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ENTRUST TO FAITHFUL MEN: PASTORAL MINISTRY AND THE RESPONSIBILITY OF MENTORING

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ABSTRACT: In the apostle Paul's last letter, he entreated Timothy to take what he had learned and entrust it to other faithful men, who would, in turn, entrust it to others (2 Tim 2:2). This paper focuses on the pastoral imperative for mentoring leaders from biblical and historical perspectives, and then analyzes several modern approaches to mentoring future leaders through established programs found in the local church and in the academy. As a result, the paper demonstrates the importance of mentoring future leaders for local church ministry.

KEYWORDS: *Leadership, Pastoral Mentoring, Church Ministries*

Entrust to Faithful Men: Pastoral Ministry and the Responsibility of Mentoring

There is much contemporary confusion about the nature of the ordained pastoral ministry. What are clergy? Are they primarily priests, presbyters, pastors, prophets, preachers or psychotherapists? Are they administrators, facilitators, managers, social workers, evangelists or liturgists? There are many options. Yet this uncertainty is not new. (Stott, 2002, p.99)

These comments by John Stott helpfully summarize my own experience during my first few years of pastoral ministry. I knew that I was to preach and teach, pray for people, and visit my flock, but beyond that I struggled to clearly define, both in my mind and in practice, what should take priority and what should not. At the root of this is a lack of clarity on the nature and elements of pastoral ministry. This lack of clarity applies to new pastors and local churches as research has shown that local church search committees and boards have vastly different pastoral ministry expectations than ministers or ministerial candidates (Purcell, 2001). Based on this reality it is helpful and practical to evaluate the scriptural responsibilities of ministers.

Pastoral ministry, scripturally speaking is a multifaceted endeavor that includes responsibilities in teaching, pastoral care, discipleship, and leadership, among other tasks (Adams, 2004). The ministries of teaching and leadership may be the more public elements of pastoral duties, the responsibility of discipleship must not be overlooked in importance to the health of the local church. It is this element of pastoral ministry, discipleship, which will be the focus of this paper.

Specifically, this paper examines the mentoring aspect of discipleship from a biblical, historical, and practical perspective, with the aim of encouraging those involved in pastoral ministry or theological education to take on this responsibility. This paper will also be examining the issue from the Calvinist/Reformed perspective of male eldership, thus the focus will be on the equipping of qualified males for elder roles. The author does realize that faithful Christians do disagree on the complementarian/egalitarian debate when it comes to who may serve in the office of elder/pastor. Wherever one may come down on this debate, it is the conviction of the author that this paper has wide application to multiple church leadership scenarios.

DISCIPLESHIP AND MENTORING: A BIBLICAL/THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

In the New Testament, one sees the term disciple used hundreds of times. Disciple is the English translation of the Greek *mathētēs*. In Greek, the range of meaning for *mathētēs* could be learner, follower, or adherent, depending on the context (Wilkins, 2013). By the first century, the term had taken a common designation of someone who learned from and followed a great thinker, religious leader, or master (Wilkins). In the New Testament one sees this taking place with those who called themselves disciples of the Pharisees (Mk 2:18), disciples of John the Baptist (Mk 2:18), and even disciples of Moses (Jn 9:28). Based on the usage of this term, a question that needs to be considered is: were disciples of Jesus similar to this first-century paradigm or distinct in some way?

As Wilkins (2013) noted: “Jesus developed a unique form of discipleship” (p.203) that was not like other forms before him, which involved being called by Jesus, following Jesus, and being commissioned by Jesus to make other disciples. This differs from the typical first-century structures, not least because of what Jesus was calling people to do, which is to follow him as the divine Son of God and not simply a Rabbi or philosopher (Jn 1:36; 2:11).

