

Liberty University

School of Music

**Mirroring Jesus's Prayerful Approach To Interactions With Dissatisfied Followers
Through The Lens of The Modern Worship Pastor**

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the Faculty of the School of Music
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M.A. Music and Worship

by

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Abstract

This study shows the life and mission of Jesus through His interactions with conflict and will show how worship pastors can apply these lessons to the church. Detailing Jesus's prayer life and His approach to interacting with others, examining the approach worship leaders should have when interacting with similar people. The report will concentrate on three areas of study, including Jesus's prayer life, his ministry, and how the worship pastor can create a church that parallels Christ. Jesus' ministry and discussions with the Pharisees show worship pastors how they should approach church members. This discussion is due to the struggles with ministry and how worship pastors face difficult situations, like Jesus's ministry. The research finds themes of love, compassion, service, and mercy that a servant leader needs to process. These qualities are essential for a meaningful worship pastor to overcome adversity. Worship leaders need to study the life of Jesus when dealing with the church Pharisees and develop regard, care, and benevolence for people. When observing and mirroring the heart of Jesus, the worship pastor can become a strong influence. This research will study Jesus's interactions and give application to the worship pastor's ministry.

Dedication/Acknowledgements

I first must thank my Lord and Savior for allowing me the opportunity to study and pursue a Master of Worship degree. I thank the Lord for salvation and for becoming sin for me so I can one day live with Him forever through redemption and His grace extended to me. Through Him, I can learn and grow as a worship pastor for His church.

I am also so grateful to my wonderful and amazing wife, Haley, for supporting my educational pursuits. She has celebrated with me at the close of every semester and has been so loving through this process. Thank you for truly being the person who has my back and the one who loves me. I also appreciate my family for encouraging me to pursue my master's. I am thankful for my parents, who have supported me throughout this journey. God has blessed me with a fantastic support group that has loved and encouraged me through this process.

Lastly, I must thank the professors who first encouraged me to continue my education and the instructors who taught me in my master's courses. I thank God for these classes, which have made me a better man and worship pastor. I pray to continue growing as a worshiper and as a person passionate about his God, family, and ministry.

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Abbreviations

Matt	Matthew
ESV	English Standard Version
NIV	New International Version

Chapter 1: Introduction

Background

This section pertains to the worship pastor's interactions with adverse and dissatisfied church members. There are many points of view for entering the ministry and the worship pastor position; there would be multiple answers, such as talent, leadership, and heart for worship. Questions about the church, calling, and "why" are always factored into worship ministry. Worship pastors often find themselves during a discussion regarding dealing with people and determining the best method of approach when facing difficult situations. People are left thinking of the best course for the church, and questions come to mind when reflecting on an effective ministry. Worship pastors should understand the calling of ministry and how they should approach it. A church ministry focuses on service, hospitality, gospel outreach, and pointing others to Christ.

Much research is on Jesus's mission and life; many have written about His ministry, healing, miracles, and purpose. Some books highlight the ministry and heart of Jesus, but no search or writings pertain to the worship leader and their interactions with church Pharisees. Some books explain the role of a worship leader and how to approach ministry, but very little about their interactions with people and the struggles of church ministry. These materials help people lead worship and give great insight into leading a worship team and church forward. The worship ministry is so much more than the music. Music and worship should be a high priority of a worship leader. Worship Pastors should faithfully lead their people and become chief worshippers, pastors, shepherds, and courageous leaders. They can experience neglect in worship

ministry and sometimes have church Pharisees make life difficult. This report will focus on Jesus's service to the people and how worship leaders should serve people.

There is no perspective literature addressing Jesus's handling conflicts with people and how worship leaders should deal with difficult church members. Through Jesus's example, worship pastors should handle the church similarly and extend love to everyone. The purpose of worship ministry is to serve the people in the congregation and move others into a closer relationship with God. A calling to lead worship and shepherd the church is a unique position for worship pastors to fulfill this role.

