

MIN181

RELATIONSHIPS

And

ETHICS

In

MINISTRY

KINGDOM RELATIONSHIPS and ETHICS

An absolutely **ESSENTIAL** key to fulfilling God's purpose is **understanding how God has ordained that relationships function in the Kingdom of God.** Very few American Christians, ministers and laity alike, have a biblical understanding of how to properly relate to others according to the principles of God's Kingdom. Instead, they continue to form all of their relationships, perceive everyone around them, create all of their attitudes and actions using the principles and definitions of this dark world. This is a major discipleship failure and produces most of the problems in our churches. *If our ministers and churches would get this right it would end the great majority of our problems in churches.*

The brief overview of Kingdom Relationships and Ethics which follows is based on the correctly understood teaching of the whole of Scripture. The socio-historical context of the New Testament church, the post-apostolic church, and the writings of the apostolic fathers immediately after the New Testament form an even more extensive basis for our understanding of Kingdom Relationships and Ethics.

*God's Word establishes the foundational truth that we Christians have been born into a new family, with a new Father, new brothers and sisters, a new kingdom with new rules, and that from now on we MUST live according to God's principles of Kingdom Relationships and Ethics / Ethics and Relationships in Ministry. **These truths apply even more strictly to MINISTERS than to laity!***

2 Corinthians 5:16-17 "16 So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. 17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!"

We must reorder EVERYTHING in our lives according to Kingdom Principles, the teaching of God's Word. That includes the most important things of all – *all of our relationships, all of our ethics!*

KINGDOM RELATIONSHIPS ...

Section I. With Christians in My Local Church

The local church is a community of faith, a family of God, the holy body of Christ, with members committed to each other in deep, loving, long-term covenant relationships. The church is not simply a voluntary association, club or business entity of this world. All of our relationships must be defined and directed by God's Word. A normal, healthy Christian's closest relationships will always be with those brothers and sisters in their local church.

Parishioners relate to one another as brothers and sisters in Christ, serving each other in holiness, humility, harmony, love and acceptance. God's Kingdom advances most effectively in us and through us when our closest friendships are with people in our local church as we spend our time with them in worship, evangelism and discipleship.

God says our closest relationships of all should be with our "Christian" family – the true Christians in our nuclear family, and the Christians in our local church family.

The following verses tell us what these relationships should be like.

Colossians 3:12 "Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.

Colossians 3:13 Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you."

"Clothe yourselves" – be completely covered, covered up. This is what the "new self", the new creation in Christ is like.

Check your clothes: If you're not wearing these things, you're not wearing Christ. Something's dreadfully wrong.

These are RELATIONAL words: words describing KINGDOM RELATIONSHIPS and ETHICS among God's people.

This is how true Christians relate to one another.

GOD COMMANDS THAT THIS BE DEMONSTRATED FIRST AND FOREMOST WITHIN THE LOCAL CHURCH.

You cannot do better business with God than with man.

You cannot do better business with co-workers than with family.

You cannot do better business with extended family than with family.

You cannot do better business with Christians in other churches (extended Christian family) than with brothers and sisters in your own local church.

Paul is writing to Christians about their relationships within a local church.

THIS IS HOW YOU TEST YOUR SPIRITUALITY AND MATURITY:

IS THE CHARACTER OF CHRIST, THE PERSONALITY OF JESUS, CLEARLY SEEN IN YOUR CLOSEST RELATIONSHIPS: OUR IMMEDIATE FAMILY AND YOUR LOCAL CHURCH?

Colossians 3:14-16 And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. 15 Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. 16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.

PEACE – means PEACE with God and PEACE with man.

Colossians 3:15 “Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful.”

“**Rule**” – judge, decide, control,

From the very center of your personality, **the peace of Christ** completely controls your relationships with fellow believers.

THIS IS NOT referring to peace of mind, no worries, no anxieties, etc.

RATHER, GOD’S WORD IS EXPLICITLY STATING THAT every attitude, every thought, every word, every behavior relating to fellow believers in the local church is RULED, CONTROLLED, JUDGED, DECIDED BY THE PEACE OF CHRIST.

IS WHAT I AM DOING PRODUCING PEACE WITHIN MY LOCAL FELLOWSHIP?

Is this attitude flowing from peace with God and man?

Do these words / deeds produce peace within the local fellowship?

IF we are truly Christians, we will obey all of the word of Christ, and we will do those things which produce peace.

ANY ABSENCE OF PEACE in the Body of Christ is a doorway to the devil and a poor testimony to the world.

“And be thankful.” – Paul is talking about PUBLIC PRAISE. Christians are to praise God publicly in their worship services. Their praise and thanks to God encourages fellow believers.

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly” -

We are to be FULL of God’s Word and we are to TEACH and ADMONISH one another with all wisdom.