Further differences are seen in the pattern Jesus used in the gospels. First, in calling people to follow Him, Jesus initiated discipleship, which was different from the typical rabbinical pattern of followers taking the initiative to find a master or teacher (Early & Gutierrez, 2010). In the process of following Jesus, the disciple would never leave Christ (Mt 23:1-12) but would always follow him. This differs from the typical first century pattern as “the goal of the Jewish disciple was someday to become masters or rabbis themselves, and to have their own disciples who would follow them” (Wilkins, 2013, p.206). In the book of Acts Christians were continually referred to as disciples, demonstrating the lasting position one takes as a follower of Jesus (Acts 6:1, 2, 7; 9:36; 11:26).

This does not mean Jesus’ disciples were not to have those who learn from them eventually, but the emphasis for Christian discipleship is to make disciples not of oneself, but of Jesus. As the third element of the discipleship process demonstrates, the disciple of Jesus is to make other disciples of Jesus, a call given by Christ himself (Mt 28:18-20). To make a disciple is to bring others into this relationship with Jesus, which includes proclaiming the gospel by which people can hear the message of Jesus and follow him, helping others to follow Jesus by teaching them and showing them how to obey, and finally equipping them to make other disciples (Carson, 1984; Dever, 2016).

PASTORAL MENTORING IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

It is into this unique discipleship process that this paper enters into, for pastoral mentoring takes place within the Christ-given task of making disciples. The Bible has several examples of mentor relationships (Boersma, 1994; Dunlow, 2014; Thompson & Murchison, 2018). These include Old Testament examples: Moses and Joshua, and Elijah and Elisha; as well as New Testament examples: Jesus and the Twelve, and Paul and Timothy. For the purposes of this paper, the focus will be on Paul and Timothy’s mentor relationship, followed by the pattern of pastoral mentoring set forth by Paul in 1 Corinthians 11:1 and 2 Timothy 2:2.

PAUL AND TIMOTHY

Referred to as “one of biblical history’s most notable mentoring models” (Boersma, 1994, p.75) the apostle Paul has made a tremendous impact on how Christians have viewed mentoring and discipleship. Three of his letters were written specifically to his protégés Timothy and Titus. These men served with Paul, accompanying him on missionary journeys, and were sent out on missionary endeavors by Paul himself to churches they had established. While both of these men were close to Paul and made a tremendous impact, this segment will focus on his relationship with Timothy.

Timothy was already a believer when he first met Paul in Lystra (Acts 16:1). He had a believing mother and grandmother who instructed him well in the Scriptures (2 Tm 1:5; 3:15). When Paul was introduced to Timothy, he was impressed by the young man to the point that he requested him to join his missionary party (Acts 16:3), thus beginning their mentor relationship (Boersma, 1994, p. 75).

In examining Paul's mentoring of Timothy, a situational leadership paradigm emerges (Dunlow, 2014; Hoehl, 2011; Lee, 2003; Veiss, 2018). In Christian settings, situational leadership has been seen as helpful in developing leaders (Coley, 2010). Situational leadership moves through levels of involvement by the mentor that begin at Directing, then moves to Coaching, then to Supporting, and finally to Delegating (Coley).

As Luke demonstrated in Acts 16-20, Paul took an interest in Timothy, and had him accompany the missionary party through his extended ministry in Ephesus, Macedonia, Corinth, and Asia Minor. Philippians 1 and Colossians 1 also mention Timothy being present with Paul during his first Roman imprisonment (Kostenberger, 2009). During this time, Paul directed Timothy who was being trained in the ministry as he learned from Paul's teaching and conduct (2 Tm 3:10). Being directed and trained is necessary when the mentorship training is beginning (Blanchard et al., 1985). Paul took the time to direct and train Timothy as a true mentor. This mentoring experience aided in Timothy's development as a Christian leader.

After some time together in ministry experiences, Paul sent Timothy out on short trips with specific instructions in at least three instances: to Thessalonica, Corinth, and Philippi. These were coaching moments where Timothy could use the training he received under Paul to serve the churches he was sent to on short-term missions. Coaching is key to building experience and commitment. (Blanchard et al., 1985). Paul was not sending Timothy empty-handed, but with clear instructions and goals. He was given a clear task to check on the churches Paul had planted and to report back to Paul (1 Thes 3:5-6; 1 Cor 16:10).

