

January 2012 Newsletter Edited for Website

What Is My Duty?

*The Duties of Pastors and The Duties that Christians Owe Their Pastors
A Review of the Table of Duties
(A Continuation of the December Newsletter)*

The Duties of Pastors

What is the duty of a pastor? Should he study all day and not interact with the congregation? Should he focus on being a people person and leave little time for study? Should the pastor try to come up with plans and programs to grow or ‘save’ the congregation? Is the pastor a rancher who should be out rounding up all the delinquent sheep, or is he an under-shepherd who leads the sheep with the voice of the Good Shepherd? Many people, pastors included, have varying ways of answering the question at hand. Like with most everything else, some answers are right and some are wrong. And if Scripture didn’t answer the question, then the debate about pastoral duties would be left to mere opinion and never settled. Thankfully, Scripture does spell it out.

Our catechism pointing to Scripture quotes this in the *Table of Duties*, *Therefore, an overseer [pastor] must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive. He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it. (1 Timothy 3:2–4, 6; Titus 1:9)*¹

Simply put, qualified men are called² to the office of pastor to publicly preach/teach the Gospel and rightly administer the Sacraments. Article five of the *Augsburg Confessions* says, “1] That we may obtain this faith, the Ministry of Teaching the Gospel and administering the Sacraments was instituted. For through the Word and Sacraments, as through instruments, 2] the Holy Ghost is given, who works faith; where and when it pleases God, in them that hear 3] the Gospel, to wit, that God, not for our own merits, but for Christ’s sake, justifies those who believe that they are received into grace for Christ’s sake.”

Pastors are to, in the words of Pastor Paul to Pastor Timothy, “...preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths. As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.”³

Pastors are under-shepherds of Christ and are called to oversee and feed His sheep with His mysteries (Sacraments). Pastors are to pray, study, preach/teach the Gospel, and feed the sheep of Christ wherever they are – hospitals, homes, etc. At seminary I was taught that a pastor should spend about half of his time in his vocation as pastor in study and prayer and the other half giving the fruits of that study to God’s people (sermons/worship, adult and youth Catechism, Bible classes, newsletters, visitation, etc.) I was taught, and try to put into practice, that weekly sermon preparation should take 12-15 hrs, each Bible or catechism class about 5-7hrs, plus worship service preparation, additional theological reading, devotions, prayer, etc. As you can see, the pastoral preparation and study of God’s Word--so that pastors have ‘something good’ to say at the funeral, hospital, to the homebound, in Bible class, to the gainsayer, worship, and in individual pastoral care situations--takes a lot of time. Guarding this time has become an increasing challenge in our ‘business’ oriented culture, i.e. the “pastor’s study” has now become the “pastor’s office.” Some pastors and people think that the pastor should

¹ *Concordia : The Lutheran Confessions*, Edited by Paul Timothy McCain, 346 (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 2005)

² Article 14 of the Augsburg Confession says, “Of Ecclesiastical Order they teach that no one should publicly teach in the Church or administer the Sacraments unless he be regularly called.”

³ 2 Timothy 4:1-5, English Standard Version

be in his office all day shuffling papers or in meetings (or a million other “The pastor should be doing this” statements that depend on ones’ back ground with other pastors and self-chosen ideas) and function as the CEO of the congregation. This is not a Biblical model and doesn’t reflect our Lutheran *Table of Duties*.

One of the best things a congregation can do for their pastor is to make sure he has time to study so that he will be well prepared to lead with Scripture and not with his opinion about everything else. Oh, how many pastors are there who have hurt their congregations by leading them to do things based on their visions and opinions of what a church and pastor should be doing instead of what Scripture has prescribed! Pastors are to teach the Word of God and not their opinions; this is why we call pastors. We call pastors to teach the Gospel and administer the Sacraments by which the Holy Spirit creates and sustains our faith. It is a great responsibility for a pastor to speak in the stead and by the command of Christ. Pastors will have to give an account on the Last Day of the sheep that were entrusted to their care. If a pastor isn’t spending his time devoted to Word and Sacrament ministry, both in preparation and distribution, then he isn’t doing his duty.

The Duties that Christians owe their Pastors

While pastors are responsible for what they say, Christians are responsible for who they listen to. Christians are to flee false teaching and are to listen to the voice of the Good Shepherd. This applies to the radio, tv, books, etc. that you take in, but it primarily applies to following or fleeing your pastor. If your pastor is unfaithful to the Word of God, in doctrine or life, you should run away lest you die. However, if your pastor is faithful to his Biblical duties, here is what you owe him: Duty #1: you are to listen to the voice of Christ through Him in worship, Bible class, etc. This is noteworthy; the responsibility for coming to church falls on the sheep and not on some sort of rancher idea of the pastor. Haven’t we all heard the excuses of those who despise preaching and God’s Word by not attending church? “If the church or pastor would have called me or wrote me a note? I don’t like so and so who attends there. I don’t like the pastor’s personality or _____. The church doesn’t have the right man-made programs to meet my felt needs—a bowling league, softball team, youth program, daycare, school, 20’s something coffee meeting, or a quilting group (these things aren’t wrong of course, but they are not why we come to church). If the entire church could simply change its schedule to fit mine, then I would make attending a priority.” Duty #2: In addition to listening, sheep are to support the Gospel that Christ has sent him to teach with time, talent, and treasure. The *Table of Duties* states:

*In the same way, the Lord commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel. (1 Corinthians 9:14) One who is taught the word must share all good things with the one who teaches. (Galatians 6:6) Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching. For the Scripture says, “You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain,” and, “The laborer deserves his wages.” (1 Timothy 5:17–18) Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you. (Hebrews 13:17)*⁴

The next article will cover *the Duties of Governing Authorities and the Duties We Owe to Them*. I hope that you find this ongoing review, of the often time forgotten part of the catechism, helpful.

In Christ,

Pastor

⁴ *Concordia : The Lutheran Confessions*, Edited by Paul Timothy McCain, 346 (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 2005)

INSTALLTION OF OFFICERS

We plan to install our newly elected and appointed congregational officers during the worship service on January 8th. Thank you to all who have served and will be serving.

ZION'S WOMEN'S SOCIETY

The Women's Society met on Thursday, December 8th. Fourteen members and several guests attended. The potluck luncheon was at 12:30 p.m. There were a variety of many delicious dishes to choose from – soup, salads, hot dishes, breads and desserts.

Prior to the luncheon the members filled the cookie tins for our shut-ins. Many were delivered later that day. Members also brought items for the food Pantry and each gave \$5.00 for the Salvation Army.

After the meal, several members and many guests volunteered to head upstairs to trim the Christmas tree and the church. A big “thank you” to all who helped with this project – a job well done. We appreciated the help from the men.

It was a great get-together. Good food and a fun time preparing the Lord's house for Christmas. Our next meeting will be on Thursday, January 12 at 1:30 p.m. Pam Rose will be the hostess. All ladies of the congregation are most welcome to attend. So if you haven't been a guest or are not yet a Women's Society member start the New Year out by coming January 12th. Hope to see you then.

BIBLE CLASSES

You are invited to attend our Bible studies on Sunday mornings following our worship service. We are studying the Book of Galatians. Classes will resume on January 8th.

Wednesday morning classes are at 9:30 a.m. We are studying the readings for the upcoming Sunday. Come early if you would like to talk with your fellow members.

Everyone is invited to attend one or both classes. You are most welcome!

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Flowers and radio: If you would like to furnish altar flowers or sponsor a radio broadcast for a special occasion, please call the office. Altar flowers are \$30.00. There is a flower chart on the left of the door as

you enter from the education wing. Sign your name by the date you would like to furnish flowers. The radio broadcast is \$76.00. Call the office if you would like to furnish a broadcast or have any questions about flowers or the broadcast.

Prayer requests: if you would like a prayer on Sunday morning, please contact one of the secretaries during the week. If it is a last minute, you can also catch pastor before service.

A MESSAGE FROM THE FELLOWSHIP BOARD

The Fellowship Board would like to thank everyone who attended the potluck brunch following the children's Christmas service.

We were greatly pleased with the huge turnout. The food items brought were varied and delicious and filled out long serving table. Thank you for your contributions. I don't think anyone went away hungry.

So many members volunteered to help with the clean-up afterwards. It is great to see everyone working together. The Board spends many hours setting things up so it is heart warming when our dining tables are full and members partake in our Fellowship opportunities. So once again, a big "thank you", for making this time together very enjoyable. We hope you all had a good time.

LWML

Zion's Lutheran Women's Missionary League will meet Tuesday, January 17 at 7:00 p.m.

All members are reminded to bring their jar of coins for supporting the ministerial students.

LWML is a mission organization that serves many missions around the world as well in our own country.

All of Zion's women are invited to attend. You are most welcome.

LIFE SUNDAY

January 22, 2012 is Life Sunday.

"Choose Life!" The word "choice"

differs greatly from the world's view. It raises all kinds of questions and controversy.

Consider the following questions and answers:

1. **What is choice for the Christian?** Choice for the Christian is a confession of what we believe. (Romans 10:10)
2. **What does the Christian believe when making choices?** We believe we can trust God in all situations of life. (Romans 8:32)
3. **Why can the Christian trust God in all situations?** We are His chosen people in Christ Jesus, our Lord. (1 Peter 2:9)
4. **What does all this mean when facing difficult life situations – crises pregnancies, chronic disease, aging?** It means we base our choices not on fear, or what we think might happen, or what others think might happen, but upon the fact that we are chosen and can trust that nothing can separate us from God’s love in Christ Jesus. (Romans 8:35-39)
5. **What if we make the wrong choices?** We still remain God’s chosen people upon whom He has “set His love”. (Deuteronomy 7:7) in Jesus. When we confess our sins, He forgives us and frees to continue to live as His chosen one. (1 John 1:9)

For more information go to www.lutheransforlife.org