“**richly**” – an overflowing abundance of the Word of God living in us, spilling out of us.

“**Teach**” – truth, doctrine, information

“**Admonish**” – warn, exhort, encourage, rebuke, correct one who is at fault

“**Wisdom**” – **God’s truth delivered with appropriateness and thoughtfulness.**

True wisdom only comes from God, and we only have wisdom to the degree that we have correctly understood God’s Word, hid it in our hearts, obeyed it and let it change our way of thinking, feeling, speaking and acting!!! **Don’t give people worldly advice!!**

Galatians 6:2 “Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.”

“Carry” – bear, put up with, help.

“burdens” – problems, spiritual failures, weaknesses.

Ephesians 4:29-30 “Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. 30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.”

“**unwholesome**” – spoiled, negative, will make sick or not nourish.

“**building others up**” – edify, positive, nourish, make stronger.

“**grieve**” – to cause sorrow. It is bad talk that grieves the Holy Spirit.

Partial truth can still be spoiled, can hurt Christians and grieve the Spirit.

On the danger of negativity toward the things of God, toward what God is really saying and doing:

“The devil ... is the author of every negative notion. It is Satan who says, “Impossible!” He is the originator of every conceivable objection. Negative people are unwittingly servants of Satan..”

Pastor Richard Dresselhaus

Romans 15:1-3 “We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves. 2 Each of us should please his neighbor for his good, to build him up. 3 For even Christ did not please himself ... “

Ephesians 4:14-16 “14 Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. 15 Instead, **speaking the truth in love**, we will in all things **grow up** into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. 16 From him the **whole body, joined and held together** by every **supporting ligament**, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.”

We are COMMANDED to speak the TRUTH to one another, NOT to PET and PAMPER one another like BABIES!!!!

NOTE: Ephesians 4:11-13 says it is those who receive the ministry of their Pastor-Teachers who will be MATURE and able to speak the TRUTH.

Those who think they are mature, spiritual and wise enough to ignore their Teaching Shepherds continually on many matters are immature, unwise and foolish.

Notice how tightly the Christians in a local church are held together: as if by ligaments!!!!!!

NOTE: The concepts of individualism, independence, lone ranger church-hopping voluntary society “Christianity” are completely, utterly unbiblical!!

They are carnal, sinful, flowing from the original divider and rebel himself, LUCIFER!

These mark Kingdom Relationships within my local church:

Compassion	Kindness	Teaching	Unity
Humility	Gentleness	Admonishing one another	
Patience	Forgiveness	Carrying burdens	
Love	Edification	Peace	
Nourishing Speech		Worship	

The only way you can fulfill God's commands for Kingdom Relationships, and enjoy the fullest blessings of Kingdom life is to be in close relationship with Christians in your local church. This only comes by spending time with them in Christ. Your love for all is to be holy.

The Kingdom of God is primarily advanced through the ministries of local churches. The Bible's teaching on our commitment to our local family of God means that, except in extremely unusual circumstances, we will normally be so involved in the life, relationships and ministry of our local church that **ministry beyond that will be difficult**. Sometimes our local church will of course have ministry in conjunction with other ministries or churches, and we may be a part of that, but the individualistic approach in ministry is not normally a biblical model.

Your relationships with Christians in your local church should be closer, tighter, than your relationships with co-workers, extended family members, unsaved people, other Christians outside of your local church. Your closest relationships should be in your church.

(NOTE: In your local church, always promote unity and never strife, gossip, backbiting, division, dissension, or rebellion in any way. To do

1 Corinthians 3:16-17 “Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you? 17 If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him; for God's temple is sacred, and you are that temple.”

Here, Paul is warning the Corinthian church against all of the division, strife and dissension that was going on in their midst.

The strongest, most dreadful warning in the New Testament is reserved for those people who destroy local churches through strife, faction, gossip, division, dissension, rebellion and so forth. This sin apparently angers God more than anything else a human can do, for the person doing it should know better, but destroys the sacred temple of God, the earthly body of God's Son, anyway.

“God will destroy him” – God himself will judge and destroy, both now and eternally in hell, the person causing division in a local church.)

KINGDOM RELATIONSHIPS

Section II. With My Family and The Lost

As we have seen above, Jesus was very clear regarding how devoted we MUST be to him to be his disciples. Christ has every right as our Savior, Redeemer and God to make any demand he sees fit on us. The following scriptures reiterate this.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 19 Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; 20 you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.

1 Peter 1:18-19 18 For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, 19 but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.

Philippians 3:20 20 But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ,

Colossians 3:1-4 1 Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. 3 For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

John 14:15,21,23-24 15 "If you love me, you will obey what I command. 21 Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him." 23 Jesus replied, "If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. 24 He who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me.

1 Corinthians 7:22-23 22 For he who was a slave when he was called by the Lord is the Lord's freedman; similarly, he who was a free man when he was called is Christ's slave. 23 You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of men.

