

# **THE PASTOR AND HIS PRAYER MINISTRY**

**Text: Luke 18:1-8, I John 5:14-15**

**A TEACHING PRESENTED AT THE  
OGBOMOSO BAPTIST CONFERENCE PASTOR'S RETREAT**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

One of the basic roles of a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ is praying. It is so vital because, it is the only means by which the will of God can be established on earth. Not only that, it is also a means by which a line of communion is established between a disciple and the master, Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ taught and exemplifies the necessity of prayer and the art of praying. The Pastor is called to carry on the ministry of Christ on earth, hence he cannot but be engulfed with the responsibility of praying, teaching and leading the sheep under his oversight to pray. His effectiveness in ministry and personal walk with the Lord depend largely on how much of communion he is having with Him.

It is very significant to note that contemporary Pastoral Ministry has demonstrated a very great deficiency in this vital area of ministerial life. It is very common to see people do and say so many things today in the name of prayer which are far away from what can be traced to Christ in terms of His life and teachings. If the Pastor as a disciple and a man saddled with the responsibility of oversight and equipping of the saints can go this far in error, then the church is not safe. The resultant effect is that, the project of making all men to know to Christ and be conformed to His image is already jeopardized. In our time, the subject of prayer and praying has been so bastardized. Moreover, our goodly heritage of effectual fervent prayer that is bible based and Christ centered has given way to mere noise, display of arrogance, celebration of Satan and an enforcement of the will of men. Thus there is the need for a rethink and that is why this teaching is timely.

It is in this light that this teaching seeks to address some pertinent issues about the prayer ministry of the Pastor. In what follows, we will try to explore issues including: The Pastor: his call and

function, the necessity of effective prayer ministry, the scope of the Pastor's prayer ministry, contemporary challenges facing the prayer ministry of the Church and the Pastor and the keys to effective prayer ministry. Let me say that, this is not an attempt to deal with prayer in all its ramifications. As such, the scope of this teaching is limited, hoping that we shall be stirred up unto praying and praying appropriately.

## **THE PASTOR: HIS CALL AND FUNCTION IN THE LOCAL CHURCH**

The Pastor is a person who has received a call from God for full-time Christian service. He is a gift of Christ to the body of Christ (Eph. 4:7-11). He is first and foremost a regenerated child of God; spirit filled but now set apart to be an undershepherd under the leadership of the chief shepherd (Jesus Christ). A Pastor is not elected by popular vote of the membership rather it is a divine mandate (Heb. 5:4). Again, the Pastor is an ordinary man and not a super human being; as such he is liable to mistakes in discharge of his assignment. All Pastors are fallible; it is only the chief shepherd that is infallible.

Apart from the divine calling, the Pastor must meet biblical qualifications as stipulated in I Tim 3:1-7, and Titus 1:1-9. Other qualification he must meet is as follows:

- (a) He must be a man of God (Ex. 3:1-10, Isa 6:1-10, 49:1, 5, Jer. 1:5; Mk 3:13-19, Acts 9:15).  
It is God who calls, elects and appoints people to lead His church.
  - (i) A man of God is born again, filled with the Holy Spirit and full of wisdom (Acts 6:3)
  - (ii) A man of God walks daily in the spirit and bears the fruit of spirit (Gal 5:16, 22-25)
  - (iii) A man of God is loyal and obedient to God's Word (Jos 1:8, I Sam 15:22-23, Jer 7:21-34; Hosea 6:6).
  - (iv) A man of God is a prayerful person (Col 1:3, I Thessa 5:17)
- (b) He must be a man who is courageous and has vision (Jos 1:6-7, 9; Prov 29:18)
- (c) He must have the spirit of servanthood and humility (Mt. 20:25-28)
- (d) He must be able to lead to his strength and stand to his weakness
- (e) He must take initiative and be creative
- (f) He must be self-disciplined, self-confident, enthusiastic and a man of integrity.

It must be emphasized further that there are two sides to a pastor's call. Firstly he is called to oversee the local assembly where he takes residence and receive support. Secondly, he is called to be a gift

to the body of Christ at large. To this end his ministry is universal and transcends the local assembly where currently he found himself and that gives recognition anywhere he finds geographically. These two perspectives of the pastor's call should well be understood. There is the church ministry and his ministry to other flocks within the body of Christ.