Statement of the Problem

In the next segment, the discussion is regarding the core concepts of a worship leader, reflecting the heart of Jesus's boldness and courage toward the Pharisees. Successful worship leaders understand their role and know the importance of shepherding the congregation and raising the next generation of worshippers. Pastoral care, discipleship, and leadership development have been a massive part of worship ministry. Zac Hicks profoundly states, "A pastoral heart builds up such a love and empathy for the church that, even in the midst of receiving wounds, he or she is able to respond in love."¹ These elements help worship leaders serve the church and the community. This action of church service focuses on the people and less on talent or musicianship. God calls worship pastors to lead and disciple people well.

A worship leader is a musician to the church, a lead worshipper, and a shepherd. They face problems and difficult situations in church ministry, which causes them to serve the people who create problems. A worship pastor must be a servant to the church and people who produce

¹ Zac Hicks, *The Worship Pastor* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan 2016), 25.

and cause unwanted stress. Jesus's interactions with the Pharisees called for boldness and a desire for the truth. Robert Roth notes, "In the gospel reading, Jesus calls the Pharisees to accountability (again!) because the teachings and the temple entrusted to them are critically important, but they do not practice what they preach (Matthew 23:3)."² A servant is a person who cares and loves others more than themselves and who desires to point others to the Father. Solomon writes, "A man of knowledge uses words with restraint, and a man of understanding is even-tempered (Proverbs 17:27 ESV)." They are focused more on the mission rather than the position or self-reconnection. This action requires a person to have self-discipline and the ability to tame the tongue. Charles Stanley notes, "Among them, many the benefits of servanthood are a radiant excitement in your life, a healing in your life, and a difference in the lives of those you serve."³

As mentioned above, Jesus faced many challenges in His ministry. The Pharisees and religious leaders were not loving and did not desire to worship Him. He extended grace and love to them. Worship pastors face discouragement, negativity, and pessimistic comments in ministry. They are under pressure to lead a worship ministry forward and are responsible for pointing others to Christ. So, worship leaders must learn to handle church members with love and respect and extend kindness to everyone, especially church dragons. They are to have courage in facing difficulties; as J. Oswald Sanders writes in his book *Spiritual Leadership*, he says, "Courage is that quality of mind that enables people to encounter danger or difficulty firmly, without fear or discouragement."⁴ There are many books about people loving their neighbor, being a better

² Robert Roth. Living the Word. *Sojourners Magazine*, Sep, 2005. 49.

³ Charles Stanley, *Developing a Servant's Heart* (Nashville Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, 1998), 15.

⁴ J. Oswald Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership* (Chicago, Illinois: The Moody Bible Institute, 2007) 71.

Christian, and loving the unlovable.

These books give great points on being Jesus to the world but nothing to the worship pastor. There is very little material for the worship pastor about dealing with Pharisees in the church and how to approach them as Jesus dealt with the religious leaders. Worship pastors are responsible for leading worship, shepherding, and serving the community and have a calling to love the unlovable and extend grace to the harsh, difficult church member. This thesis focuses on people in the church who are individuals being difficult. The person causing the trouble may not have a relationship with Jesus Christ, or they might believe in Christ but is a crucial person. When conversing with anyone, a worship pastor, whether they are a Christian or not, must handle the situation with compassion and courage to ultimately fix the issue. Kevin Navarro says, "Our congregations need to know that believers love them. People do not care how much a person knows until they know how much they care."⁵ Worship pastors are more than song leaders and musical directors. Church ministries consist of care, love, and a gracious spirit toward people. Worship leaders calling is leading worship and shepherding the flock God has given them. They have a calling to extend tough love to aggressive, unkind church members as Jesus dealt with the Pharisees. This section highlights servanthood's significance and how worship leaders should approach people.

Statement of the Purpose

This section will discuss the approach of Jesus's ministry and worship leaders. Research on this topic will consist of a collection of books, theses, dissertations, and journal articles. Using Scripture will be a significant part of studying and observing Jesus's ministry and prayer life.

⁵ Kevin J. Navarro, *The Complete Worship Leader* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books 2001), 127.

This study will reflect the qualitative historical approach to gathering data. Creswell states, “Qualitative researchers collect data themselves through examining documents, observing behavior, or interviewing participants.”⁶ Research for this study will focus on statistics on pastors leaving ministry because of church Pharisees and how pastors approach difficult church members. The study will be a foundation for worship pastors to observe Jesus's ministry and learn the importance of serving others. In addition, the report will also be conducted by researching Jesus's interaction with the Pharisees and how worship leaders should approach church members. Studying scripture and literature on servanthood and shepherding the church will give worship leaders greater awareness and understanding.

