

Full-time Yet Still By-vocational Pastors

PART ONE

(1 Cor. 9:13-14) Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live *of the things* of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.

There seems to be a trend today or maybe it's always been, that with some and probably more now, there are pastors that are getting fulltime salaries and have other outside jobs or businesses. Let me say that I'm not judging anyone because we ourselves at this time are still by-vocational missionaries. But there really needs to be a consideration of why and how long should one stay trying to do both. If we have the right motive and correct balance of our time, energies and faithfulness to the Lord and His church or ministry then all is well.

If a pastor has the wrong motive for working when he is paid a full-time salary then his ministry and church will suffer. This will be seen in many areas because of the need and lack for his leadership and shepherding skills which are not available. Let me say that pastoring is a full-time ministry of servant hood whether one is paid full-time or not. If one doesn't desire or want to give his all for the ministry of pastoring, then it may be best for him and the church that he finds God's real calling for his life. Again there is nothing wrong with being by-vocational if needed, but make sure it's really a need.

Most churches in America would be considered a by-vocational church and the pastor would or should be willing to do whatever it takes to serve these churches. We have served in both full-time and by-vocational churches and sense the needs of both and how to balance the work in either of them is not an easy task. Many missionaries are on the field under supported and are willing to sacrifice to serve where God has called them. This may or may not be always the wise thing to do especially if on a foreign field. But they are willing to do whatever it takes to minister and see people saved serving the Lord wherever He has called them. Obedience will bring sacrifice and adjustment.

The past few years I have talked with many young preachers and assistant pastors that want to pastor a church. Not one of them wanted to pastor a by-vocational church but be in a full-time pastorate. Maybe there needs to be more training in our schools about the how and why of being a by-vocational pastor. Maybe there could be some training in and through being a by-vocational assistant pastor that could help these young men to get prepared for any church. Many small and broken churches could use a good and faithful by-vocational pastor that would help them recover and move forward in their ministry.

Sometimes we need to just have a reality check on our real motives for ministry and how we are serving. Is it a "job, career" for getting the best benefits or is it a calling from God to serve no matter what we need to do. May we all just be honest with God, our churches and ourselves if we need to be doing something outside the church for income. Again nothing wrong being by-vocational is needed and that with a right motive.

God bless and have a great week.

Bro. Mickey - SCM

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PART TWO

(1 Cor. 9:13-14) Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live *of the things* of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.

Sometimes we let tradition and the present culture determine what we do instead of what the scriptures have to say. There was a time that men went out to serve a church and never thought of being paid full-time. They were just willing to obey the Lord's call and serve people wherever and however the Lord decided. Many of these men were trail blazers for church planting and many types of missions work both home and abroad for the Lord and His church. There is a need in our churches for new men of God that will consider doing the same to help struggling churches and start new churches all across America.

Then there are churches that want a pastor to be available "full-time" on a by-vocational salary and are not willing to help him in many areas of ministry. Some churches have unrealistic demands upon their pastor that even a full-time pastor could not fulfill. Then the pastor and the church become frustrated and many times the pastor feels guilt and failure because he can't give more time to the church. A church and the pastor need to have balance in this area of being full-time or by-vocational as well as being realistic about the needs of the church and the pastor and his family.

Sometimes churches as well as pastors get themselves into excessive debt in which they are not able to afford. Therefore the church can't afford to give a sufficient salary to a pastor or the pastor needs to have more income to pay off over indebtedness. These churches and pastors need to seek getting back into living within their income and grow in their faith and giving. Living within our means will help both the church and the pastor to do more for the Lord and each other.

Maybe some churches should take an account of how they can better provide for their pastors so he can give more time to the ministry. And maybe some pastors should re-examine their real needs for living expenses and why they are trying to make more money. Maybe we all need to just trust the Lord a little bit more in the area of finances. I know that there are areas in my own life that could be adjusted more. And by the grace of God we will seek to be the best stewards of the money that God allows us to use for His glory.

Let us all make sure that whatever God allows us to have in monetary things, that we are always full-time for Him and others whether we are paid "full-time" salaries or not. If we have to work by-vocational then may our churches understand and give grace and help to meet the needs of the ministry. May we be honest and have the right motive if we are getting paid a full-time salary and need to make a little extra for a time. Let's just have integrity, uprightness and truthfulness in all our dealings with our churches and our pastors.

Have a blessed and joyful week in the Lord!

Bro. Mickey

SCM