

Preachers' Responsibilities and Qualifications

Members sometimes ask a preacher what they do all week.

Members have been heard to say, "I wish that I had a job like yours. You only work 1 hour a week."

Those members do not have a clue as to what is involved in the work of a preacher. A preacher is on call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and his work is never done.

The preacher's work and qualifications are often misunderstood.

The Bible clearly reveals the responsibilities and qualifications of a New Testament gospel preacher.

Today, we will see how the Bible summarizes the responsibilities of a true preacher. Notice that three words especially describe their work - preacher, evangelist, and minister.

Their qualifications should become quite clear as we begin to understand their responsibilities.

Let's not expect more or less of a preacher than what God expects.

When a congregation is planning to choose a preacher it is important that we study their responsibilities and qualifications just like we do when appointing elders and deacons.

1. Preach and Teach the Word.

- Preach, teach, exhort, and rebuke boldly.
- Hold firm to sound doctrine.
- Evangelize and teach the lost and edify the saved must be the preacher's passion and purpose.
- Reject and refute false doctrine and avoid foolish teaching (mentioned at least nine times below).

1 Timothy 1:3-7 - "³ As I urged you when I went into Macedonia—remain in Ephesus that you may **charge some that they teach no other doctrine**, ⁴ **nor give heed to fables and endless genealogies**, which cause disputes rather than godly edification which is in faith. ⁵ Now the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from sincere faith, ⁶ from which some, having strayed, **have turned aside to idle talk**, ⁷ desiring to be teachers of the law, understanding neither what they say nor the things which they affirm."

1 Timothy 1:18-19 - "¹⁸ This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may **wage the good warfare**, ¹⁹ having faith and a good conscience, which some having rejected, concerning the faith have suffered shipwreck,"

1 Timothy 4:6-7 - "⁶ **If you instruct the brethren in these things, you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ**, nourished in the words of faith and of the good doctrine which you have carefully followed. ⁷ But **reject profane and old wives' fables**, and exercise yourself toward godliness."

1 Timothy 4:11 - "These things **command and teach**."

1 Timothy 6:2 - "**Teach and exhort** these things."

1 Timothy 6:20-21 - "²⁰ O Timothy! **Guard what was committed to your trust, avoiding the profane and idle babblings** and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge—²¹ by professing it some have strayed concerning the faith."

2 Timothy 1:13 - "**Hold fast the pattern of sound words** which you have heard from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus."

2 Timothy 2:14-16 - "¹⁴ **Remind them of these things**, charging them before the Lord not to strive about words to no profit, to the ruin of the hearers. ¹⁵ **Be diligent to present yourself approved to God**, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. ¹⁶ But **shun profane and idle babblings**, for they will increase to more ungodliness."

2 Timothy 2:23-25 - "²³ But **avoid foolish and ignorant disputes**, knowing that they generate strife. ²⁴ And a servant of the Lord **must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient**, ²⁵ in **humility** correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth,"

2 Timothy 4:1-5 - "¹ I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: ² **Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.** ³ For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; ⁴ and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. ⁵ But you **be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.**"

Titus 1:13-14 - "¹³ This testimony is true. Therefore **rebuke them sharply**, that they may be sound in the faith, ¹⁴ **not giving heed to Jewish fables** and commandments of men who turn from the truth."

Titus 2:1 - "But as for you, **speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine.**"

Titus 2:15 - "**Speak these things, exhort, and rebuke** with all authority. Let no one despise you."

Titus 3:8-10 - "⁸ This is a faithful saying, and these things I want you to affirm constantly, that those who have believed in God should be careful to **maintain good works**. These things are good and profitable to men. ⁹ But **avoid foolish disputes, genealogies, contentions, and strivings** about the law; for they are unprofitable and useless. ¹⁰ Reject a divisive man after the first and second admonition,"

2. Set an Example.

- Practice what you preach in word, conduct, love, spirit, faith, and purity.

1 Timothy 4:12 - "Let no one despise your youth, but **be an example** to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity."

Titus 2:7-8 - "⁷ in all things showing yourself to **be a pattern of good works**; in doctrine **showing integrity, reverence, incorruptibility**, ⁸ sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you."