During Timothy's mentorship under Paul, one can see a supportive relationship take form as he was willing to give him the freedom to be sent out and engage in ministry. This is evident in how Paul referred to Timothy in his letters. On four occasions, Timothy is called a fellow-worker (Rom 16:21; 1 Cor 16:10; Phil 2:22; 1 Thes. 3:2) and is listed as a co-writer on six of Paul's thirteen letters (1 & 2 Thess; 2 Cor; Phlp; Col; Phlm). Northouse (2007) noted that a mentor is "quick to give recognition and social support" (p.94) to a mentee as one grows in their leadership. Paul's social recognition of Timothy's status was crucial to his development into a leader of the church.

Timothy's mentorship eventually led him to be less under Paul's direct authority and more on his own, as demonstrated in 1 and 2 Timothy. These letters were written to Timothy by Paul to encourage him after he had been established as a leader of the church in Ephesus (Kostenberger, 2009; 1 Tm. 1:3). The church in Ephesus was an important church given its location in Asia Minor on a major trade route. Due to the volume of people who traveled through Ephesus, the church had the potential to reach many cities throughout the Roman Empire through missionary efforts. Köstenberger (2009) called the church in Ephesus an "important city" and a "beachhead for other congregations over the Roman Empire" (p.642). That Timothy was trusted with the charge of this church gives evidence that through their mentor relationship, Paul had helped Timothy become the leader God had intended him to be. Timothy became a "leader of others, in compliance with Paul's command to entrust the truth to other faithful men who could teach others also (2 Tm. 2:2)" (Boersma, 1994, p.76). Blanchard et al. (1985) described this stage as delegating, which means that the day-to-day responsibilities of leadership were being practiced by the mentee. Timothy was fulfilling the daily leadership responsibilities of pastoral ministry, a task that Paul had prepared him for and entrusted him to do.

PAUL AND LOCAL CHURCH LEADERS

Paul's mentorship and development of leaders did not stop with Timothy or Titus but extended to leaders within local churches as well. There are two texts which give a clear picture of Paul's concern for local church leadership development: 1 Corinthians 11:1 and 2 Timothy 2:2.

1 CORINTHIANS 11:1

In 1 Corinthians 11:1 Paul wrote: "Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ" (ESV, 2016). In the letter as a whole, Paul was dealing with

practical issues such as schisms in the church, lawsuits in the local courts, the exercise of church discipline, questions related to idolatry, Christian marriage, the ordinances, spiritual gifts, and theological issues such as the nature of salvation and the doctrine of resurrection. (Köstenberger, 2009, p. 462)

The letter demonstrates the importance, from Paul's perspective of the integration of theology and practice. As Fee (2014) noted, Paul's "greater concern is the theological stance behind the behavior" (p.5) and once this was rectified, the Christian could then live as they are called. For Paul, the Christian life is understood as "becoming what you are" (Fee, p.8). The context of this particular passage is on the extent of Christian freedom and ethical behavior using the example of meat that was previously offered as a sacrifice (Fee; 1 Cor 10:23-30). Paul used this hypothetical situation to teach on the framework and grounding of the church's ethical behavior.

Imitation of Paul, and of Christ. The ethical understanding of how the church is to live as Christians, based on their faith, is demonstrated in 11:1, "Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ." Paul desired the church to live as he did, seeking to always imitate Jesus. He made a similar call before Agrippa and Festus in his defense in Acts 26:29 (see also Phil 3:17; 1 Thes 1:6; 2 Thes 3:7). Yet, this call of Paul was not one of egotism, as the ultimate imitation is not Paul, but is Jesus. They were to imitate Paul, "in the same way he has imitated Christ" (Fee, 2014, p.540). Wright (2013) noted that "Paul urges his hearers to imitate him as he imitates the Messiah, or perhaps to join him in imitating the Messiah" (p.1104). When viewed from the angle of Wright, Fee, and others, it is clear that Paul's call for the Corinthians to imitate himself was primarily a call to imitate Jesus. As Calvin wrote: "he directs himself and others to Christ as the only good pattern of right acting" (Calvin, 2009, p.350).

