**THE LIFESTYLE OF A COMMITTED PASTOR**

Matt 20:20-28, Rom 12:1-2

**INTRODUCTION**

Every committed Pastor is expected to have an ideal lifestyle. This is the life he lives consistently and not a one-off practice.

The lifestyle of our Lord Jesus Christ, while he was on the earth here, could always serve as a standard after which every pastor or minister of God could pattern his/her life. Jesus’ pattern of life is revealed to us in Matt. 20:20-28, i.e. “…Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many”. This was exactly what He did by sacrificing His life in order to redeem mankind. From what He said, the lifestyle of a committed pastor or minister of God could be expressed in either of two or a combination of these two words: sacrifice, and, or consecration. May the Lord help us to pattern our style of living after the standard set by the Lord Jesus Christ, in Jesus’ name.

**3 important words to define**

1. **Pastor**

A pastor is a shepherd who tends to a flock. He/she is a minister or a priest in the church of God, and someone serving a congregation. (Jer. 10:21, 23:4, Eph. 4:11)

1. **Lifestyle**

It is a pattern or style of living that reflects the attitudes and values of a person (or group). It is the life a person is used or taken to, that reveals whom that person is. As the Lord Jesus Christ said, that, he has not come to be ministered unto, but to minister to, and gave his life a ransom for many.

1. **Committed**

It is the state or condition of pledging ones obligation to a course. It is like being sold out to do something without looking back (Jn. 4:34).

Therefore for a committed pastor, his style of living is that of being sold out to the course of serving the congregation he shepherds without looking back. In line with Jesus style of life, a pastor is committed to serving and not to lord it over the sheep or congregation (1 Peter 5:2-3).

A committed pastor is a servant leader; a servant and not a lord, over his congregation, which is the church of God.

The lifestyle of a committed pastor therefore must be purpose driven, that is, to serve. To enable him to serve effectively, there are five (5) prominent characteristics that are peculiar to the kind of living he must imbibe in. These are:

1. **Valuing people**

The lives of members of the congregation must be valuable and precious in the sight and in the mind of the pastor. This value must not be based on what they give to him or to the church, but for whom they are. Knowing and admitting this will serve as the bedrock for laying down the life for them in order to attend to their needs or to rescue them from dangers. Ex. 32:31-33 revealed the attitudes Moses maintained when his congregation, the nation of Israel, sinned against God. He preferred to be punished or even die for his people to stay alive. What our Lord Jesus Christ did for the sake of the lives of the disciples and mankind generally, also says it all. He laid down His life for the lives of others (Jn. 10:11-13, 17-18)

1. **Humility**

Good and committed pastors don’t promote themselves, but others first. Their humility is intentional and genuine because it has a cost attached, like their reputation, position, ego, etc. This humility provides a premise for total obedience to whatever God commands or demands in order to do His will and to serve the sheep’s being pastored, even if it is dying for them. (Phil. 2:6-8)

1. **Listening**

In order to know when or how the services of the pastor is needed, he listens to his members receptively, deeply and not judgmentally. This gives room for understanding the people first, before seeking to be understood. A leader who has no listening ears cannot have an understanding heart, and will lack comforting words. They know the voice of the sheep, and their sheep knows his own too. (Jn. 10:2-5)

1. **Trust**

Good shepherd give some measure of trust to his followers by delegating some assignments to them. For the sake of the people, and to show that he leads by example, he should be prepared to take the risk without fear as a leader who is authentic and dependable. (Lk. 10:1-3, 19-20)

1. **Caring**

A committed pastor, as a servant leader, must have people and purpose in his heart. He must display kindness and concern for others. He is there to serve and not to be served. When the multitude following Jesus was hungry, he fed them, not allowing them to faint – he had compassion on them (Mk. 8:1-8, Jn. 6:5-12)

**THE COST OF LEADERSHIP OF A COMMITTED PASTOR**

In other to meet up with the standard of the lifestyle of a committed pastor, two (2) important areas of counting the cost are:

1. Developing yourself
2. Sacrificing yourself

**DEVELOPING YOURSELF**

A committed pastor must focus on three major areas of developing self, which will also cascade into developing their followers, these are:

Character, Competence, and Capacity

1. **Character**

The character of a person consists of all the qualities he/she has that make him/her distinct from other people. Character can be used to say what kind of person someone is. Your character is your personality, especially how reliable and honest you are. If someone is of good character, he is reliable and honest. If he is of bad character, he is unreliable and dishonest.

