

The Important Role Of Ministry Leaders



To get us started

In your experience, what does a pastor do during a typical week?

These questions are important to set up the video and application of the video. The point of the week is not "Work Harder!!!" The point of the week is "Why should pastors and church leaders work hard?" And just as important, "At what should pastors and church leaders work hard?"

In your opinion, what should a pastor do during a typical week?

It's possible participants won't feel comfortable answering this, and yet they probably have an idea in their mind of what they think a pastor should be doing. Identifying that idea early in the lesson, will allow the Word of God and Application of the Word portions to either validate or challenge their assumptions.

2 Corinthians 10

In 2 Corinthians chapters 10, 11 and 12, the Apostle Paul is defending himself. He had come under attack by so called "Super Apostles." (See 2 Cor 11:5) Context would suggest they not only attacked Paul's authority as an Apostle of Jesus ("sent one" of Jesus, sent by Jesus), they also attacked his gifts for ministry. Chapter 10 verse 10 and Chapter 11 verse 6 make it clear one of those attacks launched a direct assault on his ability as a public speaker.

Ideally, we'd read through all of chapters 10, 11, and 12 to get the full flavor of Paul's defense of his authority as an Apostle of Jesus. After reading all of chapter 10, for the sake of time, we'll stop to highlight a few key sections in chapters 11 and 12.

As you read through chapter 10, which arguments do you find most memorable against the attacks on Paul's authority? *Read 2 Corinthians chapter 10.*

Answers will vary

According to this chapter, in what ways should a church leader be valued?

The arguments of the super apostles centered on their own view of themselves. They were focused on their own gifts and were trying to convince the Corinthians that they should be valued on the quality of their gifts. Paul says the value of a church leader should instead be found in the value of their message. "...since we have come to you with the Gospel of Christ!" (2 Cor 10:14b)

2 Corinthians 11:1-4

In this section Paul sets up his reason for fighting boasting with boasting, foolish though it is. This "boasting" continues through chapter 12:10. For what reasons is Paul willing to speak this way? *Read 2 Corinthians 11:1-4*

Paul does not want any person or any teaching to sway people away from Christ. He was concerned they could be seduced away from their devotion to Christ. Their eternal well-being is at stake as they listen to "gospels" which are really no "gospel" (not good news) at all.

2 Corinthians 12:11-21

Now that Paul's boasting is over, he drives the goal of his role as a church leader home. His goal was not to get rich off of the Corinthians. His goal was not to become famous across the region. His goal was not to get anything from the Corinthians. What was his goal? *Read 2 Corinthians 12:11-21 to find out!*

Paul's goal was the people themselves! He wanted to bring people into the Church of God where they would be built up and remain steadfast in Christ.

Digging Deeper - Ezekiel

The prophet Ezekiel had a challenging task. Identify 3 things. What was the task? What made the task so challenging? How does God encourage Ezekiel for the work that lies ahead? Read Ezekiel 2:1-3:9 to identify these three things!

What was the task?

Ezekiel was to go to the house of Israel and speak God's Word to them.

What made the task so challenging?

The house of Israel would not want to listen to Ezekiel because they didn't want to listen to God – the whole house of Israel was hardheaded and hardhearted.

How does God encourage Ezekiel for the work that lies ahead?

God gave Ezekiel His Words and they tasted sweet. He promised to make Ezekiel's face as hard as their faces and his forehead as hard as theirs. He would be with Ezekiel and told him not to be afraid or discouraged.

Read Ezekiel 3:16-21. These verses are at the same time both remarkably intimidating and immensely comforting for church leaders. For what reasons is this true?

Remarkably Intimidating?

Ezekiel would be held responsible for the blood of those he didn't warn if he chose not to speak out and warn them.

Immensely Comforting?

God asks church leaders to share His Word and the message of Jesus' redemption with others. In the end, they're just the messengers, not message creators.

Pastor David Rosenau is a second career WELS pastor with a very unique story. This week's video is about 12 minutes long and provides an insight into what a good ministry leader looks like.

watch video

Titus 2:11-3:11

Paul not only encourages Titus to work hard in ministry, but he also first reminds Titus why he ought to work hard. *Then* he clearly directs Titus to what that hard work ought to look like. *Read Titus 2:11-3:11*

Why work hard?

The grace of God has appeared bringing salvation for all people! The word of God gives clear instruction for us while we wait for Jesus return. Jesus was given to us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to cleanse for himself a people that belong to him and are eager to do good works

Work hard at what?

At proclaiming God's Word. Teaching what God's Word says. Reminding God's people what Christian living looks like. Insist on what the Word of God says.

Application = Use

Good leadership in the church is not found in the form of extraordinary gifts. It's found in the one who knows his sin is big, but also knows the grace of God is far bigger, even for a sinner like him! This kind of church leader is able to serve others with the same truths of law and gospel that first apply to him.

The lesson here is more than "work hard." Lots of ministry leaders work hard. The question is, "What are they working hard at?" Even more, "Why are they working hard?" Plenty of ministry leaders have worked hard at the wrong things. Plenty more have worked hard for the wrong reasons.

Identify examples of what it might look like for a ministry leader to work hard at the wrong things.

A ministry leader focusing too much on the details of church structure so that the gospel is in the background, a leader focusing on the style in which something is done instead of its purpose or with content that shares Jesus. A ministry leader that gets caught up in the method and forgets the mission itself "Preach the Gospel/Disciple the Nations."

Identify examples of what it might look like for a ministry leader to work hard for the wrong reasons.

A leader who wants to be recognized for his gifts or efforts. A leader who desires to be praised for working hard. A leader who is working out of guilt or to earn thanks or status. A leader whose focus is on the outward appearance of the church/ministry instead of on the eternal well-being of the sheep entrusted to his care.

In what ways can you encourage, not only your pastor, but all your ministry leaders to work hard for the right reasons, and at the right things?

Give glory to God for your leaders' gifts instead of giving glory to the leader himself. Pray for leaders. Encourage and challenge leaders to reflect Jesus in their lives. Challenge and test to see if ministry efforts are gospel-motivated. Do they feed the sheep and reach the lost? Deepen and strengthen your own relationship with Jesus so that you also become zealous as a result of the gospel working in your own heart. This way you can spur one another on and encourage each other.

In the case of a lazy ministry leader, what would godly encouragement look like?

The answer here, applies what has been identified and applied above. The answer cannot simply be "Work harder!" Why work harder? And once the proper motivation for hard ministry work has been identified, what exactly does "harder work" look like in that specific ministry context?