*(You see how that your natural situation and relationships no longer define you, are no longer primary in God's sight! You are a new being in Christ, and your status and relationships MUST be defined by him, or you CANNOT be his disciple. **If you rebel against this, you move back into domination by this world's powers.** If you do not order your relationships as God says, you will no longer be FREE in Christ, you will return to bondage).*

Matthew 10:34-39 34 “Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. 35 For I have come to turn “a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law— 36 a man’s enemies will be the members of his own household.’ 37 “Anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; 38 and anyone who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. 39 Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

(Do you see that you MUST change your relationship with your earthly family? That Christ and his church must come first? We must seek to maintain our ties with family and friends as much as we can, and still be putting Jesus and his kingdom FIRST. BUT, the people, kingdom work, and things of God must now come FIRST.

That means that kingdom work, local church events, etc., come BEFORE our extended families or friends outside of our local church. We participate in every way that we can with our families and friends, but in the normal course of life, the local church, our local family of God, comes first.)

Mark 10:28-31 28 Peter said to him, “We have left everything to follow you!” 29 “I tell you the truth,” Jesus replied, “no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the gospel 30 will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age (homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields—and with them, persecutions) and in the age to come, eternal life. 31 But many who are first will be last, and the last first.”

(Here, Jesus redefines our family – if we lose our earthly family because they oppose our walk with God, we still have our family that is even more real IN GOD’S EYES, our spiritual family of the local church.)

Mark 3:31-34 31 Then Jesus’ mother and brothers arrived. Standing outside, they sent someone in to call him. 32 A crowd was sitting around him, and they told him, “Your mother and brothers are outside looking for you.” 33 “Who are my mother and my brothers?” he asked. 34 Then he looked at those seated in a circle around him and said, “Here are my mother and my brothers! 35 Whoever does God’s will is my brother and sister and mother.”

(Here, Jesus AGAIN explicitly redefines our family. Christ’s family was opposing his ministry at this moment by trying to distract him and get him to stop and do something for or with them. He says that those who SUPPORT our life in Jesus and DO God’s will are our true family. Ideally, our family members would be doing this, for God’s will is household salvation. If they do not, then our

truest family – according to the explicit teaching of God’s Word – will be found in our local church family, God’s household and now ours.)

Proverbs 13:20 20 He who walks with the wise grows wise, but a companion of fools suffers harm.

Proverbs 24:21 21 Fear the LORD and the king, my son, and do not join with the rebellious,

These and many other verses teach us to be extremely careful in our relationships, including with family and with “Christians.”

Any relationship with friend or family that is actively dragging us down spiritually, leading us away from Christ, should be distanced or severed. This would NOT normally include spouses.

If God is not helping you minister to a lost person, or to a backsliding or lukewarm Christian, but instead you are being drained of spiritual vitality despite your prayers and study, then you must distance or sever that relationship!

God wants us to work with people with whom HE is working!

He wants us to work with people who desire to grow, who are receptive to the Word and the Holy Spirit, people who are teachable, receptive and willing to change to obey God and be like Jesus.

God wants us to be led by the Spirit in reaching out to others and working with others, not led by emotions, culture, tradition, programs, etc.

We should be constantly asking God to lead us to lost people or Christians where we may serve, help, witness, love and lead to Jesus Christ. **BUT, we should also always be praying that GOD WILL KEEP US FIRMLY AWAY from all relationships that are NOT his will.**

And not all people enter our lives through God’s will!

Some are sent by the enemy of our souls to distract us, drag us down, and destroy us!!!

And YES, this will sometime include family members.

Your primary relationships should always be with mature, spiritual, challenging, on-fire, growing saints in your local church. These “wise” people will help you grow in grace and power, giving you the wisdom and power to reach out to the lost and lukewarm.

Hopefully these people might include your family, but if not, then what does **Jesus** say? Will you obey Him? Do you truly love Christ more than you love your friends and earthly family? *If not, then your friends and family are idols in your life, your true gods, and Christ is not your Lord.*

KINGDOM RELATIONSHIPS

Section III. With Christians and Ministers in other Churches

God's Word tries to explain what the church is really all about by using several "word pictures" for the church.

There are several important facts to remember in these passages:

1. The primary context and application is the local church unless otherwise noted.
2. You should meditate on these word pictures to see the full implications.

A. CHRISTIANS IN OTHER CHURCHES

1. THE BODY OF CHRIST

1 Corinthians 12:27 "Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it."

Ephesians 4:16 "From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work."

The local church is the body of Christ. Every member of a local church should be viewed and treated as the member of a body, the holy body of Jesus Christ.

All human bodies have human DNA. But, not all human body parts are presently compatible with all human bodies. Even so in the churches.

