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# Pastor Teachers in the Church Age

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## Functions and Responsibilities

Because in the present Church Age each and every saint is a Royal-Priest, it is necessary to outline and comprehend the system that God has ordained for the spiritual advancement of the saints. There are two kinds of authority in the present dispensation, the Church Age: 1) the Word of God as contained in Holy Scripture, and includes the concept of pastor/teacher; 2) the authority of the free-will of every saint. And the pastor/teacher brings together these two forms of authority to the saints.

To do this, the pastor/teacher has had bestowed upon him a spiritual gift that he does not deserve and cannot earn. The gift of pastor/teacher provides the individual with the talents and strength necessary to communicate the Word of God. The gift is given at the point of salvation and, as already stated, is not based on merit of any type. The gift is given by God the Holy Spirit, and it would be presumptuous to attempt to document his criteria for assigning the gift.

I Timothy 2:11,12 is one of the most controversial passages in Scripture. The question revolves around this: Does God the Holy Spirit give the gift of pastor/teacher to females? Opinions abound, the discussion is endless, and connections too tenuous to be defined are cited. Based on a grammatical, syntactical and etymological analysis the passage, the author asserts that the answer to the question is 'no, God the Holy Spirit does not bestow the gift of pastor/teacher on women.' The author also asserts that the question, aside from Scriptural analysis and its acceptance or dissension, should be directed to God the Holy Spirit, not the author. As Paul with Philemon, the author refuses to impose his exegetical conclusions upon others, other than to state that the tumult that the question arouses is beyond belief.

The concept of 'pastor/teacher' is based on four Greek words from the New Testament:

1. PRESBUTEROS, which means leader or ruler and stresses the pastor's spiritual authority.

According to Titus 1:5 and I Peter 5:1 there is one such PRESBUTEROS per local church.

2. POIMENAS KAI DIDASKALOS, which means "pastor and teacher;" the pastor part refers to caring for the sheep and the teacher part refers to communicating the Word of God. The reference is found in Ephesians 4:11, which says, "It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers."

3. EPISKOPOS, which means "overseer or foreman;" this is the function of the pastor as the spiritual policymaker, which policy must be based upon Scripture and the concept of grace. Some Scripture references are Philippians 1:1, I Timothy 3:2, Titus 1:7.

4. DIAKONOS, which means "minister" but is usually transliterated 'deacon.'

Citations are I Corinthians 3:5 and Colossians 1:7,23, which say, 7 "You learned it from Epaphras, our dear fellow minister of Christ on our behalf."

This brings up the next idea: Why does the position/gift of pastor/teacher exist? The answer is found in Ephesians 4:12,13, which say, "To prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ." In other words, without a pastor/teacher, the saints cannot attain spiritual maturity. This is a remarkable and, to some, a shocking statement.

Now that we have the 'why' of the pastor/teacher, 'how' does the pastor/teacher perform this sensitive and vital function? The answer is found in Ephesians 4:20,21, which say, "You, however, did not come to know Christ that way. Surely you heard of him and were taught him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus." In other words, the pastor/teacher is to teach what the Word of God says; only by doing this may the saints become spiritually mature. And this 'teaching' presup-

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poses the spiritual gift of pastor/teacher, human maturity, education and scholarship, self-discipline manifested in good study habits, academic and spiritual honesty, and the courage to teach what Scripture says without being afraid of insulting or offending the saints.

Thus, it may be seen that the pastor/teacher must be careful to stay within the bounds of the gift. This means not intruding on the spiritual privacy of the saints, not judging the saints, nor making private and personal decisions for the saints. This does not, however, preclude normal social and/or human intercourse such as friendship, interest, or even love.

According to I Corinthians 12:11,28, pastor/teachers are provided the gift at the moment of salvation. "All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines. 28 And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with gifts of administration, and those speaking in different kinds of tongues."

I Peter 5:1,2 outlines the function of the pastor/teacher and seems to assert that God provides just the right pastor for each church: "Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers -- not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve."

Ephesians 3:7, I Corinthians 15:10 and I Timothy 1:12-16 declare unequivocally that all pastor/teachers are the products of grace; they have no claim to entitlement. And further documentation concerning the concept of pastor/teacher may be found in Ephesians 3:7-13; 4:11-13, Colossians 1:23-29, I Timothy 2:24-26, I Timothy 3:1-9, and Titus 1:6-9.

The pastor/teacher's spiritual sanction is found in the book of Hebrews, chapter 13, verses 7 and 17, which say, 17 "Obey your leaders and submit to their authority (in the teaching of spiritual matters). They keep watch over you (their function as pastor) as men who must give an account (to

Christ). Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you. 7 "Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith."

And Hebrews 13:17 compared with Hebrews 6:10 tell us that pastor/teachers are responsible to God, our Lord Jesus Christ, for their correct and appropriate function: "God is not unjust; he will not forget you work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them." (Heb. 6:10)

Finally, according to Philippians 4:10-20, the saints are to provide for their pastor/teachers' physical needs and wants. This enables the pastor/teachers to fulfill their functions without having to be concerned about food, clothing, shelter, transportation. Here in verse 10 Paul uses the very delicate word translated "concern for me;" in the Greek the term is PHRONEO, which is "to direct one's mind to a thing," i.e., to direct their minds to Paul's provision. 10 "I rejoice greatly in the Lord that at last you have renewed your concern for me. Indeed, you have been concerned, but you had not opportunity to show it. 17 Not that I am looking for a gift, but I am looking for what may be credited to your account."

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