Character, for a Christian, can be equated to the fruit of the spirit (Gal. 5:22-23).

Developing character means having and building upon very good behavior.

Good character keeps you, guides you, and gets you far in life.

5 ways to build your character

* Be humble – Humility is the beginning of becoming great. You must be open to new ways or give room for a needed change; ready to take corrections.
* Live out your principles and values – Practice what is in you, don’t pretend. Live by your principles. Let people see you the way you are, in case there could be one or two things they could say that could make you improve (criticism or praise.)
* Be intentional – Be sincere, be original, and accept responsibility.
* Practice self-discipline – Have self-control. Develop the ability to do what is right over what is easy.
* Be Accountable – Surround yourself with people who have high expectations. Open yourself up to accountability. Allow people to push you to high character. Realize what your shortcomings are and find different ways to improve yourself.
1. **Competence**

This is the ability to do something successfully and efficiently; to get something done with expertise and do it efficiently and effectively. This can come either through building on a skill or talent.

When you develop competence in areas important to you, the benefits include:

* Having more self-reliance
* Make fewer mistakes which means you will need less time to finish tasks.
* Become more knowledgeable and informed.
* Improve your chances of taking advantage of opportunities.

As you benefit from your improvements, the people you are serving are also doing so directly or indirectly.

**5 ways to develop competence for better results**

1. Identify areas of improvement or skills you want to develop. – Once you define your goal, you can conduct research, attend classes, and learn from others to develop competence.
2. Join dedicated networks or groups. – You could most of the time leverage the knowledge and experience of others in the quickest way to develop competence. Be ready to learn from others.
3. Challenge yourself through practice and action. – Learn competence through doing it. Practice makes perfect, as they say. Meaning that it will be easier to do it after a period of time.
4. Ask for feedback consistently. – You won’t know how you are doing if you don’t track your progress. Have someone who can hold you accountable and provide constructive feedback.
5. Teach what you are learning. – When you do so, you get to learn it twice. It is also confirming that what you are sharing will provide opportunities to enhance your understanding of the task or skill you want to improve upon.
6. **Capacity**

It means the ability to use and understand information to make a decision and communicate any decision made.

It also means the amount (volume) you can produce, or handle, or which you can become. The scope of what you can handle (capacity) will determine how well you can perform on the assignment given to you. If you are given an assignment bigger than your capacity, failure or ineffectiveness and inefficiency are inevitable.

The key point to note in developing your capacity is to increase your required capacity and become more than you were originally created to be. Don’t be afraid of trial. If you fail, you can still succeed.

**NOTE**

To fast-track your development of your Character, Competence, and Capacity, you must commit yourself to the;

1. Ministry of the word and
2. Ministry of Prayer

Acts 6:2-3

Leave the serving of tables to others, concentrate on growing and fulfilling your ministries.

**SACRIFICING YOURSELF**

It is essential to know that total commitment to God and His work could only be possible when one is ready to offer one’s life as a living sacrifice to God. Sacrifice is a force behind acceptable service to God, and for a productive life, as a minister of God.

A sacrifice is a service you render, or something you give that causes you something. What you do out of inconvenience or pain. It takes something out of you as a cost for what you are doing. (2 Sam. 24:24)

Without a sacrificial life, there can be no revival or progress of the church as expected. It is one of the forces we need if we want to take over the kingdom. That sacrifice starts from consecrating our lives as a living sacrifice offered unto God without looking back. (Rom. 12:1, Matt 11:12, Ps. 50:5)