

Pastors as God Intended

Sunday, January 17, 2016

It was He who gave some to be (pastors)... to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up... attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

(Eph. 4:11 - 13)

It doesn't take many years in this business to realize that we can conduct a fairly respectable pastoral ministry without giving much more than ceremonial attention to God...

But the pastor's responsibility is to keep the community attentive to God. (Eugene Peterson)

Introduction: Shepherding God's people through the valley of human expectation and divine calling.

Sermon Outline:

I. Pastors as Seen by the World

II. Pastors as Seen by the Traditional Church

III. Pastors as God Intended

IV. Implications of Pastors Pursuing What God Intended

Questions for Reflection / Discussion:

- i. What was your perception or expectation of a pastor's role during your childhood years?
- ii. How has that changed now that you are a more mature believer?
- iii. What element of a pastor's role according to Scripture is most neglected today? Why?
- iv. What needs to occur in the local church for pastors to fulfill their calling and churches theirs?

We are going to ordain you to this ministry and we want your vow that you will stick to it. This is not a temporary job assignment, but a way of life that we need lived out in our community. We know you are launched on the same difficult belief venture in the same dangerous world as we are. We know your emotions are as fickle as ours. That is why we are going to ordain you and why we are going to exact a vow from you.

We know there will be days and months, maybe even years, when we won't feel like believing anything and won't want to hear it from you. And we know there will be days and weeks and maybe even years when you won't feel like saying it. It doesn't matter. Do it. You are ordained to this ministry, vowed to it.

There may be times when we come to you as a committee or delegation and demand that you tell us something else than what we are telling you now. Promise right now that you won't give in to what we demand of you. You are not the minister of our changing desires, or our time-conditioned understanding of our needs, or our secularized hopes for something better. With these vows we are lashing you fast to the mast of Word and sacrament so you will be unable to respond to the siren voices.

There are many other things to be done in this wrecked world, and we are going to be doing at least some of them, but if we don't know the foundational realities with which we are dealing - God, kingdom, gospel - we are going to end up living futile, fantasy lives. Your task is to keep telling the basic story, representing the presence of the Spirit, insisting on the priority of God, speaking the Biblical words of command and promise and invitation.

(Eugene Peterson, The Contemplative Pastor).