

Charge to Assessment Candidates

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Historically Christians have believed that it is God who calls men and women into ministry and it is obedience to that call that leads people to make personal commitments to the pastoral office. We affirm that the call to ministry is of God and not of man. We affirm that the church is God's creation and that the call to ministry is God's call. The invitation is of God and from God. Ministry is response to God's divine call upon the life of one who is fully committed to Him.

The church is God's creation and the avenue through which the office of pastoral ministry is conducted. The church is charged with the responsibility of affirming and confirming the call that God places upon the lives of men and women. It is the church which provides opportunities for those who are called to use their gifts to extend the borders of the Kingdom.

Today you begin the long journey of preparation to answer the call that God has placed upon your life. There will be times when the call to ministry is very strong and pulses within your heart and there will be times when the call seems distant. Be encouraged that God has called you. Never fail to respond to His divine initiatives.

As a "steward of the divine mysteries" you are being called to be a shepherd of the souls for whom Christ died. With singleness of purpose you must glorify God in your conduct and character. Ministry properly conducted is an outward sign of an inward grace. As you prepare for ministry consider the privileges and responsibilities associated with shepherding. You must be presently convinced that the ordained ministry is the best way to fulfill your call from God. Consider the following:

Ministry goes beyond the *Transference of Knowledge* it is *Teaching*. One must be able to communicate Christian teaching in a "tolerant and gentle" yet disciplined way. H Timothy 2:23. Yours is not to simply communicate facts, you are to incarnate the truth of the Gospel. People will look to you for answers, resist the temptation to answer them in your own strength. Learn to point them to Jesus as the hope of glory. You will have the privilege of instructing men and women in the faith. Be responsible.

Ministry goes beyond the *Retelling of the Story* it is *Preaching*. *"I* give you this charge: Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage-with great patience and careful instruction." You must learn to plumb the depths of God's Word so that you can preach the Word of God with conviction. Today's culture does not need another voice, the Church of the Nazarene needs to hear the voice of God. Preaching will be a significant component of your ministry. Don't be tempted to take shortcuts in your preparation. People are hungry for the Word. Prepare it well, serve it well and call for people to make decisions for Christ. Remember, you are handling the Word of God. Be responsible.

Ministry goes beyond the *Skillful Response* It is *Individual Pastoral Care*. Be to be an example to believers "In speech and behavior, in love, fidelity, and purity" R Timothy 4:12. God will entrust sheep to your care in the days ahead. Learn to be a good shepherd by spending time

with the shepherd of your soul. Learn to take your flock to places of nourishment and strength. You are called to be an "ambassador of Christ, and envoy from the King of heaven. Take the role of a servant and learn to wash peoples feet. Be an encouragement to those who grieve, share words of joy with those who celebrate and offer hope to those in despair. From the cradle to the grave you will have the responsibility to care for the souls of men and women. Be responsible.

Ministry is beyond the *Manipulation of Structures* it is *Organization*. The Scripture says, to be "ready for any honorable form of work' Titus 3:1 Organization is a significant component of any effective ministry. it will require you to hone your skills and to recognize the high trust placed in you. You will be required to discharge your duties with a sense of decorum and expertise. Allow this to be an area that reflects your complete dependence upon God. You are an overseer of the church of God. The church was bought with the blood of Jesus. Be responsible.

Ministry goes beyond the *Protective Ritual* it is *Celebrating*. You will be called upon to "Make full proof of thy ministry." Celebrating the completed work of Christ will bring joy to both you and the congregation that you serve. Spend adequate times in personal preparation before you attempt to lead.