

Struggles in Christian Leadership

Eye-opening and thought-provoking article at Acts 29 on “Why every leader needs a shepherd”. An excerpt here, but read it in full for some challenging statistics.

Pastors deal with an array of emotions as a result of ministering to a group of people. The stress of preparing sermons, developing leaders, handling boards, raising funds for the budget, caring for the sick and elderly, encouraging the wayward, challenging people to get on mission, bringing unity, reconciling conflicts, conducting worship, handling facility issues, counseling, weddings, funerals, social functions, praying with others and the responsibility of having an exemplary marriage and family.



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I had this piece emailed to me today by a member of my leadership team. Bill Wilson posts “7 Things Your Pastor Wishes You Knew, But Is Afraid To Tell You”

- It's not their fault, but your minister didn't learn everything they needed in seminary to be a pastor. Like doctors leaving medical school, clergy need a time to do their “residency” and learn to practice in the field what they've learned in the classroom. Actually, that theological education never stops. So give your minister permission not to be perfect and always to be learning.

- Every pastor must learn to “choose their guilt.” There is always more to do than there is time to do it. Every minister must come to terms with an inherent guilt around what he or she did not do today. Too often that means their own family gets the leftovers. By the way, this is a dilemma for all of us regardless of our vocation.
- Be kind if you have a criticism. Healthy clergy welcome constructive criticism. Everyone abhors petty nitpicking. Make sure you engage in the former and not the latter.
- Have some realistic expectations for the pastor’s family. How many ways can we say this? Please give your minister’s family an extra measure of grace.
- Err on the side of generosity. I’m not just talking about money, though I am talking about money. I also mean be generous with your attention, questions, interest, ability to remember family names, laughter, food, jokes, invitations to ball games and your life.
- Your pastor loves you, but he or she may or may not like you. As in your family, there are days when your spouse, child or parent loves you, but is frustrated by you or wondering what they did to deserve you. That ambivalence is part of being human. Own it and expect it.
- Your comfort is not your pastor’s primary concern. Hope you know this. If not, read the Bible and remind yourself why your church exists in the first place. Trying to be priest (comforting the afflicted) and prophet (afflicting the comfortable) to the same people is confusing, messy and an invitation to misunderstandings.

I’ll have to write my own list one day.