The approach, compassion, and kindness Jesus extended to the Pharisees will be studied and examined. A.W Tozer profoundly states, “God, as the Pharisees saw Him, was not easy to live with. So, their daily religion became grim and hard, with no trace of true love in it.”⁷ The information presented will help, encourage, and strengthen a worship pastor's prayer life and ministry through the lens of Jesus's life. Bob Kauflin says, “The importance of prayer is something we need to hear over and over. If we do not pray for those in our church, we will lack power, grace, and love as we lead them.”⁸ The themes of this report are service, private devotion, compassion, and love. Jesus's approach to the Pharisees and serving others will be examined and applied to the worship pastor's role. At its conclusion, the information aims to educate, explore, learn, and provide application regarding the cohesiveness between Jesus's life and ministry to worship leaders.

⁶ John W. Creswell and J. David Creswell, *Research Design*, 181.

⁷ A.W Tozer, *Whatever Happened to Worship* (Camp Hill, Pennsylvania: Wing Spread Publishers, 1985), 26.

⁸ Bob Kauflin, *Worship Matters* (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Publishers, 2008), 219.

All believers have a calling to grow and learn in discipleship, love, and compassion through Scripture and devoting themselves to worship. This command to Christians throughout Scripture, perhaps most prominently in the Great Commission. In this sense, the role of a worship pastor begins long before he steps into the church. His devotion and dedication to private worship will serve as the catalyst from which he helps. He should be a bondservant to Jesus Christ. Zach Neese says, “A bondservant does not serve his master out of compulsion. A bondservant serves his master out of love.”⁹ Jesus demonstrates this through His interactions with the Pharisees, influenced by His prayer life. E.M. Bounds states, “To Christ Jesus prayer occupied no secondary place, but was exacting and paramount, a necessity, a life, the satisfying of a restless yearning.”¹⁰

A lifestyle of worship begins with personal prayer, which will assist worship pastors in dealing with hard-hearted individuals. An impactful worship pastor must take note of the example presented to us in the Scripture of Christ and draw strength from their devotion and prayer life when ministering to the broken congregants. Grant Osborne states, “Jesus’ prayer life went way beyond Jewish expectations. He did not merely pray two or three times a day; he spent entire nights with God. He did not just pray in-home or synagogue; he went out in the wilderness like Moses or Elijah to commune with his Father.”¹¹ Worship pastors should worship God through personal prayer and private devotion. They must humbly worship, praise, honor, and adore the Lord through faithful service to the church. Worship ministry demands humility, lack of pride,

⁹ Zach Reese, *How to Worship a King* (Lake Mary, Florida: Charisma House Book Group, 2014), 58.

¹⁰ E.M Bounds, Jim Cymbala, *E.M Bounds on Prayer* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 2004), 257.

¹¹ Grant R. Osborne, Moving Forward On Our Knees: Corporate Prayer In The New (*Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 53, no. 2 (06, 2010): 248.

submissiveness to God, and a willingness to serve others. The calling of church worship ministry commands people to lead and unashamedly shepherd the congregation. God will grant wisdom, courage, and boldness to worship leaders who seek and honor Him. King Solomon writes, “For the Lord gives wisdom; for his mouth come knowledge and understanding” (Proverbs 2:6 ESV).

Significance of the Study

A collection of multiple literature sources defining a worship leader’s lifestyle, which includes books, theses, dissertations, personal interviews, and peer-reviewed journal articles, have been compiled as research for this study. The focus on service will use Scripture alongside scholarly texts to describe how Christ ministered to, cared for, and extended compassion toward the Pharisees.

The focus on devotion will delve into the personal pursuit of an intimate relationship between Christ and God the Father. Christ extends an invitation to the Pharisees from a place of acceptance and love instead of mere tolerance.

Combined, the information collected on these two topics discusses the parallels between the life of Jesus and His interactions with the Pharisees. It will detail His prayer life, and the significance worship pastors should make to one's devotion. Worship pastors should approach prayer as “Prayer is not something you have to do. Prayer is something you get to do.”¹² Vernon Whaley writes, “In the end, without regular times of private worship, one's public worship will become perverted and shallow.”¹³ The research will focus on private worship and how it affects

¹² Mark Driscoll, Ashely Chase, *Pray like Jesus* (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, 2021), 1.

