tells us and as Paul teaches us in many of his letters, throughout many of his letters, he says that the role and the responsibility of a ruling or a teaching elder is not about status. It's all about service. It's always about service. In fact, Paul repeatedly describes himself as a slave and as a servant of Jesus Christ.

[14 : 17] Therefore, being an elder or a teaching elder, it's not about promotion and status. It's about the position that God has given to us and service.

Which is why Paul explains and emphasizes here in verse 17 that an elder must build trust. He must gain honor.

He must earn respect within his congregation and his community. He can't just command it or claim it because of the position he holds within the church.

He must gain honor. He must earn respect. He must build trust within the congregation and community. And as you know, that doesn't happen overnight.

It takes time. It requires energy and effort. It requires devotion and dedication. As someone once said, an effective elder will be everywhere, not elsewhere.

[15 : 20] An effective elder will be everywhere, not elsewhere. That's why Paul says in verse 17, let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching.

For the scripture says, you shall not muzzle an ox when it threads out the grain and the laborer deserves his wages. In verse 18 there, Paul quotes from Deuteronomy, you shall not muzzle an ox when it threads out the grain.

And he also quotes the words of Jesus in Luke's gospel, the laborer deserves his wages. And he does so in order to explain and to emphasize not only that a teaching elder is to be paid what he's owed, but also that when an elder rules well, he will receive the reward of double respect.

When an elder rules well, he will receive the reward of double respect. In other words, Paul is saying when an elder builds trust in a congregation and community, when an elder earns respect in a congregation and within a community, when an elder gains honor within a congregation and within a community, he will receive the reward of double respect.

He will receive the reward of double respect. And so in this section, Paul is saying to Timothy, in order to have an effective leadership with effective elders, you must pastor the pastors.

[17 : 01] But pastoring the pastors, as we said, is like a double-edged sword because when they rule well, they receive double respect.

But sometimes, says Paul, they need double rebuke. That's what we see secondly. Double respect and then double rebuke.

Now look at verse 19. Paul says, Now as we said, this section, well, I suppose that the letter as a whole, Paul is focusing upon the fact that as a church, we're a church family.

We're to show care, concern, and compassion towards one another. We're to love one another and look out for one another. We're to pastor people patiently. Therefore, when it comes to effective leadership with effective elders, we must pastor the pastors patiently.

And as the minister of the congregation, Paul teaches Timothy that he's not to shirk or to shy away from his role and his responsibility.

[18 : 34] He's to pastor the pastors patiently by sometimes saying those challenging and sometimes complex things, maybe even having complex conversations with his elders.

But he's, Paul is saying to Timothy that he's to deal with these issues within his eldership and he's to deal with them lovingly. He's not to ridicule them.

He's not to reject them. He wasn't to be angry with them or arrogant towards them or even aggressive towards them. No, Timothy was to pastor the pastors.

He was to pastor his elders and he was to do it patiently and peacefully. He was to address and admonish his elders with care, compassion and concern.

And you know, particularly as he was a young minister, so Timothy was to rebuke his elders respectfully, recognizing that they were older than him. That's why Paul said at the beginning of the chapter, he says in verse 1, do not rebuke an older man but encourage him as you would a father, younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, younger women as sisters in all purity.

[19 : 52] Timothy was to pastor the pastors patiently and peacefully which of course requires real wisdom. Because as Paul says there in verse 19, he says, do not admit a charge against an elder except on the evidence of two or three witnesses.

And this is an important point because if someone is going to bring an accusation against a minister or an elder, there must be evidence. There has to be evidence.

It can't just be a personal feud or fallout. It can't be hearsay. It can't be just he said or she said.

There has to be evidence. That's what Paul is saying. There has to be evidence because as soon as you make this accusation or as soon as you make an allegation against an elder or a minister or a church member, you are immediately defaming them, disparaging their Christian character, conduct, and conversation.

And as Paul explains and emphasizes here, it has to be dealt with very wisely and very carefully.

And you know, that's why we have church courts.

And the church courts, it's taken me a while to understand how they work. But you know, they often mirror the form and fashion of law courts. Because when an accusation or an allegation is made, it has to be taken seriously.

[21 : 24] But there must be evidence. And as Paul says, there must be two or three eyewitness testimonies. There has to be statements, statements that are signed. There has to be a formal process that is followed.

And that's because when it comes to church discipline, these things have to be done seriously, but it also has to be done sensitively and very sympathetically.

It has to be done cautiously, with care, compassion, and concern. It has to be done lovingly, always with a desire to look after the individual, but also others who may be involved.

You know, we often view church discipline as a negative thing. We don't like to talk about discipline. But church discipline has always been the marks, one of the marks of the church.

Church discipline has always been one of the marks of the church. Because in 1560, way back in the Scottish Reformation, when John Knox and all the other, there were six Johns, I can't remember all of them, but there were six Johns and they wrote the Scots Confession in 1560.

[22 : 39] And they explained in the introduction that the foundation and the fundamentals of the church in Scotland are three things. The word, sacraments, and church discipline.

They are the three, they are the foundation and the fundamentals of the church in Scotland. The word, sacraments, and church discipline. And it was church discipline not because they wanted to be harsh and heavy-handed with everyone within the church.

No, it was actually the opposite. Because when it came to church discipline, they wanted to be prayerful, and they wanted to be practical, and they wanted to be pastoral in their care, compassion, and concern.

You know, the desired outcome of church discipline, it's not exile and excommunication. Rather, it is repentance and restoration.

