

Every elder meeting follows this pattern. Topics change each month but the same format. The next page is our minutes and reminders of what needs to be thought about monthly. As pastor, I bring the update and an elder brings the current minutes

Elder's Update on October 22, 2019

Ministry Opportunity and Prayer

- ❖ **Devotional Thoughts – Staff... (attached)**
- ❖ **Last Meeting Minutes – Assignments Reviewed and Approval (attached)**

Items of Interest

- ❖ **Sign Bank Stuff**
- ❖ **Raising Hope (attached)**
- ❖ **Piano Option**
- ❖ **Attendance Report (attached)**
- ❖ **Finance (attached)**
- ❖ **Staff - P. Jim, P. Kevin, P. Zach, Rhonda, Natalie, Amanda - Kids**
- ❖ **Next Elder Meeting, we need to schedule it now :-)**
- ❖ **Paradigm shift as a church, all of us preach this – glad you came so are you in the game?**

Remember Often What A Healthy Church Looks Like

1. Bible is taught and has supreme authority.
2. Believes in the power of prayer.
3. Does life w/ one another (serving and committed).
4. Has a good reputation w/community. If we vanished would they even notice?
5. Healthy Churches grow numerically. You need to have a burden for lost people.

Elder Meeting Minutes

Location:

Attendees:

Summary of to-do's leading into current meeting (for comparison):

Minutes:

Summary of to-do's before next meeting:

File annual report for nonprofit corporation with AR secretary of state office.

Upcoming event calendar entries:

January

- Send missionary support letters
- Send membership affirmation letters
- INSURANCE – have there been any major contents purchases in the past year? Should have pictorial record to support a claim.

February

- Early-Mid February – New members class 30 days before business meeting
- Start planning agenda for business meeting

March

- Early March – publish notice of Annual business meeting – 2 weeks advance notice in bulletin
- Late March – business meeting
 - o Be sure to mention financial accountability with detailed disbursement reviews with supporting documentation
- Elders review detailed disbursement reports and supporting receipts

April

- File annual report for nonprofit corporation with AR secretary of state office

Key annual events for elders:

January

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- Send membership affirmation letters
- INSURANCE – have there been any major contents purchases in the past year? Should have pictorial record to support a claim.

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April

- File annual report for nonprofit corporation with AR secretary of state office

May

- Review budget and make adjustments

June

- Elders review detailed disbursement reports and supporting receipts

July

- Mid July – plan for Jim & Sharon’s anniversary – August 3 – recognize on Sunday morning service

August

- August – start planning Pastor Appreciation in October
- Review budget and make adjustments

September

- Elders review detailed disbursement reports and supporting receipts

October

- October – Pastor Appreciation
- October – start Budget preparation – complete and finalize in December
 - o Plan for financial audit in 2020/2021

November

- November – draft Missionary support letters
- November – draft membership affirmation letter
- Review budget and make adjustments

December

- December – send Missionary support letters
- December – review decision to start depreciating long-term assets
- December – send membership affirmation letter
- Elders review detailed disbursement reports and supporting receipts

The Expectations of Pastoral Ministry...

By Aubrey Malphurs

Over the past few years, God has allowed me not only to teach leadership at Dallas Seminary but also to minister in numerous churches and denominations as a consultant and trainer. As I work with various leaders, I've come across a fundamental assumption on which some base their pastoral paradigm. It's the assumption that the primary and foremost role of the pastor is to provide pastoral care for the congregation—to take care of the sheep. This would include such hands-on care as visitation in the hospital and at home, counseling, and care during a crisis.

I challenge this assumption both biblically (exegetically) and practically. I believe that while pastoral care is a function of the pastorate, it's neither the primary nor the foremost role of a pastor. The primary responsibility of the pastor is to lead the congregation, which includes such things as teaching the Scriptures, propagating the mission, casting a vision, strategizing to accomplish the church's mission, protecting the sheep from false teaching, and other functions.

Both the Old and New Testaments use shepherd imagery of leaders, but a study of such passages reveals that this imagery refers to leadership more than to pastoral care.

We begin with an examination of the shepherd metaphor in the Old Testament. While pastoral care may have been an aspect of what some leaders in the Old Testament did, their primary role was that of leadership. For example, the prophets and God commonly used the word *shepherd* of the political leaders of Israel and the nations (2 Sam 7:7; Isa. 44:28; Jer. 25:34-38; and Ezek. 34:1-4). The emphasis here is clearly on them as leaders. In Psalm 78:70-72 the psalmist writes of David as Israel's shepherd. Is he referring here to David as the primary caregiver or leader of the nation? The answer is found in verse 72, where he uses parallelism. First, he says that David shepherded Israel "with integrity of heart." Then he follows with a parallel statement, "with skillful hands he led them." The latter term *led* explains the former *shepherded*. We see much the same in 2 Samuel 5:2, where the Israelites said to David, "And the LORD said to you, 'You will shepherd my people Israel, and you will become their ruler.'" From these verses we can conclude that, whether or not these leaders provided some type of pastoral care, the main thrust of what they did was lead people.

