

Your Expectations from a Pastor

A Reflection on Pastoral Humility and Character

Reflections Family, Discipleship and the Christian Life 28 November 2023

Titus 1:7-8

Isaiah 6:2-3

Isaiah 6:5

This piece is not intended to point a finger at any specific person, pastor, group, or entity. Any similarities to real-life situations or people are purely coincidental. Its purpose is to offer insights and perspectives, not to make accusations or to assign blame. The reader is asked to approach what follows with an open mind, as a reflection on broader concepts and ideas.

Readers may wish to look up the article entitled "10 Qualities Church Members Expect in a Pastor" by Jayson D. Bradley. The Bible speaks of many great pastors, though none of them carried that particular title. Moses, and all the major and minor prophets, and even some of the personalities of the Old Testament, were, in effect, pastoring the people of their time. In the New Testament we have all the apostles, especially Paul, who pastored the church when it came into being. All of them were ordinary human beings, with their own good, bad, and weak points of character. The only exception is the King of Kings, Jesus Christ, who is the Pastor of pastors.

According to Jayson D. Bradley, the following are ten qualities expected of pastors: an understanding of Scripture; an ability to listen; competence; teaching ability; good character; vision; an ability to lead a team; a focus on building discipline; self-awareness; and drive. If one reads Paul's words to Titus, one would wish to add humility to that list. We read in Titus 1:7-8, "For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; but a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate" (KJV).

Humility might not top the list of qualifications for a pastor, but it should. The passage above emphasises the importance of integrity, humility, self-control, and moral uprightness in those entrusted with pastoral responsibility within the church. It serves as a guide for the selection of those who are to lead and serve the community of believers.

Isaiah was given a vision, recorded in the sixth chapter of his book, in which he saw the seraphims: "each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory" (Isaiah 6:2-3, KJV). The threefold "holy" marks the degree to which God is set apart. This

vision speaks of two profound truths: the utter holiness of God, and the equally profound humility of the seraphims, who cover themselves entirely as they stand before Him. It speaks, too, of the humility that is expected of all who are set apart to serve the one true God.

Consider, then, the reaction of Isaiah himself: "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts" (Isaiah 6:5, KJV). He did not say to God, to paraphrase, "Lord, I am among a congregation of unclean lips, but as for me, I am content that I am serving You well." That is the difference between the pastors of old and the pastors we so often encounter today. We can only pray that God would send a seraph to touch the lips of such pastors with a burning coal, in cleansing.

Like Isaiah, we are not worthy. We must not grow proud, or self-reliant upon our calling. Scripture teaches us the importance of confession and cleansing. May we, too, adopt this beautiful posture of willing obedience.