

PREACHERS, PREPARE...YOUR TIME IS COMING



TEXT: Proverbs 6:6-11

THESIS: To set forth the pastor's responsibility to prepare for his and his family's future.

INTRO.: A. I had never planned to "retire" from the pastoral ministry. I loved the church, the people, and I loved studying and preparing messages, visiting the people, making friends, preaching and teaching. I often said I would like to die in the pulpit. God had other plans. My health dictated my retirement. My neurologist said I had three options: a wheelchair, a casket or get out from under the pressure of the church, the school, the deadlines, the planning, organization, counseling, etc., etc. My family doctor concurred. I had a debilitating stroke, a quadruple heart bypass surgery, several TIA's, etc.

B. I am not an expert on what to do, but I can share some things with you which I believe are biblical and practical and which I trust will be helpful. They fall under three headings: **"PREPARING, DECLARING AND SHARING"...**

I. PREPARING:

A. Set Thine House In Order:

1. Establish a reputation for frugality, fiscal responsibility, and be blameless in every area, but especially in the area of finances, debt, etc.

- a. Be super generous towards your church and its people; teach by example!
- b. Attempt to save some money for the future, e.g., insurance, annuities, C.D.'s., I.R.A.'s, etc. (Get a financial planner or adviser involved.)

2. Never allow yourself to handle church funds and be "squeaky clean" about your testimony within the church as well as with those without."

3. Never be **"greedy of filthy lucre"**— never **push** your desires or make financial demands.

- a. These things will secure your integrity, your humility, and your honesty in the eyes of your people.
- b. Prepare to **STAY** in your church for a long period of time.

ILLUS.: I always promised my people I planned to stay for as long as possible. I told them I would outlast them, even if I had to "wear them out." I often reminded them that it was easier for them to move their church letter, than for me to move my furniture and my family! ☺

B. Set The Church House In Order:

1. Begin preparing the church early on regarding your future needs.

2. Get them in the habit of thinking about you and your family and your future by leading them to support you properly, without "driving" them. (I wish I had been more observant in this area)

1 Peter 5:2-3 *Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.*

- a. Attempt to lead them to give you incremental increases in salary and/or benefits
- b. Such helps as a gas credit card, car allowance, book allowance, etc.
- c. If you are in a church owned home, encourage them to either move you into a home of your own, or eventually deed the ownership of the parsonage to you.

ILLUS.: I had some opposition over this concept when it was first discussed among my men. One man was especially opposed on the grounds that home ownership would detract from my duties as pastor, with repairs, problems, etc. My position was that I needed to build equity in something for my family to relieve the church of responsibility if something happened to me. I reminded them that I was not an O.T. Levite who wasn't allowed any earthly inheritance, and that all of God's people in both testaments had possessions.

II. DECLARING:

A. Preach the Whole Counsel of God:

1. Preach on the concept that those who preach the Gospel, should live of the Gospel, etc.
2. Preach on the passages that promise blessings to those who properly support the man-of-God..

ILLUS.: A passage I see as often mis-applied and claimed by those who do not meet the prerequisites is found in Phil. 4:14-19. Folks want to appropriate the promise in v.19 without meeting the criteria in the preceding verses, i.e., that unless they have met the needs of God's man, they cannot claim the promise!

B. Teach Scriptural Principles:

1. Let them know that a laborer (in the Word) is worthy of reward.

1 Timothy 5:18 *For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his reward.*

2. Teach them the principle of "double honor" for elders. (If you feel awkward doing this bring someone else in [like me ☺], to do it for you.)

1 Timothy 5:17 *Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.*

3. Share the concept of not muzzling the ox that treads out the corn.
4. Show them that those who preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel.

1 Corinthians 9:13-14 *Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.*

III. SHARING:

A. Those Who Have Shared Spiritual Things Should Reap Physical Benefits:

1. God has promised to take care of His men, but He uses God's people to do so.
2. Just as physical fathers should be taken care of in their declining years or time of need, so should those who have been spiritual fathers.

ILLUS.: One of my favorite Bible characters is Onesiphorus who ministered to the aged Apostle Paul when he was in prison.

2 Timothy 1:16-18 *The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus; for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain: But, when he was in Rome, he sought me out very diligently, and found me. The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day: and in how many things he ministered unto me at Ephesus, thou knowest very well.*

3. The man of God must be just as diligent preaching these truths to their members as they are in sharing other "uncomfortable" concepts.

B. Those Who Have Received Spiritual Blessings Should Share Physical Benefits:

ILLUS.: The church I pastored for 31 years has bought and paid for my home, is purchasing my car, is sending me a monthly check, and takes care of my hospitalization. What they give me does not take care of some living expenses, etc., but without their help and with questionable health, I would not be able to survive unless God sent ravens to feed me or dropped manna from heaven!! The balance of our needs are met by the generosity of churches like yours who have me come to preach and give me expense money and love gifts.

CONCL.: Don't fret or fear. Have faith and trust the God you serve. He is more than capable of meeting your needs. That does not disqualify you from doing what you can when you can, but **when you can't, He will!!!**

Luke 12:22-31 And he said unto his disciples, Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on. The life is more than meat, and the body is more than raiment. Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feedeth them: how much more are ye better than the fowls. And which of you with taking thought can add to his stature one cubit? If ye then be not able to do that thing which is least, why take ye thought for the rest? Consider the lilies how they grow: they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. If then God so clothe the grass, which is to day in the field, and to morrow is cast into the oven; how much more will he clothe you, O ye of little faith. And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind. For all these things do the nations of the world seek after: and your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things. But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you.