



Authority of the Pastor-Teacher

The Purpose of the Pastor

The threefold purpose of the pastor is found in Ephesians 4:12. The “saints” refer to the royal family of God with emphasis on the Baptism of the Spirit. “Equipping the saints” refers to God’s grace policy and provision for the execution the spiritual life. “Equipping” is the function of the pastor who, through teaching the mystery doctrine of the Church Age, is able to see people grow and mature spiritually. All believers are in full-time Christian service from the moment of their salvation. Christian service is the normal result of spiritual growth, but never the means. Edification is the execution of the plan of God for the Church Age believer and subsequent development of spiritually mature believers, resulting in the glorification of God.

“for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ;” (Ephesians 4:12, NASB)

The spiritual growth of the believer comes from the teaching ministry of the pastor. The body analogy used in Ephesians 4:15-16 relates to the Body of Christ composed of all Church Age believers. Body function depends upon the proper use of joints. Athletic coordination depends upon the proper use of the joints. So in this analogy of the pastor to the joints, it is the pastor-teacher who gives the Body of Christ its function on earth. The result of the communication of doctrine is the construction of an edification complex in your soul. Personal love for God the Father provides motivation for perception of doctrine. This motivation results in impersonal love for everyone around you in all aspects of life. It provides the ability to listen objectively to a pastor-teacher regardless of his personality.

“but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.” (Ephesians 4:15-16, NASB)

The Authority and Responsibilities of The Pastor-Teacher

The pastor-teacher is responsible for seeing that the policy and administration of the local church line up with the Word of God, but he is most importantly a teacher of the Word. However, he should not involve himself directly in administration of the local church. That is the responsibility of the deacon board whose members have the spiritual gift of administration and other leadership gifts.

“For even if I boast somewhat further about our authority, which the Lord gave for building you up and not for destroying you, I will not be put to shame,” (2 Corinthians 10:8, NASB)

The pastor has the highest authority in one local church only. God's delegated authority is the pastor's means of protecting the sheep. The pastor can abuse this authority by spiritual bullying or by not using his God-given authority. There is no such thing as a denomination where a pastor has authority over more than one local church. Authority over more than one local church was unique to the spiritual gift of Apostleship, which was a temporary spiritual gift. That gift vanished once the Canon of Scripture was completed and the Church established. Pastor-teachers now carry the authority of the local church for the rest of the Church Age.

The pastor-teacher's authority over a specific congregation is developed through faithful and consistent Bible teaching. He is the one with the most delegated authority now in the post-Canon period of the



Church Age. The authority resides in the teacher while the congregation assembles to learn doctrine as students under his authority. Heb. 13:7; Heb. 13:17.

"Remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you; and considering the result of their conduct, imitate their faith." (Hebrews 13:7, NASB)

"Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you." (Hebrews 13:17, NASB)

Believers in the congregation “remember” their pastor-teacher by faithfully attending Bible class and praying for him. The pastor-teacher’s “rule” over the believers in their local church is based on the teaching of the Word of God to them, not from privately telling them what to do. The pastor-teacher’s function is to teach believers what God expects from them and how to execute His plan based on his studies and teaching from the pulpit. Believers cannot just read the Bible and learn the Bible doctrine contained within it. They must be taught by the pastor-teacher. Each believer must decide for themselves which pastor-teacher is the one they should select whereby they will grow spiritually.

The Extent of the Pastor-Teacher’s Authority

The authority of God extends down to the most minute detail in a believer’s life. He has absolute authority over you! The authority of the pastor-teacher extends to his communication of divine truth to the congregation of his local church. Titus 2:15.

"These things speak and exhort and reprove with all authority. Let no one disregard you." (Titus 2:15, NASB)

Authority is ἐπιταγή (epitagē) and means authority or to command, to charge an individual, or a congregation. “All authority” means to the highest degree of authority, absolute authority. Disregard” is περιφρονέω (periphronēō) and means to examine on all sides, to consider carefully, to think around, to think beyond, to come to a negative conclusion, to reject, to despise.