The Pastor is not just to be a figure head or an occupier of an apartment of office in a local church. His responsibilities and functions can be summed up as follows:

- (i) Equipping the saints for the work of ministry Eph 4:11-16
- (ii) Shepherding the saints – provides care for the sheep, this must be done without any grudge I Pet 5:3
- (iii) Leading the flock, as a leader he sets the pace for people to follow. He must exhibit decisive leadership. Indecisive leadership is not leadership. However, he is not a tyrant who exhibits a haughty, superior, or overbearing attitude.
- (iv) Preaching and Teaching – He preach with prophetic unction to exhort people and to refute error. He teaches to instruct and explain deep things of the spirit
- (v) Correcting – The Pastor is to correct though gently and lovingly, this often should be done without degenerating the relationship with flock (2 Tim 2:24-26)
- (vi) Evangelizing – The Pastor should be involve in evangelism and promote it (2 Tim 4:5)

In carrying out these functions stated above, also performs such duties as counseling, visitation leading the church in capital projects, encouraging and promoting the formations of the various missionary organizations (MMU, WMU, Youth, BSF etc). The Pastor as an administrator of the local church also promotes good public/human relations, planning and managing the church, handling correspondence, conducting or moderating church business meeting, church council meetings etc.

The Pastor also spear heads the planning and conducting of the worship service. He officiates the two ordinance of the church, Baptist and Lord Supper. He also conduct burial/funeral services, he officiates wedding, blessing of marriages etc. He does all of this with the mind of Christ.

## **THE NECESSITY OF EFFECTIVE PRAYER MINISTRY**

As briefly mentioned above, prayer and praying is a role and responsibility of a disciple. However, care must be taken in order not to do it in our own way. God has copiously revealed Himself in the Holy Scriptures as a God of order to His servants. All things must be done to His standard else, He withholds His approval and they will forfeit all the benefits therein. Ineffective prayer will end up becoming a mere noise

and physical exercises. This is a common occurrence in many of our assemblies today. We can now see the necessity of prayer as follows:

- (1) **COMMANDED BY THE LORD** – Jer. 33:3, I Thess. 5:17  
Prayer is not just the will of man to express his heart desire to God. The Lord Himself commanded that man should pray. Hence, it is an obligation to be fulfilled and obeyed.
- (2) **PRAYER INSTIGATES FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD** – Mk 1:35  
Through prayer, intimacy is established with the Lord. Man was not created to be on his own. He was created for God's pleasure. At the place of prayer, the Spirit of man is opportuned to commune with his creator.
- (3) **KEY TO INSIGHT** – Jer. 33:3, I Cor. 2:9-12)  
God dwells in the realm of the invisible. Nobody receives anything except from above. Prayer enables the capacity to have deeper revelation of God's plans, purpose, provision and all that makes for life and godliness. It is in prayer that a line of communication that provoke knowledge of the mysteries of God is established.
- (4) **POWER FOR LIFE AND MINISTRY** – Isa 40: 28-31, Lk. 3:20-23, Acts 2:1-4  
Divine ability is required for living a victorious life and having fulfilled ministry. Prayer opens the heavens above a man for fulfillment of destiny. Life and ministry are tasks that cannot be accomplished by arms of flesh. Effective praying will release the oil of grace against all frictions of life and provides the enablement required to actualize divine mandate.
- (5) **MIGHTY WEAPON TO SUBDUE THE ENEMY** - Eph 6:10-18, James 4:7  
The disciple of Christ is always at war. The arch enemy is the prince of this world – Satan (I Pet 5:8, James 4:7). It is not a fight against flesh and blood. Through prayer, the power of the enemy in temptation and trials (all wicked acts of the devil) is brought to a halt. The only weapon to curtail the activities of the realm of darkness is prayer of faith.
- (6) **ESTABLISHING GOD'S KINGDOM**  
God's Kingdom is to be established on earth. Hence, Jesus taught us to pray. The will of God for a man's life can only be fulfilled to the extent he can commune with God in prayer. As we know God much more progressively and intimately, His peace and grace is multiplied (2 Pet 1:2-4, LB, AMP). Evangelism and Mission will only prosper if men can pray and seek

God. Christ can only be formed in the heart of men when the gospel message or biblical teachings are soaked in the oil of prayer.

We can go on and on to list the necessities of praying. All of these listed are not exhaustive. They are just to open air understanding that prayer and effective praying is a prerequisite in our lives and ministry.

## **THE DIMENSIONS OF PASTOR'S PRAYER MINISTRY**

At this point we need to explore the scope of the Pastor's prayer ministry. For quick understanding these classifications will suffice.

- (1) **PERSONAL:** The personal profile of a Pastor must as a matter of necessity include a virile prayer ministry. A cursory look into the life of the Lord indicates that, this is a principal area of His Life and Ministry. Jesus never joked with His private personal time of communion with the Father. If God incarnate will develop such a consistent walk of communion with the Father, then it speaks volumes to any disciple following in His steps. It is expected that a Pastor will maintain a very strong devotional life through which he draw strength and refreshing (John 15:5-7). Unfortunately, this vital connection with the master is often treated with Kids glove. It is no news to say that many Pastors have substituted the church prayer programme for their own personal time with Lord. Character formation and impartation of divine ability that should be the result of such encounters with the Lord in the secret is conspicuously missing. Instead, we have resulted to gimmicks, noise, fabulous phrases and prayer appellations, syncretism and of course some have even gone diabolical.