Proselyting Christians from other churches is like trying to build a body from the many different parts of other bodies.

Remember Frankenstein's monster?

You hurt living bodies when you cut chunks out of them.

Many American Christians and ministers are like Dr. Frankenstein – they try to build their church from the parts of other bodies.

Therefore, you should not be inviting people who are attending another good church to attend this church, and people attending other churches should never invite our parishioners to attend another church. *It is highly inappropriate.*

The only exceptions would be for highly unusual special events, and never with the goal of getting someone to change churches.

Proselyting Christians from other churches to build your church is a carnal, cultural, competitive, cutthroat, political business model that is completely opposed to the way of Christ and of the New Testament.

It is unethical and immoral, and those who practice it are destroying the body of Christ. They are sinning.

(The next word picture is ...)

2. THE TEMPLE OF GOD

1 Corinthians 3:16-17 “Don’t you know that you yourselves are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit lives in you? 17 If anyone destroys God’s temple, God will destroy him; for God’s temple is sacred, and you are that temple.” *(Paul here speaks of the local church.)*

1 Peter 2:5 “you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”

Jesus Christ is building local churches one “living stone” at a time, and it is dangerous to tamper with His work or remove these holy stones. Stones are fit into a building with great precision, care, design and permanence. It is extremely difficult to remove such a true stone. *Don’t tamper with God’s design and handiwork!*

Therefore, you should not be inviting people who are attending another good church to attend this church, and people attending other churches should never invite our parishioners to attend another church. *It is highly inappropriate.*

(The next word picture is...)

3. THE BRIDE (WIFE) OF CHRIST

Revelation 19:7-8 “Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. 8 Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear.” (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints.)

This refers to the church universal. The church universal is the bride, and the local churches and people in them are parts of the bride. BUT, do you think it’s ok to pull the bride’s fingernails and toenails out, and switch their places? After all it’s the same bride?!?!

Divorce is very painful in a marriage, and God is against those who cause this by breaking marriage vows. Do you want to cause a breakup in God’s marriage to his bride, the church? Do you want to lay hands on Christ’s bride and rearrange her?

Therefore, you should not be inviting people who are attending another good church to attend this church, and people attending other churches should never invite our parishioners to attend another church, except for very special events when invitee's home church has no service. *It is highly inappropriate.*

(The next word picture is)

4. GOD'S HOUSEHOLD (FAMILY)

1 Timothy 3:15 "...how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is the church of the living God, ..."

Ephesians 2:19 "Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household,"

It is a very painful thing when families are torn apart by hatred, violence, divorce, drugs, kidnapping, etc.

Have you ever known a homewrecker, a child stealer, a kidnapper?

How much more does God hate his local families being torn apart?

These word pictures: Body / Temple / Family / Bride, and many others, all show a local church to be a tightly knit, closely related group, not to be interfered with by outsiders.

Therefore, you should not be inviting people who are attending another good church to attend this church, and people attending other churches should never invite our parishioners to attend another church. *It is highly inappropriate.*

DO YOU TAKE GOD'S WORD SERIOUSLY? Then NOTE THIS:

God never used any word picture, metaphor, or description for his church that would portray the church as simply a loose-knit, voluntary grouping of people that anyone could decide to join or leave on a whim or a "leading."

Every description is one of a tightly knit, closely related group or spiritual family.

Those people who want complete individual freedom to come, go, join, leave, and proselyte are rejecting everything the Bible teaches about the Church.

Every local church is different. God's present word and immediate plan for each local church will be different.

Examples:

1. The New Testament letters.
2. The Seven Churches of Revelation.

God has a word and season for his church universal, his church in regions, and so forth, but not every local church is hearing what the Spirit is saying to the Church. Furthermore, God will have specific words and seasons for specific local churches. Not all local churches are at the same place in the Spirit, in the

Word, in their walk with God. SO, all local churches are DIFFERENT, including in their maturity, depth and true spirituality. Therefore, you cannot simply invite anyone and everyone from other churches to come into this one. *We must let GOD join existing Christians to us as HE sees fit.*

What should you do if a Christian from another church questions you regarding something about their church?

1. Direct them to God's Word, Prayer.
2. Direct them to their Pastor.
3. You speak to your own Pastor.
4. Encourage them to be faithful to their church.

B. MINISTERS IN OTHER CHURCHES

What about ministers?

How should ministers relate to other ministers and Christians in other churches?

How should Christians relate to ministers in other churches?

The same ethics apply to laypeople as to ministers. Ministers are simply judged more strictly.

2 Corinthians 10:13-14 “We, however, will not boast beyond proper limits, but will confine our boasting to the field God has assigned to us, a field that reaches even to you. 14 We are not going too far in our boasting, as would be the case if we had not come to you, for we did get as far as you with the gospel of Christ.”