Imitation and Mentoring. This imitation of Paul/Christ framework from 1 Corinthians 11:1 serves as a pedagogical guide for Christian discipleship. "Ancient ethical and pedagogical theory assumes that learning takes place by imitation of exemplary figures" (Fowl, 1993, p.172). The church would learn and grow in their discipleship by their imitation of Paul, as he imitated Christ. Fee (2014) pointed out that the word imitate (*mimētai*) had a long history in both Greek and Jewish contexts of describing the relationship noted above that is consistent with pedagogy, as he explained it "as an expression of the relationship both between teachers and pupils and between a worshiper and his deity, this word has a long history in both the Greco-Roman and Jewish worlds" (p.202).

Imitation was not used to demand a type of mechanical copying or mimicking; instead, it referred to someone who deeply internalized the model they had been following and lived it out (Fee, 2014; Wright, 2011). It was an in-depth and hands-on mentoring that brought another into one's life so they could both learn and know how to apply what they were learning (Wright, 2011). The imagery used by Fowl (1993) was that of an apprentice who imitates the master of a craftsman,

in a process that involves listening, practicing, and copying the master's techniques. Applied to pastoral ministry in the early church, Fowl (1993) explained

new converts cannot be expected to have mastered the demands of their new faith and the practices needed to live in accord with these demands in their day-to-day lives. Such converts need both instruction in their new faith and concrete examples of how to embody their faith in the various contexts in which they find themselves. (p.430)

Imitation, for the early church, was a mentorship-based pedagogy of discipleship.

2 TIMOTHY 2:2

In 2 Timothy 2:2, Paul wrote: "and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also." Paul's instructions here to Timothy were focused not just on mentoring in general but were directed at the necessary task of mentoring future local church leaders (Oden, 1989). What is important for the current discussion is the context as well as the command of Paul to Timothy to entrust the gospel to faithful men who would be future leaders of the church so they could do the same (2 Tm 2:2).

Paul's second letter to Timothy is likely the final letter of the New Testament the Apostle wrote (Towner, 2006). This letter was a personal letter to Paul's son in the faith (2 Tm 1:2). In the letter, Paul told Timothy that "he was to focus on proper teaching and was to pass on the gospel truths to faithful, committed followers of Christ gathered around him (2:1-2)" (Lea, 1992, p. 45). Paul most likely wrote this from prison in Rome awaiting execution as his mentee Timothy was in Ephesus pastoring the church that was located there (Towner, p. 654). It is within this context that this verse (2:2) is pinned.

Entrust the Gospel. The verse begins with Paul having Timothy recall what he had heard in the presence of many witnesses. This has been interpreted to be referring to either Timothy's ordination (1 Tm 4:13) or a general sense in which Paul has preached to/taught Timothy with other believers present (Guthrie, 1990). Regardless to the occasion, the content Timothy received and was to entrust would be the same, that is the core truths of the gospel. The command of Paul here to entrust (*paratithēmi*) finds its origin in the same word family as deposit (*parathēkē*) which is seen in 1 Tm. 1:14. (Lea, 1992). Lea (1992) explained that the "clear reference to the gospel in that verse makes it likely that Paul here conveys the same idea" (p.201). Guthrie (1990), likewise agreed, writing: "the idea is clearly to entrust something for another for safe keeping, and in the present context this notion is of great significance. The transmission of Christian truth must never be left to chance" (p.156). Paul's deep concern for the purity of the gospel to thrive in Ephesus (2 Tm 2:15; 3:10-4:5), gives evidence for this interpretation (Lea, 1992).