¹³ Vernon Whaley, David Wheeler, *The Great Commission to Worship* (Nashville, Tennessee: B&H Academic, 2011), 18.

the worship pastor's relationship and interactions with people. The result of private worship is a heart cultivated so they cannot simply go through the motions with a cold and distant nature. They must abide in the Word of the Lord and pursue His truth. David Edwards writes, “Abiding in Jesus requires time spent in His Word, time spent in prayer, time spent in worship, and most importantly, following His directions.”¹⁴ It instead fuels the deepest, innermost longing of his heart to move forward on a mission of service toward those whom the general population would deem unworthy and unreachable.

The research will examine a worship pastor's approach when dealing with complex individuals. Jesus's ministry dealing with the Pharisees called for grace, mercy, compassion, and love. The material gathered for this section will be Scripture, books, and personal accounts focusing on extending understanding to others. The purpose is to inform the worship pastor how a servant should extend kindness, humility, and care for resentment by others.

It is imperative to incorporate a counseling mindset in the report and view hardship from a place of understanding. The individual's heart should be in mind, and the worship pastor has a calling from God to serve and shepherd the church. This research will discuss worship pastors standing firm with the gospel and being unashamed with addressing others. Jesus's life with the Pharisees was compassionate, but He stood firm with the gospel. The study will view how He treats them compassionately and challenge them with Scripture and the law.

Jesus was patient with the religious leaders and the Pharisees. He was patient and kind but also firm with the Pharisees. The research will explore patience and how a worship pastor should approach it. The section will highlight the act of patience and how one should approach

¹⁴ David M. Edwards, *Worship Three Sixty-Five* (Nashville, Tennessee: B&H Publishing Group 2006), 142.

people. The purpose is to show how the worship pastor should extend love and compassion as Jesus did to the Pharisees. A shepherd's calling is to lead the flock and be willing to be misunderstood. God has called worship pastors to faithfully teach the church through worship, discipleship, and acts of service. This study will show Jesus's heart for His people and how worship ministry should handle the church.

The third study area will be what Jesus did with the Pharisees. The research gathered for this section is Scripture, books, and thesis. The focus is on Jesus's interactions with them and how He responded to their questions, and the study will reflect on His three years of ministry and dealings with the religious leaders. The research will observe Jesus's interaction with the Pharisees, the woman at the well, the adulterous woman, and the woman who anoints Jesus. The Pharisees hated Jesus and the service He brought to everyone. Jesus had compassion, prayed for them, and extended love toward the leaders. Yair Furstenberg notes, "Jesus, then, was not attacking the Pharisees for making arbitrary distinctions but for what he viewed as a distorted notion of sanctity, which vests those objects consecrated by humans with greater authority than the temple itself."¹⁵ The study will highlight the interactions with the Pharisees and why He extended care. The purpose is to inform the reader about Jesus's approach to negativity, what He did to show respect, and how He proclaimed the truth to everyone.

The final study and section of the research paper is the worship pastor's response. The report will focus on Jesus's life, ministry, and time spent with the Pharisees. This section will be on worship leaders coping with hardships, discouragement, and challenges dealing with church Pharisees. This section will highlight tools to deal with controversy and how a worship leader

¹⁵ Yair Furstenberg, Jesus Against the Laws of the Pharisees: The Legal Woe Sayings and Second Temple Intersectarian Discourse. *Journal of Biblical Literature* 139, no. 4 (2020). 776.

can handle personal attacks. The themes in this section are coping and managing the pressures of the church. The purpose of ministry is to share Christ's love with the world. This research will address the negativity in ministry and how a worship pastor overcomes it.

The section will focus on prayer and how Jesus dealt with adversity. Annabelle Freeland profoundly states, "One of the greatest agencies put into the hands of the educated and uneducated in the church is prayer. For prayer is giving God a foothold in the warfare of the believer's life."¹⁶ Worship leaders need to bring struggles, hardships, difficulties, and stresses to God. The focus is on overcoming trials in ministry and coping with personal attacks. Jesus extended compassion and love to the Pharisees even when they chose to hate and refuse to worship Him. Worship pastors should have a heart like Jesus and have empathy for church Pharisees in the modern era. The calling on worship leaders is to serve the broken- and hard-hearted individual. The worship pastor is responsible for the culture of the church. Their calling is to help the church, shepherd the congregation, and point others to Christ. May worship leaders develop love and compassion for people and be gracious to everyone.

