

The Preacher – Church Relationship

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Introduction: We must always examine our beliefs and practices by the word of God.

- A. The Bible is a sure anchor that keeps us from drifting over time. **(Heb 2:1-3)**
 - 1. We face the real danger of allowing our “customary practices” to produce attitudes and actions that in time can lead us into apostasy. (Ex. Catholicism)
 - 2. One of the sure signs of apostasy is when we are so sensitive that we will not examine our practices (even the long standing ones!). **(2 Tim 4:1-4)**
- B. Churches today make the choice and work of the preacher one of great importance.
 - 1. Without question this is an important decision! It is important because the work of preaching is important! **(Rom 1:16; 2 Tim 4:5)**
 - 2. If a man comes that does not bring the gospel then great damage can be done. **(2 Jn 9-11; Rom 16:17-18)**
 - 3. If a man comes with wrong motives then he can limit the gospel. **(Phil 1:15-17)**
 - 4. I believe that many churches, however, have placed additional importance upon the role and work of the evangelist that the Lord has not!

I. Why are there churches and preachers?

A. What is an evangelist for? **(Acts 21:8)**

“The term evangelist is derived from the Greek word *euaggelion*, meaning “gospel” or “good news.” The verbal forms of *euaggelizesthai*, meaning “to bring” or “to announce good news” occur some fifty-five times **(Acts 8:4, 25, 35; 11:20)** and are normally translated with the appropriate form of the word “preach.””

- 1. The evangelist is to preach the word! This is his great work.
 - a. He will be judged by God on how faithful he has been to the word and not on how pleasing he has been to men. **(Gal 1:10; 4:16)**
 - b. He carries a great burden to do his job well for the sake of his hearers. What fruit will be produced? **(2 Tim 2:14-15; 1 Cor 3:9-15)**
 - c. The reward of the evangelist is to see the beautiful fruits of God’s word in the lives of others. **(Phil 2:14-16; 3 Jn 2-4)**
- 2. The evangelist is not a “pastor.”
 - a. God has given instructions for pastors. Their work is different!
 - b. Most churches make the evangelist do the work of pastors by neglect!
- B. What is a church for? **(Eph 4:11-16)**
 - 1. A local church is equipped by the Lord to build up the saints!
 - 2. A local church will be involved with “every member” doing their part.
 - 3. Many Christians think they are “hiring” a preacher to do their work!

II. Expectations of a local church of an evangelist

A. They can expect no more than the Lord does. **(1 Cor 4:1-5)**

- 1. What do you mean when you “hire” a preacher?
- 2. If you mean you are supporting a man to be faithful to the work of the Lord then fine. But if you mean you are hiring a man to do your work or submit to human rules then you are wrong! (Ex. As a “youth minister” or special visitation.)
- 3. Every Christian has responsibilities to the oversight of the church’s elders, including the preacher. This oversight, however, is limited! **(Heb 13:17)**
- B. To preach the word plainly and boldly. **(1 Tim 4:16)**
 - 1. Again, what is our goal? We need men to see and understand God’s word.

- 2. This will allow them to place their faith in God and not in men. **(2 Cor 4:5)**
- C. To live a life consistent with being a Christian. **(1 Tim 4:12, 16)**
- D. To have a love the Lord and thus a love the truth! **(1 Tim 6:3-5)**
 - 1. A message becomes powerful when the hearer believe there is a genuine interest in their well-being on the part of the preacher! **(Phil 2:17-10)**
 - 2. If a man is trying to just “make a living” or advance a “career,” he should repent!

III. Expectations of an Evangelist of a local church

- A. Faithfulness to the Lord. **(Col 2:18-19; Ezek 33:30-33)**
- B. Those who will stand up when conflict comes. **(2 Tim 4:16-17; Gal 5:11; 6:12)**
 - 1. In many churches the evangelist must stand “alone.”
 - 2. Many “personality” issues are in fact doctrinal issues that cowardly men use to “run a preacher off.”
- C. Support and encouragement in his work. **(2 Cor 11:8-9; Lk 10:7)**
 - 1. It is a very common problem for a preacher to be involved in his work alone without understanding or help.
 - 2. It is good for a man to be supported in this great work to be effective! Sadly this is difficult when proper leadership does not exist.
- D. Protection from carnal attacks and gossip from the weak. **(Titus 1:10-11)**
 - 1. Some view the preacher as “expendable.” (Ex. He’s not a member.)
 - 2. There are times where faithful men must stop those who would destroy another’s influence unfairly. When you destroy a preacher’s influence, you have destroyed his ability to effectively work.

IV. Special problems of our times

- A. Churches without elders.
 - 1. None of you would want to work under the arrangement of the “men’s business meeting!” While it is a proper scriptural arrangement, it has great weaknesses.
 - 2. In the area of preacher’s support there is great ignorance. Sadly a young man is often ignored if he tries to explain his needs. (Ex. “You reckon that’s legal?”)
- B. Lack of personal evangelism. **(2 Tim 2:2)**
 - 1. Both the evangelist and the local church must be involved.
 - 2. How can you expect the preacher to come into a community and reach people without the active work of every member? (Ex. Fishing class)
- C. A wrong attitude towards preaching.
 - 1. Why did Paul receive criticism in his day? **(2 Cor 10:10; 1 Cor 2:2-4)**
 - 2. Today we see a shift of responsibility from the home to the preacher! Rather than preparing one’s heart for worship and expect that a man teach the truth, we are now concerned about “style and delivery.” (Ex. Clock watchers)
 - 3. Recently Bill Hall preached a series about “problems facing the church” and one of his greatest concerns was “professionalism in preaching.” (Ex. Members visits 20 yrs ago)
 - 4. Should a preacher become the focal point of “how the work is going?”
 - a. Too often we have made him the “pastor” in a de-facto way. Think!
 - b. When brethren make a preacher the focus of concern for things that are the duty of the whole congregation, it is almost certain that these same brethren have neglected their own duty!

Conclusion: What is your attitude towards the work of preaching? **(Rev 2:4-5)**

- A. One day our hearts will be revealed. Let us repent and return to the great work of the Lord!