2 Corinthians 10:15-16 “Neither do we go beyond our limits by boasting of work done by others. Our hope is that, as your faith continues to grow, our area of activity among you will greatly expand, 16 so that we can preach the gospel in the regions beyond you. For we do not want to boast about work already done in another man's territory.”

Look at the words used here:

“**beyond proper limits**” – ametra; “not measured and given out.” Paul says he did not go into, or boast about, people or an area that God had “not measured and given out” to him. He worked in and with that area and people that God had given to him and not to others.

“**the field God has assigned to us**” - measured by a rule and divided. Precise.

“**work done by others**” – work belonging to others

“**another man's territory**” – **kanoni**; sphere, jurisdiction, referring either to God's assignment of certain people, or of a certain geographic area, to be under someone's authority.

“**as your faith continues to grow, our area of activity among you will greatly expand**” – the more you mature spiritually the more highly you will esteem us,

follow our lead and join us in this mission; and, the more influence we will have in your lives.

These word pictures relate to two images:

1. Lanes in a race marked out for each runner which others must avoid.
2. Spheres of authority or jurisdiction where only the assigned person has God-given authority.

Ministerial Courtesy and Ethics (from the AG Bylaws)

“All ministers are advised against interfering with pastors in charge of assemblies, whether it be by 1) going in upon their work without consent, or 2) by such communications with the members of the assembly as will hurt the influence of the leader.” (*that is, the Pastor*)

Paul was saying to the Corinthian church as their pastor, the Teaching Shepherd God gave them, “You are my lane, my field, my territory, sphere, and jurisdiction. No one else should be working with you without my consent. If they do so in any way, they **violate God’s orders and operate in rebellion.**”

It is unscriptural, ungodly and highly unethical for a minister to give to another pastor’s flock any counsel contrary to what their pastor would give! *The only exceptions to this would be where the other pastor has clearly violated major doctrine or lifestyle issues in God’s Word.*

A godly minister will only minister to, counsel with, hear you or advise you with your pastor’s permission. He will direct you to your pastor.

Kingdom relationships require that other ministers relate to you **through** your pastor.

This includes all apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastor-teachers.

Why might upset parishioners go to ministers or laity outside of their church for counsel instead of their own pastor?

1. Unaware of biblical pattern.
2. Looking for affirmation (rebellion).
3. Avoiding accountability (rebellion).
4. Angry at pastor or staff (rebellion).
5. Seeking help more privately (sometimes legitimate).

Why might ministers willingly counsel someone not in their flock? Because such ministers ...

1. Are ignorant of the scriptures and ethical considerations.
2. Don’t care what God’s Word and ministerial ethics teach; they are intentionally, knowingly unethical.
3. Are willing to steal people, talent, money from another flock and another pastor.

“Above all the apostle did not want to intrude into someone else’s field of labor. But that was what (others) had done. It is common today for congregations to compete with one another and to attract members from one church to another. They measure success by their power to persuade Christians to place their membership in another church. They take credit for souls they have not won. This contributes nothing to the triumphs of the gospel. The church, like any other organism, cannot grow by feeding on itself.”

Dr. French Arrington

(The next word picture relevant to Ministers is ...)

5. FLOCK

Another important word-picture is that of the “flock.” In the Palestinian / Judean context to which Jesus and the New Testament writers were referring, a flock was a well-defined and numbered group of specific sheep belonging to a specific shepherd.

Acts 20:28 “Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, ...”

1 Peter 5:2 “Be shepherds of God’s flock that is under your care, serving as overseers—not because you must, but because you are willing, ...”

Peter and Paul tell the pastors to shepherd the “flock,” SINGULAR, that is under their care.

God assigns particular shepherds over particular flocks.

We should normally not to seek counsel or ministry from shepherds God has not assigned to us instead of going to our own shepherd.

Today, biblical ethics and biblical relationships are at an all-time low.

Many pastors think nothing of “flirting” with Christians from other churches: bragging on their own church, inviting to them services, cultivating relationships with them, “schmoozing” them. **This is ungodly, self-centered, predatory behavior.**

Many pastors are always on the look-out for dissatisfied Christians from other churches, always ready to listen to their complaints or “hurts.”

They even teach their people to invite Christians who are actively attending other churches to leave their home church.

Such predatory pastors and Christians have no concern whatsoever for other churches, other ministers, or God’s Kingdom as they build their own kingdom.

When a parishioner goes directly from regularly attending one local church to attending another local church, the receiving pastor is honor-bound to contact the previous pastor. Almost none do so.

“A wise pastor will want to talk with the former pastor about the reasons for the relocation of members before receiving them into membership in his church.”