Faithful Men. Paul here did specifically call for the entrusting of the gospel to be left to faithful men. This does not mean that only men are to learn from the word specifically, as learning and sharing the Word is a component of discipleship for men and women alike (Mt 28:18-20; Ti 2:1-6). That Paul included the term faithful men demonstrates that he had in mind those who had the qualifications to be elders (Guthrie, 1990; Lea, 1992). Paul's focus on elders demonstrates their particular responsibility for giving instruction in sound doctrine (Tm 1:9), and to preach the Word (2 Tm. 4:2). Guthrie (1990) explained that Paul's focus here was on "reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others. Two qualifications are demanded: a loyalty to the truth and an aptitude to teach (1 Tm 3:2)" (p.156). Lea (1992) provided solid evidence that these men had to be trustworthy and reliable Christians who would meet the qualifications of an elder that he wrote about in 1 Tm

3:1-7 (p.201). Oden (1989), in his commentary on this passage came to the same conclusion that these men referred to those who were likely to be elders in the church (p.162). Timothy was to be diligent and intentional in his pastoral responsibility to entrust the truths of the gospel to faithful and reliable believers. While it is this author's conviction from the text that Paul is referring to a complementarian view of eldership which is restricted to only biblically qualified men, as mentioned earlier, faithful Christians may come to a different conclusion here. Even if one disagrees with this interpretation, what is unifying to all Christians, is the need to identify and mentor faithful believers to serve the church in many capacities.

Generational Mentoring. These faithful men that Timothy mentored in the faith also were expected to teach others also. Through this command, a pattern was set for which the ministry can continue for generations. Towner (2006) commented that "the 'others' (1 Tm 1:10) are distinguished from the 'reliable' ones who teach them the apostolic gospel, which anticipates the outward growth and movement of the ministry" (p.491). Paul has set forth for the church a process of discipleship by which the church can perpetuate after the age of the apostles closed. This concept of generational mentoring that Paul put forward was not limited to the pastoral ministry, but was encouraged for all Christians in his letter to Titus (Titus 2:1-8). Timothy himself was a beneficiary of multi-generational discipleship from within his own family (2 Tim. 3:14-15).

MENTORING: A HISTORICAL REFLECTION

Pastoral mentoring clearly has roots in the New Testament, but what has been the view of this practice by pastors and church leaders throughout church history? The current section will take an overview of discussions on this topic by several pastors and leaders. The focus of this historical section will be on the early church and reformation periods. Oden (2000), reflected well on the importance of examining historical practice before one goes directly to modern application, noting that through church history "most pastoral writers have strongly commended the study of the example of excellent ministers" (p.152).

EARLY CHURCH EXAMPLES

Clement of Rome encouraged men who want to be pastors to spend time with those who are already faithful pastors, so they can learn from their example (Clement, 1968). The famed theologian Origen was the recipient of such mentoring, with church leaders having him preach to the congregation while he was pursuing the ministry (Shaff, 2011). Athanasius, the defender of orthodoxy against Arianism, was mentored by Alexander of Alexandria, serving as his assistant (Vaggone, 2008). Athanasius also wrote of another of his mentors, Anthony, that he was engaged in sitting under godly teachers and mentors as a young man noting, "he subjected himself in sincerity to the good men whom he visited, and learned thoroughly were each surpassed him in zeal and discipline" (Oden, 2000, p.153). Finally, one of the most famous examples is that of Augustine and Ambrose. As Augustine wrote of Ambrose in his *Confessions*: "That man of God received me as a father and showed me an Episcopal kindness on my coming" (Augustine, 2008, p.87). From this brief survey of early church leaders, it is clear that they were influenced by and received mentoring from faithful men before them.

