

Bringing a Student Pastor to Sandy Ridge Baptist Church

Philippians 2

19 But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly, that I also may be encouraged when I know your state. 20 For I have no one like-minded, who will sincerely care for your state. 21 For all seek their own, not the things which are of Christ Jesus. 22 But you know his proven character, that as a son with his father he served with me in the gospel. 23 Therefore I hope to send him at once, as soon as I see how it goes with me. 24 But I trust in the Lord that I myself shall also come shortly.

About this church: approximately 10 years after its birth in Acts 16 with notable characters such as the house of the Philippian jailer.

About these characters: Paul is the administrator although he was the founding preacher (with Silas). Timothy is identified as one who “cares for their state.” Epaphroditus is “their messenger.” In these three characters you have the three-fold ministry of Christ: Prophet, priest, king. One who preaches (Epaphroditus; verse 25 and following); one who cares for their souls and is touched with their infirmities and weaknesses (Timothy); one who directs and oversees chiefly (Paul).

Disclaimer #1: this is the very powerful, 3-fold function of a pastor. **It is not found in this passage.**

The pastor is not only one who acts like the Christ-like King—sitting behind a desk, making decisions, visiting nobody, following up with nobody, and preaching like a pansy.

The pastor is not only one who acts like the Christ-like Priest—always patting hands, making phone calls, shooting texts, but never in his office; never at a meeting; never saying “no” to anybody; always afraid of the committees or the deacons or the money people or the big-wigs in the community; always preaching like a little, limp-wristed cupcake.

The pastor is not only one who acts like the Christ-like Prophet—always studying to preach; always writing some new dictate; always locked away with a book; usually seeing himself as a Christian statesmen, but uncaring to the flock and always afraid of making a wrong decisions in the day-to-day life of the church.

In this passage of Scripture, you have a man who is identified as Timothy, and **Paul has an amazing complement about him that is not the only complement that should be given to a pastor, but it is a fantastic complement.**

Disclaimer #2: Paul is not (just) a pastor in this book, and neither is Timothy.

Paul is an apostle. Apostles did feed sheep the Word of God, did care for people’s souls, and did make many decisions in churches—many churches; many churches at the same time.

Timothy is not called a pastor just yet. He is a companion of Paul’s. As one reads the book of Acts, they will find that there were many who pastored churches as Timothy did, but were not recognized as the pastor.

Having said all of that, **Paul cared for the church in an official capacity, and so did Timothy and so this passage, once again, serves our purpose in principle today.**

Disclaimer #3: Paul is not “bringing a pastor” to a church to help him serve. That is very clear from this passage (2:19). Paul is in prison (from his many references to “bonds”). Paul, again, is an apostle—a special office for a special time with special privileges over many churches. He furthermore “sends Timothy”, and he himself hopes to be released soon.

Having said that, **Paul cared for the Philippian church and wanted someone to care for them just as he did** in such a way that it would be as though they had “two Pauls caring for them.”

Disclaimer #4: Paul personally beheld Timothy’s conversion, and definitely raised him in the Lord (2:22). This Timothy also proved himself as one who worked long before he was sent to Philippi.

This is ideal. In this church, we want to eventually get to the point where we are stable and strong and deliberate about setting the conditions for God to raise up Gospel ministers not only for our own church body, but also for other church bodies we wish to rescue or begin in other locations.

Having said that, Paul had a philosophy of care that a man under him by the name of Timothy **came to appreciate and adopt as his own.**

Disclaimer #5: Paul had a personal and immediate errand which required a timely feedback. He was in prison and wanted to know how the Philippians believers were doing. We know almost nothing more of his errand other than, perhaps, to check on the folks. We also know nothing about the trip that actually did occur, or if it occurred. Timothy did not actually carry the letter.

But we do know that Paul thought it was a good ministerial move at the time of this writing and that it would not have been a wasted trip **as Paul had pre-qualified the man, stating that it would be a good work.**

Now then, having said all that we have just said about what we cannot say out of this passage, let's review what does make today's message concerning this additional minister to the flock of God at Philippi:

1. Timothy was complemented by a senior minister under whom he worked as being careful (2:20) and well-mannered (2:22a).
2. Timothy was already active in serving God's people with God's man (2:22b).
3. Timothy cared for the church just as Paul did (2:20b).
4. Timothy thought like Paul thought (2:20a).
5. Timothy had already proven himself worthy of service at a higher capacity—filling in for Paul as needed (2:19).