Rev. James Bridges

Dr. Lowell Ashbrook writes:

“In dealing with ... members ... of another man’s church, we must be especially careful. A proper code of ethics will not allow us to say anything against that pastor or anything to encourage his members to attend our church. In such matters as visiting another’s members, raising money among businessmen belonging to another congregation, and in MANY other ways, a minister may violate ... proper ethical standards. In so doing, he will ... be judged by God.”

“A partial list of unethical behavior:

1. Showing excessive attention toward members visiting from another assembly.
2. Enticing members of another church by giving them a ... position (ministry) after they have visited your services.
3. Entering a conversation that is critical of a fellow minister.
4. Accepting members of a neighboring church without contacting the previous pastor.

“We will give account to God ... for our attitudes, words and deeds with regard to our fellow ministers. Our ethics ... will rise up against us in judgment.”

Dr. Lowell Ashbrook

We know there are Christians in all denominations and most local churches. We are not doing wrong when we stand against unscriptural doctrines OR practices in those churches (unconditional eternal security, entire sanctification, purgatory, hyper-faith, prosperity gospel, etc.).

If we KNOW someone in another church is LOST, then witnessing to that person is ALWAYS appropriate.

Depending on the degree of false doctrine in the other church, you may want to invite that newly saved person who attends that other church to our own church, but you should make CERTAIN the Holy Spirit is leading you to do this.

Normally, we should not be inviting people from other orthodox, evangelical, bible teaching churches into our church.

We should still pray for other churches, and not intentionally steal people from them.

KINGDOM RELATIONSHIPS

Section IV. Parishioners and Pastors

Pastor – Parishioner. The Pastor relates to all parishioners as their Teaching Shepherd and servant-leader, serving them in love, humility and holiness, praying, guiding, preaching, teaching, modeling Christ, striving to present them as a holy bride to Christ.

- Parishioners relate to their Pastor as their shepherd and leader, harmoniously following him in fulfilling the mission, vision and philosophy of ministry of this Pastor and church.
- The Pastor and Pastor’s wife are the father and mother of the local family of God, and are loved, respected and appreciated as such.
- The pastors are the God-appointed shepherds and leaders of a local church.

There is a biblical pattern which **God** has given for the church, and there are cultural models created by **man**. Man’s models will be opposed to God’s pattern. God’s blessing always rests on obedience: building according to the pattern.

God’s Word defines how we relate to each other in God’s Kingdom. His Word governs all of our relationships.

This includes how we relate to leaders and how leaders relate to us.

There are 2 kinds of relationships that are especially revealing of our true spiritual maturity:

1. How we relate to “leaders,” those who are “over” us;
2. How we relate to the “lesser,” those who are “under” us.

Put another way, how do we relate or react to the pastors and the poor, to those in “power” or “authority”, and to those seemingly “weaker” than us.

Our culture says wealth is a sign of success, ability and worth.

God says wealth means nothing about your success, ability or worth.

Our culture says question, resist and reject authority.

God says obey and respect authority, wherever it lines up with God’s Word (God’s correctly interpreted Word).

We in America have brought cultural values into the kingdom of God and replaced Godly principles in these two areas: wealth and authority.

We view the “leaders / pastors” and the “lesser / poor” through cultural lenses instead of through Kingdom eyes.

We relate and respond based on the principles of this world.

We have seen how we are to relate to the poor.

Now let’s examine the conflict between our culture and God’s Word on how we relate to our pastors, and how our pastors / elders relate to us.

1 Peter 2:5,9 “... you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through

Jesus Christ. ... 9 But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.”

Some people think we are all on completely equal footing in the priesthood of all believers.

Yes and no. The priesthood of all believers refers ONLY to every Christian’s privilege to go directly to God in prayer and praise, and to declare or speak to others about God. This has no reference whatsoever to your particular gifting and service in the Body of Christ, and therefore no reference to “authority.”

God’s Word tells us what a pastor is to BE and to DO.

Ephesians 4:11 “It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers,” “pastors and teachers” – poimenoι kai didaskaloi ... these two terms are here linked together as ONE - Teaching Shepherds.

Ephesians 4:12 “to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up ...” “prepare” – equip, train, teach, get ready, get into shape to serve in God’s kingdom.

Acts 20:17,28 “From Miletus, Paul sent to Ephesus for the elders of the church. ... 28 Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.” “elders / shepherds” – same person “Keep watch” – epi skopoi, scope out, watch out for, look over, inspect.

(NOTE: It is God the Holy Spirit who makes and appoints the pastors of a church.)

1 Peter 5:1-3 To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder, ... 2 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; 3 not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.

1 Peter 5:1-3 To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder, ... 2 Be shepherds of God’s flock that is under your care, serving as overseers—...”

“elders – shepherds – overseers” – presbuteroi – poimenoι – episkopoi Elders serve as pastors / shepherds and bishops / overseers. These words are used interchangeably.