- Flee temptations and pursue goodness.

1 Timothy 6:11 - "But you, O man of God, **flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness.**"

Poem - I'd Rather See a Sermon Than Hear One Any Day by Edgar A. Guest.

I'd rather see a sermon than hear one any day:
I'd rather one would walk with me than merely tell the way.
The eye's a better pupil, and more willing than the ear,
Fine counsel is confusing, but example's always clear.
The best of all the preachers are men who live their creed,
For to see good put into action, is what everyone needs.
I can soon learn how to do it, if you let me see it done,
I can catch your hands in action, but your tongue too fast my run.
And the lecture you deliver may be very wise and true,
But I'd rather get my lesson by observing what you do.
For I may misunderstand you in the high advice you give,
But there is no misunderstanding how you act and how you live.

Let's remember that many of the things we are talking about today also apply to all Christians.

3. Prepare.

Sometimes a member tells a preacher that what they do looks so easy. It is not easy, but if it looks easy that means that the preacher was well-prepared. Excellent preaching and teaching requires many hours of preparation in addition to the years behind it as well.

- Read, meditate, learn the doctrine.

1 Timothy 4:13-16 - "¹³Till I come, **give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.** ¹⁴**Do not neglect** the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership. ¹⁵Meditate on these things; give yourself **entirely** to them, that your progress may be evident to all. ¹⁶**Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine.** Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you."

- Develop genuine faith (not artificial or superficial).

2 Timothy 1:5 - "when I call to remembrance the **genuine faith** that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded is in you also."

- Continue to grow.

2 Timothy 3:14 - "But you must **continue in the things which you have learned** and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them,"

A preacher should continue to attend advanced classes, seminars, workshops, and Bible lectureships. And the church should pay the expenses for him to attend.

4. Work Well with Others.

- Respect all ages.
- Respect the authority of the congregational shepherds.
- Do not show prejudice, partiality, or favoritism to select individuals or groups. God's preachers must not be bribed with money or persuaded to take sides based on popularity or power.

1 Timothy 5:1-2 - "Do not rebuke an older man, but exhort him as a father, younger men as brothers, ² older women as mothers, younger women as sisters, with all purity."

1 Timothy 5:19-21 - "¹⁹ Do not receive an accusation against an elder except from two or three witnesses. ²⁰ Those who are sinning rebuke in the presence of all, that the rest also may fear. ²¹ I charge you before God and the Lord Jesus Christ and the elect angels that you **observe these things without prejudice, doing nothing with partiality.**"

- Develop teamwork with other church leaders and workers to edify the church.

Ephesians 4:11-12 - "¹¹ And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some **evangelists**, and some pastors and teachers, ¹² for the **equipping** of the saints for the work of ministry, for the **edifying** of the body of Christ,"

5. Train and Mentor Others.

- Develop others to become teachers and leaders.
- Leave a legacy behind of others who will continue your good work.

2 Timothy 2:2 - "And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, **commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.**"

This scripture observes that when the preacher does his work well, he is easily affecting four generations.

- Help organize the church.

Titus 1:5 - "For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should **set in order the things that are lacking**, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you."

Now let us consider the other side of the coin.

The Responsibility of the Church Is to Support Your Preacher.

- Do not elevate preachers above God.

Acts 14:11-18 - "¹¹ Now when the people saw what Paul had done (at Lystra), they raised their voices, saying in the Lycaonian language, "The gods have come down to us in the likeness of men!" ¹² And Barnabas they called Zeus, and Paul, Hermes, because he was the chief speaker. ¹³ Then the priest of Zeus, whose temple was in front of their city, brought oxen and garlands to the gates, intending to sacrifice with the multitudes. ¹⁴ But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard this, they tore their clothes and ran in among the multitude, crying out ¹⁵ and saying, "Men, why are you

doing these things? **We also are men with the same nature as you**, and preach to you that you should turn from these useless things to the living God, who made the heaven, the earth, the sea, and all things that are in them, ¹⁶ who in bygone generations allowed all nations to walk in their own ways. ¹⁷ Nevertheless He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good, gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness." ¹⁸ And with these sayings they could scarcely restrain the multitudes from sacrificing to them."

