

God's Pattern For Faithfulness In Ministry

faithful: 1. Of persons, their actions, etc. : Full of or characterized by faith; believing. 2. Firm in fidelity or allegiance to a person to whom one is bound by any tie; constant, loyal, true.

faithfulness: The quality of being faithful; a. Fidelity, loyalty [to a superior or friend]; trustworthiness, conscientiousness. b. Strict adherence to one's pledged word; honesty, sincerity.

- I. To what or whom are ministers to be faithful?
 - A. Ministers are called to be faithful ministers of Jesus Christ. **1CO 4:1-4.**
 1. steward: An official who controls the domestic affairs of a household, supervising the service of his master's table, directing the domestics, and regulating household expenditure; a major-domo.
 2. It is required (demanded) in stewards that a man be found faithful. It is to be the state of being or existence for ministers of Jesus Christ.
 - a. It is not required that a steward speak in tongues, be wealthy, poor, married, single, work an extra job, forbidden from working an extra job, etc.
 - b. He must be faithful to his Master, Jesus Christ, in all things pertaining to his calling as revealed in the Scripture.
 - c. He must be faithful in everyday matters, having a good report in general.
1TI 3:7.
 3. When it comes to a minister's faithfulness, it matters not how others judge it, or what his own opinion might be concerning it, the bottom line is that he answers not to men but to Jesus Christ.
 - B. Those that are called to be faithful ministers of Christ are enabled by Jesus Christ Himself. **1TI 1:11-12.**
 1. It is not natural ability or scholarly education that enables a man for this work but Jesus Christ. **ACT 4:13 c/w MAT 11:25.**
 2. Whatever one's education, if a man is a *bona-fide* minister of Jesus Christ, He enabled him.
 - C. Those thus enabled are rightly said to be a gift from Jesus Christ, given for the work of the ministry. **EPH 4:8, 11-12.**
 - D. NOTE: It is a ministry *for* the church and *to* the church, but ministers are called to be ministers *of* Jesus Christ. **COL 1:7; ROM 15:16.**
 1. In a monarchial system (and the church is a kingdom with a King), the Sovereign's minister may be called, for example, the Prime Minister *of* (insert nation here) but his charge is from his Sovereign to rule in his stead, administering his order.
 2. Christian ministers are ambassadors for Christ, speaking for Him, as workers together with Him. **2CO 5:20; 6:1; 1CO 3:9.**
 3. They are not ambassadors for some system or denomination.
 - E. The ministry they are given and for which they are enabled is a New Testament ministry. **2CO 3:5-8.**
 1. They do not sit in Moses' seat (**MAT 23:2**) but stand and proclaim Jesus Christ the Lord. **2CO 4:5-7.**
 2. They have a more glorious ministry than that of the letter of Moses' law, for they preach the knowledge of the glory of God as seen in Jesus Christ.
- II. Even though they are ministers of Jesus Christ, He is not Himself the pattern for their ministry.
 - A. He has a ministry, but it is an high-priestly ministry, not on earth but in heaven. **HEB 8:1-2.**

- B. Even His earthly ministry was not a pattern for Gentile ministers, for it was primarily to the nation of Israel. And it was a ministry of performing many miracles. **MAT 15:24 c/w 10:5-6; ROM 15:8.**
- C. The gospel went to the Gentiles primarily after His death, at which time the N.T. would be fully in force. **HEB 9:16-17; 10:9.**
- D. Because of an imposed judicial blindness upon the Jews, the gospel predominantly favored the Gentiles. **ROM 11:25.**
- III. Jesus Christ provided a man, an apostle and a minister, as an example and pattern for N.T. ministers.
- A. That man was the apostle Paul, the apostle to us Gentiles. **ROM 11:13.**
1. He wrote more than half of the N.T. (14 of 27 books).
 2. He wrote the three pastoral epistles, written not to churches, but to ministers.
 3. Where do we go to get instructions on a N.T. ministry and concerning N.T. churches? We go to the man who wrote about it under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.
- B. Paul is the one that writes to a minister and steward that he might know *how he oughtest to behave himself in the house of God which is the church of the living God.* **1TI 3:14-15.**
1. Where do stewards go to find out how to control and administer the affairs of God's house?
 - a. We go to the man who writes and tells us how we oughtest to behave ourselves in that house. When Paul says "oughtest," he's not leaving us stewards any latitude in our behavior.
 - b. ought: The general verb to express duty or obligation of any kind; strictly used of moral obligation, but also with various weaker shades of meaning, expressing what is befitting, proper, correct, advisable, or naturally expected.
 2. Paul is the one who sets forth the duties and obligations binding upon stewards. They had best do it Paul's way.
- C. Paul sets himself forward as the example for believers to follow. **1CO 4:14-16.**
1. **PHIL 4:9.** "Those things" is a very specific group of things that are required that the God of peace be with us. Omitting any of those things is fraught with risk.
 2. **PHIL 3:17.** Brethren are to be followers "together" (In one assembly, company, or body) of Paul. A church should be emphatically Pauline in doctrine and conduct.
 3. Pastors with churches are to follow Paul together.
 - a. Pastors are to feed the flock of God, take the oversight thereof, and be ensamples to the flock. **1PE 5:1-4.**
 - b. Even Peter, an apostle to the Jews (**GAL 2:8**), encouraged Jewish saints to regard Paul. **2PE 3:15-16.**
 4. Following Paul's example will keep a pastor and his flock from following the walk of those described in **PHIL 3:18-19.**
- D. NOTE: By following Paul we are not actually following Paul, for Paul's ways were not really Paul's ways but rather they were from Christ and in Christ. **1CO 11:1; 4:16-17.**
1. If a minister desires his ministry to be faithful in the Lord, he should be as Timothy, whose ministry brought believers into remembrance of Paul's ways (which be in Christ).
 2. That is why Paul could write the Philippians and say "...be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have US [Paul and Timothy, **PHIL 1:1**] for an ensample" (**PHIL 3:17**).
 3. Timothy's ministry was to bring brethren into remembrance of Paul's ways because

- Paul's ways were in Christ and of Christ.
4. Paul's ways were taught by him in every church, which means they all had a common creed and were to function the same way. We have his letters to those churches explaining his ways.