1 Peter 5:1-3 ... not greedy for money, but eager to serve; 3 not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.

“greedy for money” – in the ministry to make money instead of to serve God.
 “eager to serve” – gladly working hard in service to God and church.

1 Peter 5:1-3 “3 not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.”

“lording it over” – katakurieuontes. Meanings of this word:

- to rule to one’s own advantage and another’s loss;
- to domineer, to exercise complete control of someone’s life to their detriment of the other party;
- ruling as a master over slaves with absolute authority.

Peter warns: “Do not subjugate, domineer and exercise absolute control over those under your care, ruling them as a master does slaves to his advantage and their loss.”

Why was such a warning necessary?

Because God has given the pastors / shepherds the gift and authority to lead and direct the flock under their care.

They are warned against abusing their authority precisely because they are the ones who have that authority in the church.

(Evangelists, prophets, deacons, believers, the church, are not warned, since their gifting does not include exercising authority.)

1 Thessalonians 5:12 “Now we ask you, brothers, to respect those who work hard among you, who are over you in the Lord and who admonish you.”

“respect” – honor, esteem highly, appreciate, show special courtesy toward.

“over you” – proistemi ... rule govern, direct.

“in the Lord” – in Christ, in the Kingdom of God.

“admonish” – teach, warn, correct, rebuke.

Hebrews 13:7 “Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith.”

Hebrews 13:17 “Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you.”

“leaders” – hegeomai ... to lead, rule, exercise authority; this word refers to the Ephesians 4 Elders: the Pastors.

“obey” – occurs twice in the imperative, a command.

“remember/consider” – think about the pastors and their families, how they live, their way of life, their priorities, values, faithfulness, etc.

“imitate their faith” – pattern your life after their lives, the way they lived their faith in Christ.

In God’s Kingdom, pastors / elders do not direct your personal life or decisions outside of kingdom issues: jobs, houses, who to marry, moving, etc. It is good to enlist their prayer and counsel in such matters, and give their advice great weight.

In the Kingdom or church however, God’s called and gifted Teaching Shepherds serve God and us by caring for us, leading, feeding, being examples, training us for ministry, directing, guiding, governing the church. This is to our spiritual advantage, not our disadvantage.

God’s shepherds do have the authority to advise us concerning all kingdom related issues, and to direct us on all matters relating to, or affecting, our life and ministry within the church.

When making serious decisions, setting priorities and values and so forth where we may not have a clear command from scripture on what to do, we should stop, remember our pastors, consider how they would decide on the matter, and then imitate their faith.

2 Corinthians 2:9 “9 The reason I wrote you was to see if you would stand the test and be obedient in everything.”

2 Corinthians 7:12 “12 So even though I wrote to you, it was not on account of the one who did the wrong or of the injured party, but rather that before God you could see for yourselves how devoted to us you are.”

Galatians 4:12-16 “12 I plead with you, brothers, become like me, for I became like you. You have done me no wrong. 13 As you know, it was because of an illness that I first preached the gospel to you. 14 Even though my illness was a trial to you, you did not treat me with contempt or scorn. Instead, you welcomed me as if I were an angel of God, as if I were Christ Jesus himself. 15 What has happened to all your joy? I can testify that, if you could have done so, you would have torn out your eyes and given them to me. 16 Have I now become your enemy by telling you the truth?”

It is when our pastors tell us the truths we don’t want to hear that our relationship with them is tested.

1 Timothy 5:17-18 “17 The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching. 18 For the Scripture says, “Do not muzzle the ox while it is treading out the grain,” and “The worker deserves his wages.””

How do we relate to our pastors?

We relate to them with respect, obedience, love, honor, remembrance, consideration, imitation, devotion, generosity.

What about accountability?

1. In sound doctrine and holy living we are all accountable to each other.
2. The ministers are accountable to other ministers regarding discipline (Paul, his team, other apostles).
3. The flock is accountable to the Shepherd in spiritual growth, and all things to do with the church (because he will give an account to God).
4. We are all accountable to God’s Word and Spirit.
5. 2 Cor 8:16-24.

KINGDOM RELATIONSHIPS

Section V. The Pastor, Staff and Leaders

The relationships between the Pastor, the fellow pastors on his team, and the lay leaders are given special attention in scripture.

Mark 3:13-15 13 Jesus went up on a mountainside and called to him those he wanted, and they came to him. 14 He appointed twelve—designating them apostles—that they might **be with him** and that he might **send them out** to preach 15 and to have authority to drive out demons.

Acts 15:40 but Paul chose Silas and left, commended by the brothers to the grace of the Lord.

Acts 16:2-3 2 The brothers at Lystra and Iconium spoke well of him. 3 **Paul wanted to take him along on the journey**, so he circumcised him because of the Jews who lived in that area, for they all knew that his father was a Greek.