REFORMATION EXAMPLES

The pattern of pastoral mentoring was a vital element of the reformation movement. As Protestants split with the Roman Church structure, a renewed focus was on selecting qualified ministers to serve the churches. A leading proponent of this renewed focus on preparing qualified men to serve the church, Martin Bucur (2016) noted, working from 2 Timothy 2:2, the importance of diligence in

discerning and recognizing those whom the Lord has gifted to be reliable and suitable for this work” and that the leaders must “faithfully decide who those are who show the most signs of the Holy Spirit, i.e. those who are best gifted, fitted, and skilled for this ministry. (p.61)

William Perkins, the early Puritan, also commented on the importance of pastoral mentoring when he wrote “let every minister both in his teaching and conversation work in such a way that he honors his calling, so that he may attract others to share his love for it” (Perkins, 1996, p.97).

The example of John Calvin is one that is particularly helpful. Calvin, after his disastrous first stay in Geneva, went to Strasburg and for three years was mentored by Bucer. It was during this time that he sharpened his theology and revised the Institutes (Ryrie, 2017, p. 66). Once Calvin returned to Geneva, he remained there until his death in 1564. One of the ministries set up was his Academy. This ministry worked in a way that was similar to how Spurgeon’s College would later function. It served as a training ground for future elders and pastors, that included lectures, theological discussions, daily sermons, and an emphasis on living as a disciple of Jesus through modeling the morals of the Bible (Manetsch, 2013). These students who studied at the Academy were exposed to intensive pastoral training that prepared them to serve as pastors and missionaries. At the same time, Calvin was deeply committed to the equipping of lay leaders and elders. This took place in the Congregation, which, according to Manetsch (2013), was a “kind of in-depth public Bible study created for the purpose of training clergy and interested laypeople in the interpretation and application of Scripture” (p.133). There were at times forty to fifty students and interested laypeople who would participate in this training session. This training attracted dozens of laypeople who would participate in theological discussions, and would be equipped in the truths of Scripture so that they would be faithful servants of the church (Manetsch, p.133). Calvin was intentional in mentoring the future pastors and lay leaders of churches in his sphere of influence.

Throughout church history, there are many other examples of this practice being dutifully carried out, be it with Luther and his mentoring students who lived in his home, to Spurgeon and his Pastor’s College. Space does not permit a more detailed discussion of the practice of pastoral mentoring in these periods covered, or through the Middle Ages and post-Reformation period. However, these examples provide ample evidence of the practice in the church of pastors mentoring and discipling those who are, as Paul called them, “faithful men who will be able to teach others also” (2 Tm. 2:2)

MENTORING: A MODERN/PRACTICAL PERSPECTIVE

At this point, the reader has seen the biblical and historical examples of mentoring and the impact it has had on developing church leaders. A ministry that is well-rounded includes investing in others who can be potential leaders in the church. If it is true, as Vanhoozer and Strachan (2015) have said, that pastoral ministry “is, first and finally, discipleship” (p.23), then how can one be more effective in this area of discipleship?

CURRENT PASTORAL MENTORING TRENDS

One of the major questions that should be answered in regard to this topic is simply, is this being done? Recent research suggests that it is not happening in many situations. For this section, the focus is on one particular set of findings in a recent study to give a snapshot of the current state of pastoral mentoring.

For example, Dunlow (2014) found 41.68% of the students saying they did or do have a mentor as they prepare for ministry, while 58.32% of the students said they did not have or do not have a mentor as a seminary student. In the same study, when the question was expanded to find out if the students had a mentor before they enrolled in seminary, the numbers only improved slightly, with 43.02% of the students responding that they had a mentor at some point in their lives before seminary, and 56.98% responding negatively (Dunlow). A positive element of this study is that of the students surveyed who did not have a mentor when they entered school, 14% of them started a mentor relationship while in school, which was an increase of 109 students. Of the 109 students who began being mentored, 99 of them were mentored by pastors.

