

The Pastor's Challenge

Get His Presence!

*"If you presence does not go with me,
do not carry us not up hence."*

– Exodus 33:15

I am not suggesting that a pastor who doesn't pray as I pray or do the disciplines of prayer as I have outlined for myself and my staff is not a man of God. On the contrary, some of you may have far better prayer disciplines and a closer walk with God than I.

I am suggesting that if a pastor has no or few specific disciplines of prayer that prioritize prayer above every other work then he is missing God's call and God's best for his ministry.

I am suggesting to every pastor among us that if you practice the Presence of God by walking in these prayer disciplines of Intimacy with God you life and ministry will be radically changed. God's presence will be manifest to all both in your life and in your work. God will show up in remarkable and extra ordinary ways.

I am challenging every pastor and every parishioner to become a PRESENCE BASED SANCTUARY or tabernacle. I am saying that if God is not doing anything extraordinary and visible in your church then something is wrong. His promise is not being fulfilled in your world. I urge you to stop following church growth fades and stop patching up the missing PRESENCE with programs and special events and start getting to the heart of the matter. Start seeking God with all your heart. Start getting serious about praying in HIS PRESENCE.

The angel of His Presence is still visiting churches today. Jesus still walks into churches the doors and windows, and hearts, being shut to show himself alive and fully able to do what he has promised. We should all be praying every week and every Sunday, "Lord, if you presence does not go with me then I don't want to go!" Do not go to the pulpit without that anointing. Do not approach the altar of the Lord without holy fire. Do not run ahead of God, run to Him!

Pastor, how can you evidence to your people that prayer and God's presence and anointing is your first work and highest calling? According to Acts 6:4 we must make this priority demonstrable. "We will give ourselves continually to prayer... and (then) to the ministry of the word." Good preaching proceeds out of good praying!

When we speak of a praying pastor we are primarily referring to his private closet of prayer, not his public use or show of it. We are referring to the pastor's personal intimacy with God in the closet of prayer. We are meaning the ardent pursuit of God as defined by A.W. Tozer.

"I want deliberately to encourage this mighty longing after God. The lack of it has brought us to our present low estate. The stiff and wooden quality about our religious lives is a result of our lack of holy desire. Complacency is a deadly foe of all spiritual growth. Acute desire must be present or there will be no manifestation of Christ to His people. He waits to be wanted. Too bad that with many of us He waits so long, so very long in vain."
- Pursuit of God, p. 17

Pastor, where's the beef? Where's the substance? Where is the Presence of God? Where's the main thing? People are not coming to hear you preach. You are not the main thing! People are not and should not come to be entertained by your worship music or to be impressed by your rhetoric. They come to see Jesus!!! Where's the beef? Are you sending them away empty? Are they getting the substance? Are they experiencing and encountering God Almighty in your worship services? If not, why not? Where's the Lord?

The first call of every pastor and every believer is to "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, soul and strength." Not to love your preaching or pastoral ministry duties in first place. Daniel was a busy man, an administrator, but his first call was to be a man of God, so he disciplined himself to return home three times a day (at mealtimes) and kneel and pray before his open window to show the people where his anointing came from. Do your people see you as anointed with the presence of God? Do people know where your anointing comes from? Is it obvious in your Daytimer or daily planner, your agenda, that you seek him first and foremost above all and more than all else? Do your people know that when you pray God answers? Or are you known just as a good preacher and a nice pastor? Pastor, where's the beef?