In the New Testament Jesus picks up on this imagery and uses it about himself, emphasizing specifically his leadership (John 10:1-6, 27). Then others such as Luke (Acts 20:28-29) and Peter (1 Peter 5:1-4) use it of the leaders in the church. These passages emphasize the role of the shepherd-leader as protector, overseer, and example to the flock.

Another point that relies less on shepherd imagery but is important to this discussion is found in Acts 6:1-7. The apostles and the early church found themselves in a difficult situation in which one group of members was complaining that the other group was neglecting their widows—definitely a pastoral care situation. It's important to note how the apostles handled it. They delegated the pastoral care responsibility (the care of the widows) to others rather than doing it themselves. And the reason is most important, "We will turn this responsibility over to them and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word" (vv. 3-4). If pastoral care is the most important function, then why didn't they say so? Instead, they indicate that prayer and the ministry of the Word were most important.

There are several practical reasons for being careful about overemphasizing the pastoral care side of a pastor's ministry. Research tells us that some pastors who are strong in pastoral care tend to resist healthy, necessary growth in their churches, because if the church adds more people through evangelism or some other means, it

will grow too big for the pastor to be able to care for all the people. This puts an unreasonable demand on his time. He wonders, *How can I visit and care for all these people whom I love? There aren't enough hours in the day.* Thus, often unconsciously, he resists healthy growth, and the church stays small in size and fails to reach lost people.

Another reason is that, whether pastoral care is overemphasized or not, some in the church, often the older members, expect the pastor to visit them, particularly when they're in the hospital. If he fails to visit them even for a legitimate reason, they may be offended. This promotes the false idea that if the pastor doesn't visit you, then you haven't been visited.

This leads to a third reason. Others in the congregation may have gifts in the pastoral care area (Ephesians 4:11 applies to laypeople as well as pastoral leaders!) and will often use these gifts when visiting people in the hospital. But if the pastor tries to do all the visiting, the laypeople aren't able to exercise their gifts of pastoral care. This diminishes and even discourages this important ministry for the laity of the church.

Some ministries in the church may be better at providing pastoral care than the pastor, who may not be gifted in this area. For example, one of the advantages of a small-group ministry is that it provides hands-on pastoral care for its members. I recall visiting one of the ladies in my church who was in the hospital. When I arrived, I found several of the people in her small group there ministering to and caring for her. I suspect I was more in their way than a help to her.

Finally, some churches are too large for the pastor to visit and offer pastoral care to all or even some of the members. How, then, can his role be primarily that of pastoral care? If it is, then we should demand that he visit everybody.

Based on the New Testament, I believe that other leadership functions are more important to the church than pastoral care. One example is helping the church to develop and adopt a passionate, compelling mission statement. The Savior gave the church its mission statement—to make and mature disciples—in Matthew 28:19-20. This is what the church is to be about. And the way to evaluate the effectiveness of the church is to look for its disciples. Do you want to know if your church is effective? Look for disciples! While the Great Commission includes pastoral care, it's much broader than that.

We may wonder where this common view that equates the pastor's ministry primarily with pastoral care originated. I believe that it comes from at least two sources: the biblical use of shepherd imagery and tradition. While Scripture uses shepherd imagery, shepherds did much more than just provide pastoral care for their sheep. The passages noted above demonstrate this, and so does any good book on biblical customs. Consequently this view is a misunderstanding of what shepherds did in biblical times. It assumes that a shepherd spent most of his day taking care of sheep. It would be more accurate when we hear the term *shepherd* to think of him as a sheep-leader rather than a sheep caregiver.

An examination of church history reveals that in various historical periods, the church emphasized different roles for the pastor. During the Reformation, the Reformers emphasized the teaching of God's Word. In the 1600s the Puritans specifically stressed the role of pastor as a "physician of the soul." They believed that the pastor's primary role was that of the shepherd of souls. Much of the emphasis today on the pastor as caregiver comes from this emphasis. While tradition helps us understand how the church has viewed the role of the pastor over the ages, we must draw our understanding from Scripture. If tradition contradicts the Bible, it's imperative that we follow the latter over the former.

This view of pastoral ministry is wrong if the pastor of a church pours most of his time into pastoral care and little, if any, into other areas, such as communicating and encouraging the church to pursue Jesus' mission for the church—the Great Commission. It's also wrong if people insist that the primary role of all pastors must be the pastoral care of the flock.

My purpose in writing this article isn't to diminish the importance of pastoral care but to put it in proper biblical perspective. At a time when pastoring a church is a leadership-intensive enterprise (Peter Drucker argues that leading a large church is one of the three most difficult professions in our culture), pastors must know what their biblical role is. I am convinced that the primary role is that of leader of the flock, who at times provides pastoral care for the flock.

Submitted by Jim Brewer