

Ministerial Ethics

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GENERAL ETHICS FOR PASTORS

RULE OF THUMB: THE GOLDEN RULE.

Always acknowledge and honor any other ministers present who are not on your staff and who are rarely present in your meetings.

Never purposely steal another pastor's sheep.

Never speak dishonorably about a fellow minister, especially publicly or to another sheep.

Always assume that if a sheep speaks badly about a former pastor, they will eventually do so about you. So never agree with their criticism of another man of God.

ETHICS FOR GUEST SPEAKERS

RULE OF THUMB: NO SURPRISES and SUBMISSION TO LOCAL SPIRITUAL AUTHORITY.

Don't put out a mailing list sign up sheet without the host pastor's permission.

Don't assume it's all right to put out a book table. Ask permission of the host pastor. If you want to advertise your books from the pulpit before or after speaking, ask the host pastor if that's all right with him.

Never share one-on-one with a member of the church you are visiting the financial needs of your own ministry.

Don't share with the church congregation while you are speaking, a project of your own ministry for which you need financial support, without first clearing it with the host pastor in advance before speaking.

Never demand a certain guaranteed amount of love offering. Do it by faith, or don't do it at all.

Never publicly prophesy a church member, or pastor, or staff person out of the church. If God shows you something of that nature, share it with the pastor in private. And then, only if he wishes, with the staff member.

Never, never, never push, or rock, or shove a person backward to make them fall out "under the Spirit." Hype and pretense are fleshly. Gently lay hands on God's people.

Never spot the rich ones in a congregation and then flatter them as a pretense for a good offering, or go behind the pastor's back to recruit them as a financial supporter. Never! God can't bless witchcraft or theft.

Always let the host pastor know up front that you are his servant and his guest. That you are submitted to his spiritual authority over that flock; that you are open to his critique; that you simply wish to augment, supplement, and strengthen his own ministry in that place. Ask him before speaking, if there are any special instructions, time limitations, or any sensitive areas that you should stay away from.

Always thank the host pastor and even the congregation for the opportunity to minister and the accommodations (if any).

Never challenge a teaching, or emphasis, or specialized doctrine that you know the host pastor is trying to train his people in. Don't create confusion. If there is a certain teaching of the host pastor that you disagree with or don't understand, you can exchange differing views in private, over a meal or during fellowship with him. The five-fold ministry is given to the church to bring the church into unity, not division. Leave a good taste behind you.

A follow-up letter acknowledging and thanking the host pastor and his flock for the opportunity to speak and the generous love offering is recommended.

Never force the testimony of healing from someone who is not sure they can feel the difference yet. Don't confuse the people by mixing "faith statements" with "manifested testimonies."

If you are calling or writing a pastor, letting him know your ministry is available to his church, NEVER use high-pressure techniques, guilt manipulation, force yourself, or make him feel bad if he were to choose not to have you speak.

In everything you say and do, always project an attitude that promotes the people's respect, submission, obedience, and cooperation toward their senior pastor and his staff. Always confirm God's leaders to God's people. (Heb 13:17)

Always be prompt, never late to your meeting. Preferably, 30 minutes early.

Always be present in the auditorium for preliminaries and worship. Some pastors and churches are very offended at what seems to be "dramatic entrances" or lack of participation by the guest. If you need more time to pray before you come out, inform the host pastor.

Always participate in the worship. If the congregation is standing, stand yourself. Today, most congregations are offended at the "stuffy, plastic professional preacher" image. They want transparency and will receive you better if they perceive that you are genuine and not "holier than the sheep."

It is customary for a guest speaker to make himself available for at least one meal of fellowship with the host pastor (usually at the host pastor's church's expense). Most pastors invite a guest to speak in their church because they respect the guest's anointing and also wish to build a friendship and network for the future. Often the pastor needs some fellowship, may have spiritual questions for the guest speaker, glean ideas, or request objective outside advice for personal or pastoral problems he is facing. Be willing not only to preach to the pastor's church, but to give your time, love, and friendship to the host pastor.

Ask the pastor before you speak whether he will take up the love offering for you after you minister or whether he wants you to do it yourself. IRS guidelines state that the money should be collected through the church and then a check written to you or your ministry.

ETHICS FOR HOST PASTORS

RULE OF THUMB: ROLL OUT THE RED CARPET

After discussing any preservice details with the guest speaker, let him know you are "giving him his liberty" in the Lord.

Offer the guest speaker nice accommodations and, if you are a small church that cannot afford a motel, let him know up front, before he comes, what you can provide.

If possible, offer to pay travel expenses over and above his love offering.

Be sure you know whether or not that guest speaker and his family make most of their living from guest speaking engagements, and exhort the congregation accordingly during the love offering. In the case of a small love offering, supplement it with some more money from the general fund. Keep in mind how much it takes for a family to live on today, a minister to travel, as well as his administration expenses. Sow seed to match your church's needs. Ask yourself this question: How would you want to be treated if God calls you to a field ministry someday. This is 1999: \$200 for each service is only reasonable for a young inexperienced guest speaker or a part time minister who has another job. \$1000-\$2000 or more for two Sunday services is reasonable. Every church is different in size and financial ability, and every guest speaker's ministry is different in its operating expenses. Be sensitive to these needs and discern the level and quality of anointing that a guest ministers.

Never hold back a portion of a large love offering, even if you think some members may have misappropriated the tithe, which belongs exclusively to the church. According to a guest minister's faith, hard work, and fresh manifestations, he should be rewarded. God doesn't bless stinginess, especially if it's theft.

If possible, offer the guest speaker "food cash" if the minister will be with you more than a day. If your church fund is nearly depleted, offer him an advance on a portion of his forthcoming love offerings.

If, for some reason, you do not feel you should take up a love offering for the guest speaker and you plan to give him just an honorarium instead, tell the minister in advance and ask him if he is willing to come and speak even though you can only bless him with an honorarium. Tell him what that honorarium amount will be.

Be sure to communicate to the guest speaker things that he said or did that really blessed you and your church.

Make special note of those things the speaker spoke or ministered in the gifts that you can vouch for as from God. Feedback is most important to a guest speaker.

If the guest speaker came by airplane instead of car and is staying for more than one day, preferably make a nice car available to him or at least ask him what transportation needs he has.

If a guest minister blessed you and your church, pass the blessing on by recommending his ministry to other pastor friends and leaders. Get some of his business cards and pass them to other pastors with a good report.

If you have any time restrictions, special instructions, or special requests of the guest speaker, never assume that he already knows what you and the congregation expect. Don't hesitate to clearly communicate your wishes before he comes or before he speaks. He is your guest.

Honor the guest speaker in your introduction and make him feel warm and welcome. Project and attitude of excitement and anticipation of what God is going to speak and do. Your example of expectation will cause the people to expect and draw God's anointing out of the guest speaker. This anointing will meet their needs and enrich your church.

If you expect the guest speaker to speak on a certain topic or to do certain side activities while he is present with your church, communicate that desire in advance when you first arrange the meetings to make sure the guest will come on those terms.