

Let's Be Clear About Pastors

Almighty and gracious God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, you have commanded us to pray that you would send forth labourers into your harvest.

Out of your infinite mercy give us true teachers and ministers of your word who truly fulfil your command and preach nothing contrary to your holy word. Grant that we, being warned, instructed, nurtured, comforted, and strengthened by your holy word, may do those things which are well pleasing to you and profitable for our salvation; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

1 Under the heading 'Why Pastors?' this document gives John 20:21-23 and Matthew 28:18-20 in support of the statement, "Jesus Christ instituted the Office of the Ministry".

It's clear from Mt 28:16 that the risen Lord authorised the Eleven to baptize and teach all nations. Since they all died within the first century, who are implied in the promise in verse 20b?

2 Was the role of apostle any different from that of elder (presbyter) /overseer (bishop) /shepherd (pastor)? Compare the charge given to Peter, John 21:15c, 16c, 17c ("*Feed/shepherd my lambs/sheep*") with the apostle's description of his calling and work in 1 Peter 5:1-3.

3 The title 'pastor' ('shepherd') is a reminder that pastors act on Christ's behalf (1 Peter 5:4, John 10:11). Therefore, they also act on behalf of God the Father and the Holy Spirit. List what the following passages tell us about the specific work they're called to do: Mt 28:18-20; Mk 16:14,15; Lk 24:47; Jn 20:21-23 and 1 Cor 11:24,25.

4 What qualifications ('criteria') are required for a man to be a pastor? See 1 Tim 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9.
Does your translation accurately render what is literally 'man of one woman' as 'husband of one wife'? Or does it less accurately say something .like 'married only once'?
(Note also 1 Tim 3:15, "... *if I delay, you may know how one ought to [literally, 'must'] behave in the household of God ...*")

5 Pastors aren't to appoint themselves, but are to be appointed ('ordained') by the church, by way of her ministers. See Mt 10:1,5a; Lk 6:13; Acts 1:8; 1 Tim 5:22; Titus 1:5.

6 Read 1 Peter 2:9-12. How are the whole of God's priesthood to "proclaim" his "excellencies"? See the varied instruction given in 2:11-13, 17, 19, and 3:17!

*Lord of the church, we humbly pray
for those who guide us in your way
and speak your holy word;
with love divine their hearts inspire,
and touch their lips with hallowed fire;
give needed strength, O Lord.
(LHS 245, stanza 1)*

Pastor David Buck