The Pastor-teacher’s authority includes denouncing anything that causes lack of concentration on the teaching of Bible doctrine in the local church. That involves your deportment, any distractions, and any exhibited negative volition. The pastor-teacher is given authority to delegate functions in the church such as ushering, etc. The pastor-teacher’s authority involves telling you what class you should be in. The authority of the pastor does not extend to your social life, your married life, your job, your children, or your health. 1 Cor. 14:40.

"But all things must be done properly and in an orderly manner." (1 Corinthians 14:40, NASB)

Leadership Authority in the Local Church

In 1 Peter 5:5, “younger men” refers to all members of the local congregation in contrast to the pastor-teacher (“elder”). “Be subject” is ὑποτάσσω (hupotasso) in the Greek and means to recognize the chain of command and consider yourself under the authority of the leadership in a local church. This is in the aorist tense and is referring to the point of time during the function and activity of the local church in its services, Bible classes, and means of outreach. A member is to submit to the authority of the pastor and not try to undermine his authority. Also, if a church has to administer discipline, the member should submit willing to it or get out.

"You younger men, likewise, be subject to your elders; and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE



HUMBLE.” (1 Peter 5:5, NASB)

Hupotasso is also in the middle voice, which means that the subject is benefitted by the action of the main verb. The congregation is benefitted by submitting to the authority of the pastor. The imperative mood means this is a command to all believers. All believers should be members of some congregation. You should go somewhere where you can feed on the Word of God.

The local church cannot function without authority and leadership. The leadership of the local church is divided into two categories – teaching and administrative. 1 Tim. 3:1-7; 1 Tim. 3:9-13.

“It is a trustworthy statement: if any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires to do. An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but gentle, peaceable, free from the love of money. He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity (but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?), and not a new convert, so that he will not become conceited and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil. And he must have a good reputation with those outside the church, so that he will not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.” (1 Timothy 3:1-7, NASB)

“but holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. These men must also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons if they are beyond reproach. Women must likewise be dignified, not malicious gossips, but temperate, faithful in all things. Deacons must be husbands of only one wife, and good managers of their children and their own households. For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a high standing and great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.” (1 Timothy 3:9-13, NASB)

Ultimate leadership must exist in any organization. Local church leadership is vested in the pastor. Nearly all trouble in a local church comes from the violation of 1 Peter 5:5. Troublemakers are those who undermine the authority of a pastor by criticism or other methods. This has to be nipped in the bud by a strong pastor-teacher who runs a tight ship as unto the Lord.

Authority Orientation to the Pastor-Teacher

Believers submit to the pastor-teacher’s authority in listening to the communication of Bible doctrine. The pastor-teacher’s authority is established on the basis of the teaching of Bible doctrine. Hence, the issue is not the man, but the message he provides through his spiritual gift. Since the pastor’s authority is Bible teaching, his ministry does not violate the privacy of the individual believer. The pastor-teacher is also protected by God in his faithful performance of his spiritual gift. Isaiah 54:17.

“No weapon that is formed against you will prosper; And every tongue that accuses you in judgment you will condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, And their vindication is from Me,” declares the LORD.” (Isaiah 54:17, NASB)

The spiritual gift of pastor-teacher is God’s method for teaching the mystery doctrines of the Church Age to every believer. The gift of pastor-teacher is a spiritual gift sovereignly bestowed by the Holy Spirit at salvation totally apart from any human merit or ability - as are all spiritual gifts. The gift provides the right for the pastor to go directly to the Canon of Scripture and determine what is and is not divine policy. He then grows spiritually based on his personal study of the Word of God, and communicates Bible doctrine in public after having prepared. Therefore, he is to study and teach. 1 Tim. 4:10; 2 Tim. 4:2; 1 Peter 5:2-4.