In contrast to this encouraging finding, there was also a negative side to the mentor relationship for students who attended seminary. Of the 43.02% of students who had a mentor before school, 18% (or 124 students), did not have mentorship while in school (Dunlow, 2014). So, it seems that for some, seminary was an encouragement to find a mentor; for others, seminary led to the neglect of this important practice.

In total, 49.02% of students surveyed in the 2014 study reported that they never had a mentor in their life. Roughly half of these students seeking pastoral ministry have never had a pastor actually mentor them. It is the responsibility of the pastor as seen above in 2 Timothy as well as in the model of Jesus' discipleship to be the initiator of this mentor relationship as well as to teach those who aspire to ministry why it is important to be mentored by their pastor and not just be trained by a seminary or divinity school. Much of this responsibility ultimately must fall on the pastor and the local church to value such discipleship.

MENTORING AND MINISTRY PREPARATION, TWO PERSPECTIVES

The findings of the 2014 study, as well as Hancock (2017) suggest two areas necessary to focus on when discussing mentoring those who meet Paul's qualification in 2 Timothy 2:2: the local church and the seminary. These two areas of perspective are important for this current discussion. Pastoral mentoring in the local church is vital as its constant in the New Testament and Church history, as discussed above, shows. A discussion of this in the seminary is also necessary given the influence and opportunities that seminaries have to make an impact on those who plan to serve the church in pastoral ministry.

PASTORAL MENTORING FOR THE LOCAL CHURCH

Merida (2013) provided a thoughtful discussion on mentoring in the local church. He noted that many churches find it challenging because “Mentoring is about relationships, and therefore many do not pour into others because it requires time, vulnerability, and trust” and is seen too often as “bonus work” (Merida, p.162). Yet, the New Testament suggests this is normative pastoral work (Merida, 2013).

In evangelical life there have been several well-known formal mentoring/intern programs in churches through-out the country. Many of these are formal programs designed to give a semester to a year experience with pastors to show what ministry is like, hone their skills, and equip them for service. Is it possible though, to provide a more informal pastoral mentorship for those who meet Paul’s qualifications in the Pastorals, but may or may not pursue it vocationally?

Merida (2013) gave three helpful ways to begin pastoral mentoring based on 2 Timothy 2:2. First, pastors need to be observant, seeking faithful men, just as Timothy was tasked to do (Merida, 2013). This requires that pastors know their flock and who are prepared and qualified to be a future leader, vocationally or not, within the church. Second, relationships need to be cultivated with these men. This can involve regular meals, times of prayer, mission trips, or coffee. “Paul took Timothy with him. He did not just hand him a book” (Merida, p.164). Third, pastoral mentoring involves training, or what Merida calls pastoral coaching (Merida). By coaching, the pastor is helping the faithful men to learn how to serve, grow spiritually, and receive support as they grow in their leadership (Coley, 2010; Merida).

In pastoral mentoring, there are two groups of the faithful that can be focused upon: (a) those who are seeking to serve in pastoral ministry; and, (b) those who are seeking to serve in a lay leadership capacity. The mentoring of both groups is important for the health and growth of the local church.

This is not to say that other levels of ministry leadership are not valuable, nor is it to say that mentorship should be reserved only for those who lead or may lead in either a lay or vocational capacity. There are also other hermeneutical lenses and applications an evangelical takes when it comes to church leadership roles. The approach this paper takes is a broadly reformed or Calvinistic approach. As such, the focus is on these two specific groups of leaders, given their important role in the life of these churches.

LOCAL CHURCH LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

One of the ways that the church I serve at has attempted this is through a formal mentoring program. Following the mentoring paradigms of Coley (2010) and Merida (2013), a program was developed to equip men to lead and develop their ability to teach the scriptures. The program started with our lay elders as well as three men that we observed serving the church faithfully and had a desire for spiritual growth.