What are some takeaways from these timeless truths?

1. **The student pastor at Sandy Ridge Baptist Church is to benefit everyone here.** He is a member of the body of Christ. Remember, somehow, mysteriously, this pastor is a hand or an arm or an ear or a finger and Paul says in another letter that nobody of any importance in any part of the assembly says "I don't need you." So, it's up to you, member of Sandy Ridge, to decide how that is, but it is—even if you don't know how it is that this student pastor and his family will benefit you.
2. **The student pastor at Sandy Ridge Baptist Church thinks like I do.** This is not a job to him. This is not a career he's hoping to work his way through. He's not "giving this a try" until his wife gets a raise. We know that behind programs and decisions and sermons are souls. We are required to care for souls (Hebrews 13:7).
3. **The student pastor at Sandy Ridge Baptist Church has a primary focus of feeding sheep.** He knows that hospitality is important. He knows that student relations are important. He knows that community outreach through Gospel saturation and preaching is important, but the reason this man went to Bible college or seminary is because he loves his Bible and the Christ that bible reveals and wants others to know it also.
4. **The student pastor at Sandy Ridge Baptist Church has a family.** His family knows they're being watched. His wife knows she has to look her best. They all feel like they need to be faithful and lead by example and allow the Gospel to shape their lives. But, this man will also need time with his children and not yours. He will need to spend time with his wife. He will need to trim his own grass and paint his own fence and take a day off each week without folks thinking he doesn't like them anymore if he doesn't immediately respond to their text messages. His children will have their own ball games and will need to have quality, one hour blocks of conversation with him first. **By the way, this means he does not have time to be your children's father.** He is to complement your ministry, mom and dad—not replace it.
5. **The student pastor at Sandy Ridge Baptist Church works for the Senior Pastor.** We are not going to create a hostile environment. If parents of students think he could do a little better, he's not going to feel like he works for the search committee, the personnel committee, the deacons, or the PTA. He's going to find it refreshing to work here where the church loves the pastor (s) and the student pastor need only serve Christ and please his immediate supervisor. We will continue to have a very open dialogue, but he is not going to feel like his job is in the balance all the time. We're going to be grown-ups and

have non-emotional conversations if we let each other down. **What's more, he represents me.** The reason SRBC has a student pastor is because your senior pastor is not omnipresent nor omnibenevolent. I cannot be everywhere showing wonderful favor to everybody. So, we will talk often and work together, and we cannot have strange barriers in the way.

6. **The student pastor will be tempted to be hurt just like I am.** He is going to prepare sermons for your youth, lessons for your kids, and then realize that you didn't take his heart into consideration when you decided to spend 1/3 of your weekends away from the church. He knows that some of them will fall out because after falling behind the rest of their peers in youth group in Bible knowledge and spiritual maturity, they are going to fall out and the parents are going to shrug their shoulders and say "I guess the church is letting down today's youth." He is going to see loving, awesome grandparents in his church—some of you—not all—inviting away his sheep to leagues, cottages, conventions, cabins, beaches, and reunions 20-30 Sundays a year; he's going to watch the parents allow the kids to "sleep in" after a late-night Saturday concert 5 more Sundays a year, skip 5-10 more Sunday nights a year for something better going on in town, and then listen to some of those same people say "I wish the student pastor would be part of our children's lives." He's going to plan weeks planning activities that your children will find intriguing only to realize that you were going to give your children parental rights to consistently evaluate the quality of those activities before they decide to go. He is going to get tempted to think that you don't care about his ministry. He is going to watch your children go off—chasing their boyfriends and girlfriends to their liberal churches; go off to secular universities; go off to godless lifestyles, or worse...lukewarm lives as you say "I guess they just didn't connect with the student pastor."
7. **The student pastor of Sandy Ridge Baptist Church will fall short.** He will probably be offended from time to time by one of us as well. He will be tempted to avoid you in hallways if the air is strange; if the mood is awkward. He will be expected to be mature when your child is being petty; loving when you blame it on their upbringing; sweet when "you have a lot going on." **Here's the reality, students:** if you expect your student pastor to be forgiving and kind and talkative...then you will be expected—as a recipient of the same, life-changing Gospel of grace—to be just as forgiving. You're not allowed to cop your little attitude and have your little fit. We are going to have a man that cares for your soul—just like me (Philippians 2:20). And we were taught to be gracious by a gracious God.

We are being taught by a gracious God (Philippians 2:5-8) how to be gracious (2:12-13).