“For it is for this we labor and strive, because we have fixed our hope on the living God, who is the



Savior of all men, especially of believers." (1 Timothy 4:10, NASB)

"preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction." (2 Timothy 4:2, NASB)

"shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory." (1 Peter 5:2-4, NASB)

The congregation is to respond to the pastor's authority. Remember those (present active imperative) who keep on having the rule over you (present middle participle, masculine) who spoke (aorist active indicative) the Word of God to you, consider (present active participle) imitating or duplicating [μιμείομαι (mimeomai)] their manner of life and their faith. Heb. 13:7.

"Remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you; and considering the result of their conduct, imitate their faith." (Hebrews 13:7, NASB)

In Hebrews 13:17, Obey (present middle imperative of παίθω [peithō]) your leaders who rule over you (present middle participle) and submit (present active imperative of ὑπαίκω [hupeikō] - yield) yourselves for they keep on watching (to be sleepless, wakeful) for your souls as the ones that shall give account (future active participle of ἀποδίδωμι [apodidōmi] - render account) that they may do it (present active subjunctive of ποίεω [poieō]) with joy, and not with grief (present active participle of στενάζω [stenazō]) for that is unprofitable for you (grief - groaning, unuttered, unexpressed).

"Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you." (Hebrews 13:17, NASB)

There is no room for disagreement with the content of a communicated message. There is no room for mental reservations. There is no room for fear that false doctrine will go into my soul. Time must be given to understand what is taught. What is not understood can be put on the backburner briefly. It is not your job to straighten the pastor out behind his back or to his face. There is double cursing when the pastor is out of fellowship. The Lord takes care of him. In cases of reversionism of a communicator, again the Lord takes care of it.

Biblical authority never coerces volition. Whatever is commanded in God's Word never coerces volition. Man has volition and he chooses. Divine viewpoint never coerces volition because God lets you decide - positive or negative. You must agree to put yourself under the authority of a pastor-teacher for better or for worse. At any time you can remove yourself. You must decide if this church is teaching Bible doctrine or not. If so, you voluntarily put yourself under the institution (like marriage).

Complete relaxation under authority comes from understanding the essence of God, the plan of God, and the chain of command from God. God's sovereignty means it's God's plan for you to be under a pastor-teacher. God's perfect righteousness means His plan for you is a perfect plan with no mistakes. God's justice means it is fair that you are placed under the authority of the pastor-teacher. God's love means that He provides a doctrinal pastor-teacher for you. God's eternal life means the benefits and information learned under the pastor-teacher will last forever. Bible doctrine and divine good last forever and are rewarded.

God's omnipotence means He is powerful enough to cause His plan, including a pastor-teacher, to work together for good. God's omnipresence means that He is always with you. Your questions and



backburner issues never cause you to go it alone. God's omniscience means He knows what is best for you. God's immutability means He has always been faithful to make sure Bible doctrine was effectively communicated in every generation. God's veracity means He has promised to give people pastors after His own heart and He does. Jer. 3:15.

""Then I will give you shepherds after My own heart, who will feed you on knowledge and understanding." (Jeremiah 3:15, NASB)

All it involves on your part is a divinely directed identification of God, the pastor-teacher, etc. The harshness of authority is tempered by grace, love, fulfillment, and reward. Authority is the only way to move from spiritual babyhood to spiritual maturity. Matt. 8:9.

""For I also am a man under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to this one, 'Go!' and he goes, and to another, 'Come!' and he comes, and to my slave, 'Do this!' and he does it."" (Matthew 8:9, NASB)

Lack of Authority Orientation to the Pastor-Teacher

Constant criticism of the pastor destroys his authority. Loss of authority neutralizes any effect of the communication of Bible doctrine and divine viewpoint. The Corinthians wavered so much that Paul really had to get tough with them and throw his authority around. The Corinthians were reacting to Paul's authority and so were doing many things detrimental to their spiritual life. In 2 Corinthians 10:8, the phrase "our authority" refers to those with the communication gifts of pastor-teacher as well as Apostleship, e.g., Apollos and Timothy. The pastor establishes his authority through the communication of Bible doctrine. Paul makes it very clear that the construction of the edification complex depends upon accepting the authority of some pastor-teacher who communicates doctrinal information. People never grow up without acceptance of authority.