The point here is that, the first level (which is primary) of the Pastor's prayer ministry in his time of personal communion with God. This is where he gets himself ready in private before going to meet the public and ministers to his parishioners.

### **(2) CONGREGATIONAL**

This dimension of Pastor's prayer ministry can be seen in three perspectives. Firstly, as a priest the Pastor engages in strong intercession prayers for both his members and others (i.e other matters relating to the Kingdom of God, nation etc.) The goal of this dimension of prayer is to use the rod of the shepherd against the adversary. In the same way, he intercedes to edify, sustain and labour to see Christ being formed in the life of his members. It is not enough to teach and preach, a Pastor needs to pray to the Word of God through his member's life. (Jhn 17:1ff, Eph1:15-23, 3:14-19, Col 1:9-12).

Secondly, the Pastor leads his congregation to pray all kinds of prayer – Praise, adoration, thanksgiving, petition and intercession. There is the need for a balance here. A situation where a congregational prayer majors on Satan (curses, covenants, attacks demons etc) belittles the authority of Christ as the reigning King (Phi 2:5-11, Acts 2:36, Col 2:14-15). Many a time, the parishioners are made to continually live in fear. This is a contradiction!! (Col 1:13-14, I Jhn 4:4, 8, 2 Tim 1:7). Unfortunately, this is our new found love. There is the need for repentance.

The third facet of the congregational dimension to the Pastor's prayer ministry is that of teaching to pray. The Lord Jesus taught his disciples to pray. A Pastor is licensed to teach and nurture his members on how to pray. Our discipleship curriculum will not be complete if the subject of praying is missing. Often, we operate on a costly assumption that our parishioners already knew what prayer is; how to pray, what to pray, when to pray and where to pray. When this dimension is not properly dealt with the Pastor's prayer ministry is incomplete.

In all of these, the simple message is that, outside the Pastor's personal prayer life, he has an obligation to pray for his members, leads his member to pray and of course teach his members to pray. When this is done, the Pastor can be said to be prayerful and an example of Christ that he ought to be.

### **CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES TO PASTOR'S PRAYER MINISTRY**

It must be reiterated here that these are difficult times for the Church. The church is at the very low ebb of her personality, purpose and functions. The most prevalent thought about prayer is that, it is just a medium of asking God for things. Instead, prayer ought to be hearing from and speaking to God in order that His will be done on earth.

Below is a checklist of some challenges facing the church as it relates to prayers.

- (1) Wrong theology of prayer
- (2) The quality of life of those who prays
- (3) The content of prayer in line with biblical standards
- (4) Attitudes and postures in prayers
- (5) Neglect of the scriptures and the ministry of the Holy Spirit
- (6) Misuse of the scriptures in prayer for personal lust and desires
- (7) Immorality associated with leaders and places of prayers
- (8) Monetization of prayers
- (9) Diabolic and magical practices

(10) Misuse of the name of the Lord.

All these and several others have crept into the prayer ministry of the church. In fact, the counterfeit have become so prevalent that the original is becoming discarded. In the midst of these, the church must wake up and pursue the ideal. The arrow head of the change will have to be the Pastor, knowing fully well that for this purpose he was called (Titus 1:5, I Timo 4:1-3, 6, 2 Tim3:1-5).

### **KEYS TO EFFECTIVE PASTOR'S PRAYER MINISTRY**

Let us at this point mention some few things that will enhance the prayer ministry of the Pastor.

- (1) Assurance of Salvation – I Cor 2:14.
- (2) Victory over the flesh and its works –Gal 5:16 -21, 22-23, Col 3:5-12.
- (3) Assurance of call to ministry – Eph 4:11-13, Heb 5:4.
- (4) Fullness of the Spirit – Eph 5:18.
- (5) Knowledge and application of the scripture – John 8:32, John 15:7, Ps 119:11.
- (6) Total and absolute consecration – Rom 12:1-2, Lk 9:23.
- (7) Commitment to following in Christ steps – I Pet 2:21
- (8) Living to please the Lord in life and ministry – Gal 1:10, I Thesa 2:4-6
- (9) Commitment to sound biblical doctrines – I Timo 4:15-16
- (10) Don't be unequally yoked- 2 Cor 6:14-18.

### **CONCLUSION**

The call of God to be a Pastor is a great privilege. The responsibilities of Pastoral office must be sought and be seen to be carried out with due diligence and process. Effective prayer produces effective life and ministry. We need to evaluate and appraise our lives and ministries in order to be sure that our walk with and before the Lord are balanced. To choose and hold to our own ways can be dangerous and devastating. Holding onto the Lord affords fulfillment in life and eternal with Him.