Titus 1:5 The reason I left you in Crete was that you might straighten out what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town, as I directed you.

1 Timothy 5:22 Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands, and do not share in the sins of others. Keep yourself pure.

2 Timothy 2:2 And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others.

1 Timothy 3:10 10 They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons.

(Paul is writing to Timothy the Senior Pastor of the church in Ephesus.)

If we are part of lay leadership or a ministry team we will have the same vision and spirit as the team, which will have the vision and spirit of the leader ... the Pastor.

2 Corinthians 12:18 “I urged Titus to go to you and I sent our brother with him. Titus did not exploit you, did he? **Did we not act in the same spirit and follow the same course?**”

All of these and other scriptures on this subject produce the following guidelines:

A. Pastor – Staff. The Pastor relates to the staff as a mentor, brother and servant, guiding their ministerial and spiritual growth.

- The staff and spouses relate to the Pastor and his wife as loyal supporters and servants, extending the Pastor’s ministry however necessary.
- The relationships of the pastoral staff and spouses will be the closest core relationships in the church, knit together in love and complete loyalty.
- The first loyalty and commitment of Staff Pastors and their families is to the Senior Pastor and his family, and they shall seek to emulate the first family in every appropriate way.
- The staff pastor and family will not become closer to other families in the church than they are to the Pastor and his wife. - Staff wives will always be available to help and serve the Pastor’s wife however needed.
- Staff families provide the primary example to the rest of the congregation in love, loyalty, respect, thoughtfulness, courtesy and appreciation toward the Pastor and his wife and family.
- They will never entertain criticism of the Senior Pastor or Staff, and will never usurp any role, ministry, relationship or authority of the Pastor or

other Staff. (More detailed explanations of this relationship is available in the Portfolios / Ministry Descriptions for staff.)

B. Pastor – Layleaders. The Pastor relates to lay leaders as their mentor, brother and servant, guiding their ministerial and spiritual growth.

- The lay leaders and spouses relate to the Pastor and his wife as loyal supporters and servants, following the Pastor in fulfilling the mission, vision and philosophy of ministry, extending the Pastor's ministry however necessary.
- Lay leaders provide an example to the rest of the congregation in love, loyalty, respect, thoughtfulness, courtesy and appreciation toward the Pastor and his wife and family.
- They will never entertain criticism of the Senior Pastor or Staff, and will never usurp any role, ministry, relationship or authority of the Pastor or Staff. (More detailed explanations of these relationships are found in the Ministry Descriptions for lay leaders.)

All staff and lay leaders are selected by the Pastor as shepherd and leader of the overall ministry team.

Everyone works as part of a team guided by one overall vision.

Since the Pastor-Teacher who shepherds the flock is striving to deeply learn and apply God's Word in this community of faith, no staff member or lay-leader should ever give teaching or kingdom-related advice that is contrary to what the Pastor would give. **We should all act with one mind, in one accord, speaking the same thing – in accordance with God's Word.**

C. Staff Pastors – Layleaders/Parishioners. The Staff relates to all Layleaders and parishioners as their Teaching Shepherds and servant-leaders, serving them in love, humility and holiness, praying, guiding, preaching, teaching, modeling Christ, striving to present them as a holy bride to Christ.

- Parishioners relate to their Staff Pastors as their shepherds and leaders under the authority of the Senior Pastor, harmoniously following him in fulfilling the mission, vision and philosophy of ministry of this Pastor and church.
- All Staff Pastors are selected by the Senior Pastor and answer directly and only to him. The Staff Pastors and their spouses never have any relationship in the church closer than their relationship to the Senior Pastor and his wife.

- The Staff Pastors and their families relate to all parishioners in the church, including lay leaders, “through” the Senior Pastor and Pastor’s wife. (More detailed explanations of this relationship is available in the Portfolios / Ministry Descriptions for staff.)

CONCLUSION

RELATIONSHIPS in MINISTRY ...

All of our relationships must be 100% defined by Scripture, and not by our emotions, culture, family tradition or anything else.

We are in the Kingdom of God, under the rule and reign of the Sovereign Almighty God.

We have been redeemed by Christ’s blood, and we belong completely and absolutely to Him.

He has all authority and right to define and govern our relationships however He sees fit.

ETHICS in Ministry ...

All of our ethics must be 100% defined by Scripture, and not by our emotions, culture, family tradition or anything else.

We are in the Kingdom of God, under the rule and reign of the Sovereign Almighty God.

We have been redeemed by Christ’s blood, and we belong completely and absolutely to Him.

He has all authority and right to define and govern our ethics however He sees fit.

**IN ALL OF OUR KINGDOM RELATIONSHIPS and ETHICS,
ALL OF OUR RELATIONSHIPS and ETHICS in MINISTRY,**

If we love Him, we will obey Him.

If we do not obey Him, we do not love Him.