This report focuses on Jesus's interactions with the Pharisees, prayer life, and how worship leaders can apply these lessons to the church. The purpose and desire of the report are to educate and help worship leaders deal with the stresses of ministry. The worship pastor should become the best leader, pastor, shepherd, servant, and Christ follower for the church, their family, and the community. The Lord will honor and bless a worship pastor who loves and cares for others.

¹⁶ Annabelle Freeland, *Steps to Develop a Powerful Prayer Life in the Name of Jesus* (United Theological Seminary, 1997), 30.

Jesus was the perfect example to humanity through worshipping the Father, loving people, and being a servant leader to others. The Pharisees hated Jesus and tried to ruin His ministry. Jesus chose to love the Pharisees and had compassion for them. Worship leaders will face church Pharisees in ministry. Church Pharisees are negative individuals who can disrupt the church, hinder the ministry, and be incredibly vocal to others. The percentage of church Pharisees may vary in each church. Most places of worship will have a small group of critical individuals, rarely satisfied with anything. They are very vocal in church ministry, which causes church leadership unwanted stress and anxiety. These individuals find fulfillment in disruption and compelling drama. They are members that desire worship and ministry to evolve around their ideas. This people group will find something to complain about and express their frustration.

Jesus has called everyone to serve, especially worship pastors. Worship leaders must learn how to handle these individuals effectively through seeking wisdom, praying, and trusting the Lord. This report will address this problem and give information on handling complex individuals. May this information through personal interviews, books, and scholarly articles help worship leaders in the local church. The prayer is that God would honor this study and for worship leaders to understand better-handling people in ministry. Worship pastors are chief musicians who unashamedly speak the truth, serve the local church, and help others experience God. God has called on worship leaders to do the unlovable, opposing church members and show them His amazing grace. Jesus was a perfect example to all of humanity and to worship leaders. May God bless this research and study as we examine Jesus's ministry and life.

Research Question and Sub Questions

When studying and researching the topic of a worship leader reflecting Jesus's heart for

the Pharisees, there are a few possible responses and replies to the research questions for this worship pastor topic.

Hypothesis One: Worship pastors can extend grace to the adverse and dissatisfied congregates by developing compassion, empathy, kindness, and tolerance to church members who target them with negativity and dissatisfaction.

Hypothesis Two: Strategies that could benefit worship leaders when dealing with adversity from church members are prayer, personal devotions, and intentionally surrounding themselves with trusted individuals who can provide wisdom in coping with pessimistic individuals.

The first hypothesis has been in-depth research on the topic through thesis/dissertation, books, and historical study. The answer comes from viewing God's calling on everyone's life, which this approach helps to eliminate man's opinion and focuses on Jesus's desire.

In the second hypothesis, there is further examination observing Jesus's ministry to the Pharisees and how a man should treat others. Dawn Cochran notes, "Best has shown us that living a life of excellence is a continuous journey that shapes our ministries. Jesus lived out these same principles throughout His earthly ministry, and His focus was always motivated by love and service to others. Christ was devoted to exemplifying His Father in everything He did during His daily encounters with others."¹⁷ This approach helps the worship pastor guide themselves through adversity and deal with difficult church members. There are two research questions formed to examine this study further.

¹⁷ Dawn H. Cochran "The Qualities of the Worship Leader Perceived to Engage Others to Serve in Worship Ministry." Liberty University, 2020.

Research Question One: In what ways can worship pastors extend grace to the adverse and dissatisfied congregates?

Research Two: What strategies could benefit worship leaders dealing with adversity from church members?

Definition of Terms

Worship Leader/Worship Pastor: Worship Leader/Worship Pastor refers to an individual who holds a music leadership position. Bob Kauflin describes the role of the worship leader, “A faithful worship leader who magnifies the greatness of God in Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit by skillfully combining God's Word with music, thereby motivating the gathered church to proclaim the gospel, to cherish God's presence, and to live for God's glory.”¹⁸

Conflict: Conflict involves two or more people who strongly disagree or are associated with a severe argument. The definition of conflict is “to be different, opposed, or contradictory: to fail to be in agreement or accord” (Merriam-Webster, 2022).