Matthew 23:5-12 - "⁵ But all their works they do to be seen by men. They make their phylacteries broad and enlarge the borders of their garments. ⁶ They love the best places at feasts, the best seats in the synagogues, ⁷ greetings in the marketplaces, and to be called by men, 'Rabbi, Rabbi.' ⁸ But you, do not be called 'Rabbi'; for One is your Teacher, the Christ, and you are all brethren. ⁹ Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven. ¹⁰ And do not be called teachers; for One is your Teacher, the Christ. ¹¹ But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant. ¹² And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

Psalms 111:9 - "Holy and reverend is His name."

Preachers in the church of Christ do not allow themselves to be called Reverend or wear titles that elevate them to superior positions. What should we call our preachers? Simply refer to your preacher as your preacher, evangelist, or minister. That is how we are described in the Bible.

And remember that the preacher is your brother in Christ just like the other brothers in the church. We also need to be careful and not use Brother as an elevated title. Brother describes our relationship in Christ. It is not a position or title.

- On the other hand, do not degrade preachers.

Titus 2:15 - "Let no one despise you."

Romans 10:15 - "And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!"

- Provide support for preachers' good work.

1 Corinthians 9:1-14 - "Am I not an apostle? Am I not free? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord? ² If I am not an apostle to others, yet doubtless I am to you. For you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord. ³ My defense to those who examine me is this: ⁴ Do we have no right to eat and drink? ⁵ Do we have no right to take along a believing wife, as do also the other apostles, the brothers of the Lord, and Cephas? ⁶ Or is it only Barnabas and I who have no right to refrain from working? ⁷ Who ever goes to war at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat of its fruit? Or who tends a flock and does not drink of the milk of the flock? ⁸ Do I say these things as a mere man? Or does not the law say the same also. ⁹ For it is written in the law of Moses, "You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain." Is it oxen God is concerned about? ¹⁰ Or does He say it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written, that he who plows should plow in hope, and he who threshes in hope should be partaker of his hope. ¹¹ If we have sown spiritual things for you, is it a great thing if we reap your material things? ¹² If others are partakers of this right over you, are we not even more? Nevertheless we have not used this right, but endure all things lest we hinder the gospel of Christ. ¹³ Do you not know that those who minister the holy things eat of the things of the temple, and those who serve at the altar partake of the offerings of the altar? ¹⁴ Even so the Lord has commanded that **those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel.**"

2 Corinthians 11:8-9 - "⁸ I robbed other churches, **taking wages from them to minister to you.**
⁹ And when I was present with you, and in need, I was a burden to no one, for what I lacked the brethren who came from Macedonia supplied. And in everything I kept myself from being burdensome to you, and so I will keep myself."

Galatians 6:6 - "Let him who is taught the word share in all good things with him who teaches."

Philippians 4:16-18 - "¹⁶ For even in Thessalonica **you sent aid once and again for my necessities.** ¹⁷ Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that abounds to your account. ¹⁸ Indeed I have all and abound. I am full, having received from Epaphroditus the things sent from you, a sweet-smelling aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God."

- Pray for your preachers.

2 Thessalonians 3:1-2 - "Finally, brethren, **pray for us**, that the word of the Lord may run swiftly and be glorified, just as it is with you, ² and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men; for not all have faith."

- Remember that the primary purpose of preachers is to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Romans 1:15-16 - "¹⁵ So, as much as is in me, I am ready to **preach the gospel** to you who are in Rome also. ¹⁶ For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek."

Jesus gave the following commission to the first preachers in His church and it has not changed.

Matthew 28:19-20 - "¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

As a preacher of the gospel it is my responsibility at this time to urge you to obey the gospel if you are not a Christian. If you have not repented of your sins, confessed your faith that Jesus is the Son of God, and been baptized into Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, then I beg you to do that today while you are still alive and have the opportunity. God wants you to do that now. If you already are a Christian, but you need to make things right with God and the church or simply ask for our prayers of support, we urge you also to respond to the invitation of Jesus while we stand and sing this next song.