"For even if I boast somewhat further about our authority, which the Lord gave for building you up and not for destroying you, I will not be put to shame," (2 Corinthians 10:8, NASB)

No communication of Bible doctrine means no intake of Bible doctrine. No intake of Bible doctrine means scar tissue buildup on the soul. Scar tissue on the soul means no function under the plan of God and results in human viewpoint thinking. Human viewpoint means disorientation to the plan of God and the grace of God. 2 Cor. 10:9-11.

"for I do not wish to seem as if I would terrify you by my letters. For they say, "His letters are weighty and strong, but his personal presence is unimpressive and his speech contemptible." Let such a person consider this, that what we are in word by letters when absent, such persons we are also in deed when present." (2 Corinthians 10:9-11, NASB)

Human viewpoint attacks or distorts doctrine. Human viewpoint attacks the Word and the reception and communication of it. Divine viewpoint of 2 Corinthians 10, although hard on them, is an expression of God's love and Paul's love and concern. To have sins and carnality exposed is beneficial and, therefore, results in confession of sin and the removal of scar tissue. Divine viewpoint results in a desire for doctrine, which removes scar tissue, if it exists. Paul uses his authority to lead carnal believers to confession of sin and gave an understanding of the grace of God.

All of this necessary in a local church, if it is to be a relaxed church. Many relaxed churches makes a relaxed nation. The chain of command is as follows – Bible doctrine is the only hope and is the ultimate authority!



“For this reason I am writing these things while absent, so that when present I need not use severity, in accordance with the authority which the Lord gave me for building up and not for tearing down.” (2 Corinthians 13:10, NASB)

No one can learn any subject without accepting the authority of the one who teaches it. Therefore, the importance of understanding that spiritual edification only comes through the teaching of the pastor in communicating the mystery doctrine of the Church Age. Edification does not come in any other way. It is impossible for anyone with the gift of pastor-teacher to communicate Bible doctrine unless his authority is recognized. Therefore, the enforcement of good manners and thoughtfulness of others is a part of the exercise of his authority. Notice that Paul thought it better to talk about authority in a non-face-to-face situation so that he would not have to chew them out face-to-face when he arrived.

There must be the right pastor communicating Bible doctrine to the positive believers in a geographical location. Heb. 13. There must be a right kind of man for a right kind of woman. The man is the established authority in the marriage. Eph. 5:22-23.

“Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body.” (Ephesians 5:22-23, NASB)

Then there are parents in authority for their children. Then you have leaders for the nation. The authority is the governmental leader, “ministers of God.” Rom. 13:1-7.

“Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God. Therefore whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves. For rulers are not a cause of fear for good behavior, but for evil. Do you want to have no fear of authority? Do what is good and you will have praise from the same; for it is a minister of God to you for good. But if you do what is evil, be afraid; for it does not bear the sword for nothing; for it is a minister of God, an avenger who brings wrath on the one who practices evil. Therefore it is necessary to be in subjection, not only because of wrath, but also for conscience’ sake. For because of this you also pay taxes, for rulers are servants of God, devoting themselves to this very thing. Render to all what is due them: tax to whom tax is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor.” (Romans 13:1-7, NASB)

The edification complex of the soul is built upon thousands of Bible doctrine messages. Whether these messages are of any benefit to you depends upon whether you accept one man as your right pastor and accept his authority in teaching. 1 Thess. 5:12; Heb 13:17.

“But we request of you, brethren, that you appreciate those who diligently labor among you, and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction,” (1 Thessalonians 5:12, NASB)

“Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you.” (Hebrews 13:17, NASB)