The desired outcome of church discipline is not exile and excommunication, but rather repentance and restoration. That's why church discipline should always be carried out with genuine care, compassion, and concern for the individual and also for others who are involved.

[23 : 57] And you know, this was certainly misunderstood in the past, especially when it came to the discipline stool. In fact, I believe that the idea of the discipline stool, it probably came from verse 20.

Verse 20 says, as for those who persist in sin, rebuke them in the presence of all, so that the rest may stand in fear. Now, as many of you know, the discipline stool was the stool on which someone would sit in front of the congregation and be lambasted publicly from the pulpit by the minister. And to some extent, the discipline stool was still in use probably only 50 years ago. But I'll say it was completely wrong. Because, you know, public character assassination is not what Paul is teaching here.

He's teaching about prayerful, practical, pastoral, care, compassion, concern, love, loving one another, bearing one another's burdens, caring for the individual and for those involved.

And that's not how discipline should be carried out then. Because, as we said, the desired outcome of church discipline is not exile. It's not excommunication. It's rather repentance and restoration.

[25 : 25] repentance and restoration is what church discipline is all about. But, you know, when it comes to church discipline and the discipline stool, which is a very interesting incident about a woman named, maybe you've heard of her before, Jenny Geddes.

And with this, I'll conclude this evening. You know, the interesting incident happened following King Charles I's succession to the throne, which was in 1625.

And after he took the throne, King Charles sought to impose his Anglican views upon the Scottish Reformed and Presbyterian church.

So he wanted to introduce the Anglican prayer book to the Scottish Reformed Presbyterian church in Scotland. And the story is told that in St. Giles' church, on the Royal Mile in Edinburgh, the church that John Knox preached at only a century before.

But on Sunday, the 23rd of July, 1637, as the Anglican prayer book began to be read by the Anglican dean, who was called James Hannay, Jenny Geddes, a lady in the congregation, she stood up and picked up the three-legged discipline stool and threw it.

[26 : 47] She threw it at the dean while shouting the words, and I think Ina would probably say it better than me, didn't say mass in my lug. And needless to say, Jenny Geddes' actions, they sparked this riot in church that morning.

There was a complete riot in St. Giles' church. But it was a riot that would have this ripple effect, a ripple effect across the whole nation of Scotland, which ultimately led to the signing of the National Covenant the following year, which was in 1638.

It's a fascinating history of what was going on at the time. And of course, the distinction between the Anglican church in England and the Reformed and Presbyterian church in Scotland had continued to widen throughout the 17th century.

And it would eventually lead to many bloody years between the King of England and the Scottish Covenanters. And yet Jenny Geddes' she has been hailed as this heroine of St. Giles' Cathedral. In fact, in 1992, I was only there a few months ago in Edinburgh, and I saw there the bronze, this bronze sculpture of the three-legged discipline stool that was presented to the congregation in 1992 in memory of Jenny Geddes.

[28 : 10] And so, if you're ever in Edinburgh on the Royal Mile, make sure you pay a visit to St. Giles' Church, and you see the discipline stool that Jenny Geddes threw and shouted, D'NASA Mass in my lug.

But you know, what we're looking at here in 1 Timothy chapter 5, Paul here, he's explaining, he's emphasizing to us something very challenging for the leadership of the church.

And he's saying to us, to me, to us as elders, in order to have an effective leadership with effective elders, you must pastor the pastors.

And that's pastoring one another. Pastoring the pastors. In order to have an effective leadership with effective elders, you must pastor the pastors.

church. And so, God willing, next week, as we come to the final chapter of 1 Timothy, we'll consider another area of prayerful, practical, and pastoral care within the church family.

[29 : 20] So, may the Lord bless these few thoughts to us. Let us pray. O Lord, our gracious God, we give thanks to Thee for Thy Word, Thy Word that is so full, and a Word that addresses every area of life, not only life outside the church, but also life within.

And we pray that we would take it to heart, and the parts of it that are serious and solemn, that we would take heed to them. and be reminded, Lord, that even as leaders, as elders, we need to be faithful, we need to be effective, we need to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, knowing then that all other things will be added unto us.

O Lord, we pray that Thou wouldst guide us and direct us as a church session, as a deacon's court, as a congregation, that we would love one another, that we would bear one another and other's burdens, that we would show prayerful and practical and even pastoral care towards one another and to those whom we love.

O Lord, be gracious to us, bless us as a congregation, remember us within this community, and Lord, that Thou wouldst be near to us day by day, keeping us ever looking to Jesus, the author and the finisher of our faith.

Cleanse us and we pray, go before us, take away our iniquity, receive us graciously, for Jesus' sake. Amen. Well, we're going to sing again this time in Psalm 102.

[31 : 06] Psalm 102, we're singing in the Scottish Psalter, page 368. It's the second version of the Psalm and we're singing from verse 13 down to the verse marked 18.

Psalm 102 at verse 13, We'll sing on down to the verse marked 18 of Psalm 102 to God's praise. to God's numbers Yeti, the book The Job Words of Christ amount and What Eve of For favor with what's said Behold, this now come to my end Thy saints take pleasure In her storms Her very touch To them is dear

All in the mountains And kingly thrones On earth thy glorious name Shall fear God in his glory Shall appear When Zion he builds and repairs He shall regard And lend his ear And do the need His humble prayers The athletes

He will not store All times this shall be All record A generation The Lord Shall praise And magnify The Lord The Lord The Lord The Lord