After we found the faithful men, we moved to build relationships and to equip and coach them. This took place within a regular bi-monthly in-depth study of theology as well as regular lunch meetings with me for prayer and personal discipleship. The goal would be to better equip our lay elders and move the other faithful men to a place where they would have the competence to serve and use their gifting to serve the church. The equipping took place in two phases. First, they worked for a year and a half through a systematic theology study that was primarily composed of Grudem

(1994) and Akin (2010). When they completed the study, we then began a six-month period of becoming competent Bible teachers so they could effectively teach others, as the men Timothy taught were to do (2 Tm 2:2). Through this period, basic hermeneutical principles were studied as well as instruction on sermon/lesson preparation. As they are taught these skills, they began to practice them through teaching in our Bible Study classes as well as at our Sunday evening service. Once the teaching training was complete, they would engage in a sermon series through which each of the men would be expected to preach in the regular Sunday morning worship gathering of the church.

This leadership program is a combination of personal and communal discipleship with the aim of preparing the men with skills they can use for the health and growth of the local church. It is easily reproducible, and the cost is negligible. Even though the church I serve is a small congregation, the simplicity of this model allowed us to multiply future leaders and equip current ones through intentional pastoral mentoring.

SEMINARY TRAINING AND PASTORAL MENTORING

Most often, pastoral preparation brings with it thoughts of seminaries, and for those called to vocational ministry, it is well warranted (Allen, 2021; Gushee & Jackson, 1998). There is a limitation to what most pastors can teach, and the skill sets at seminaries aid in the health of local churches and future pastors. However, seminaries cannot train pastors on their own but need to have students engaged with pastors on a regular basis, being mentored. There are some seminaries who have recognized this and are heavily involved in the local church. For example, in 2015, Redeemer Presbyterian Church's City to City ministry has partnered with Reformed Theological Seminary, where students earn an MA and learn under the staff at Redeemer Presbyterian. Many schools require some sort of supervised field ministry for their students for a semester or two (Flooding, 2001; Hillman, 2008). Beyond this, what can be done to shepherd students to be engaged in a mentor relationship with pastors in local churches? Here are two proposals.

First, invite local pastors to engage more frequently with the students on campus. This could help students form connections that can hopefully lead to a mentorship. Seminaries can work to strengthen student engagement with the local churches in their region through events or regular promotion of mentorship available in those churches.

Secondly, instead of having a one-semester supervised field ministry, it might be beneficial to require students to be mentored by a pastor for the duration of their degree. This would help build long-term relationships between the student and their mentor, and it will help give the student opportunities to serve in a local church on a regular basis so they can take what they learn and put it into practice.

Studies have shown that there is value in a mentor relationship for seminary students, as it aids in "forming and transforming the character, values, abilities, and thoughts" of seminary students" (Howard, 1998, p.179). Additionally, these relationships aid in forming students into ministers, and they have a valuable impact on the development of students while they are in school (Dunlow, 2015). Mentoring that occurs while in seminary, research has shown, also can have a positive impact on students once they graduate and begin serving in the ministry field, and as Pryett (2006) found, the more thoroughly one is mentored, his likelihood of retention in the ministry is increased.

CONCLUSION

Pastoral ministry can be difficult, and the prospect of putting more on the plate of a pastor is daunting. However, pastoral mentoring is not an optional piece to ministry but essential to the task given to us in Scripture and to the church's future health and well-being. Students and others who desire to serve in the church, vocationally or not, need these relationships to grow and mature. Though this article is written from the Calvinist/Reformed perspective of equipping qualified males for elder roles, this tradition also understands that it is important that all Christians who have a desire to serve Christ are mentored (Ti. 2:1-8).

Pastoral mentoring ministry has been present in the life of the local church since the New Testament, and it is an important way to build healthy churches, through growing healthy church leaders. Focused mentoring to believers has tremendous benefits, and should be a part of the ministry of all church leaders. Pastors also benefit from mentoring relationships as they are challenged to stay fresh and engaged in theology and in the practice of ministry. The benefits of engaging in pastoral mentoring are too great for Christian leaders to ignore.

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