Grace: Grace is an action of love extended to a person. Paul Zahl defines the term “Grace is unconditional love toward someone who does not deserve it. The result of Grace is that the undeserving person is made more deserving.”¹⁹

Compassion: This action shows kindness to someone who may not deserve it. The definition of compassion is “sympathetic consciousness of other’s distress together with a desire to alleviate it” (Merriam-Webster, 2022).

¹⁸ Bob Kauflin, *Worship Matters*, 55.

¹⁹ Paul Zahl, *2000 Years of Amazing Grace: The Story and Meaning of the Christian Faith*, (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2005), 7.

Bold: This act displays a person's willingness to stand up and take risks confidently and with courage. The definition of bold is “Fearless before danger, showing or requiring a fearless daring spirit” (Merriam-Webster, 2022).

Pharisees: This group has an arrogant, self-righteous, hypocritical attitude toward people. They were religious leaders focusing only on the Mosaic law and imposing their notions on others. The definition for Pharisees is “a member of a Jewish sect of the intertestamental period noted for strict observance of rites and ceremonies of the written law and insistence on the validity of their oral traditions concerning the law” (Merriam-Webster, 2022).

Summary

Jesus has called everyone to serve, especially worship pastors. Their calling is ministering to all church groups and faithfully serving the people. Worship leaders must learn how to handle these individuals effectively through seeking wisdom, praying, and trusting the Lord. This report will address this problem and give information on handling complex individuals. May this information through personal interviews, books, and scholarly articles help worship leaders in the local church. The prayer is that God would honor this study and for worship leaders to understand better-handling people in ministry. Worship pastors are chief musicians who unashamedly speak the truth, serve the local church, and help others experience God. God has called on worship leaders to do the unlovable, opposing church members and show them His amazing grace. Jesus was a perfect example to all of humanity and to worship leaders. May God bless this research and study as we examine Jesus's ministry and life.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

This report examines Jesus' prayer life and the importance of private worship over public worship. It investigates the conflicts He faced and how worship leaders should learn from Jesus's encounters when dealing with difficult church members. Since the research topic seeks to explore Jesus's prayer and his dealings with conflict and how worship pastors should glean from His example, the literature review will fall into two categories: prayer life and handling conflict. The researcher will present a historical, texted-based qualitative study that seeks answers to ministry struggles and hardships. The process for the research report is to focus on five books, three on prayer life and two on handling church conflict. Research for the topic will draw from Scripture and observe how Jesus dealt with those conflicts. Scripture mentions Pharisees and their attitudes toward Jesus 77 times, 48 times with Jesus and the religious leaders, and 33 times Jesus condemns the scribes. This material will help develop strategies for worship leaders when handling major conflicts with church Pharisees.

Prayer Life

Jesus's Prayer Life Study

Scripture is the first place to turn when viewing and studying Jesus's prayer life. There are over 600 prayers in Scripture, and the most enlightening prayers are from the Son of God. In most scriptures concerning Jesus's blessings, one will see Him often praying alone, with no one present to record the words coming from the Savior. Jesus shows His disciples and believers present that "vital prayer life is not optional. It is a basic building block for those who want to live a faithful life."²⁰ The gospels record prayers of Jesus and when and where He would speak

²⁰ Robert L. Morris Jr., *Pray Like Jesus* (Bloomington, Indiana: WestBow Press, 2019), 3.

with the Father. Matthew 11:25 and Luke 10:21, Jesus is thanking the Father for his revelation, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understand and revealed them to little children."

Luke records Jesus's regular prayer times, "But he would withdraw to desolate places and pray" (Luke 5:16 ESV). Jesus prayed in the early hours, "And rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he departed and went out to a desolate place, and there he prayed" (Mark 1:35 ESV). Jesus prayed before walking on water (Matt. 14:23, Mark 6:46, John 6:15 ESV). He prayed before selecting His followers, "In these days he went out to the mountain to pray, and all-night Jesus continued in prayer to God" (Luke 6:12 ESV). Jesus prayed before Peter's confession, "Now it happened that as he was praying alone, then disciples were with him" (Luke 9:18 ESV). Jesus was praying at the transfiguration, "And as he was praying, the appearance of his face was altered, and his clothing became dazzling white" (Luke 9:28).

His prayer life came before His ministry and people. It was a habit and a necessity in Jesus's life. He was praying before teaching His disciples the Lord's Prayer, "Now Jesus was praying in a certain place, and when he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord teach us to pray" (Luke 11:1 ESV). N.T Wright writes about Jesus's prayer "The Lord's prayer, then, serves as a lens through which to see Jesus himself and to discover something of what he was about. When Jesus gave his disciples this prayer, he gave them part of his own breath, life, and prayer. The prayer distills his sense of vocation and understanding of his father's purposes."²¹ Jesus prayed for Peter's faith, "But I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail" (Luke 22:32 ESV). Jesus gives thanks before the Last Supper (Matt. 26:26), feeding miracles

²¹ N.T Wright, *The Lord and His Prayer* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans Publishing, 2014), 2.

(Matt. 14:14) and (Mark 8:6), and supper at Emmaus (Luke 24:30). Scripture displays for humanity just how vital prayer was for Jesus.

Jesus said three prayers in the Garden of Gethsemane (Matt. 26-36-46, Mark 14:32:42, and Luke 22:39-46). Jesus's prayer was not short or quick but was an authentic, genuine, holy prayer to the Father. Jesus's disciples are sleeping while He is praying in the garden. The first prayer was an hour, and the other two could have been the same. At the end of Jesus's life, humankind sees His heart, attitude, and authenticity in praying to the Father. Mel Williams mentions Jesus's prayer life: "At every crucial point in Jesus's life—from his baptism, the height of his popularity, to mountaintops, at times when healing was needed, and before his own death, Jesus was praying."²² In His time of need and struggle, He calls the Father for help. Jesus's attitude is not His will or desire but the Father's will only. His heart is pure and blameless because He is God and fully human. His years of prayer, scripture reading, and fellowship with His Father prepare Jesus for this moment.

He was facing a struggle and dealing with a problem, bringing it to the Father. It reminds worship leaders to call on the Father in trouble and hardships. Rory Noland states, "We can pray to God anywhere, anytime because he is everywhere all the time."²³ He would pray early in the morning, evening, all night, before meals, and in the temple. His life and interactions were a testament to His prayer life. E.M. Bounds writes about Jesus's prayer "Prayer filled the life of our Lord while on earth. His life was a constant stream of incense, sweet and perfumed by

²² Mel Williams, "Jesus' Prayer Life II" Sermon, Watts Street Baptist Church, August 12, 2001, Durham, NC, <https://open.bu.edu/bitstream/handle/2144/482/Jesus1.doc?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

²³ Rory Noland, *Worshiping Artist*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2007), 24.

prayer. When we see how the life of Jesus was but one of prayer, we must conclude that to be like Jesus is to pray like Jesus and live like Jesus.”²⁴

The Son of God approaches meeting with His Father as a need and routine in the day. He had an attitude of worship and an extreme desire to meet with His Father. Jesus shows humanity how to pray and communion with the Father and how prayer should become part of a person's life. Mel Williams speaks on Jesus's prayer life “It was the Spirit that propelled, guided, and energized Jesus, and the Holy Spirit came to Jesus directly from his prayer. At every crucial point in Jesus' life—from his baptism, the height of his popularity, to mountaintops, at times when healing was needed, and before his own death, Jesus was praying.”²⁵ Pray was something

What does it take to have a strong, solid, fulfilling prayer life? Worship pastors may struggle to find time to pray and think that prayer must be an exercise in eloquent speech. Torrey states, “Oftentimes when we come to God in prayer, we do not feel like praying... We should wait quietly before God and tell Him how cold and prayerless our heart is and look to Him.”²⁶ So, worship leaders can ensure a productive prayer life that reflects Jesus by spending time with the Father, valuing private worship, and allowing God to work through them. Prayer is so much more than that and is not a mysterious practice reserved for priests and holy people. Prayer is communicating with God, talking, and listening to Him. Worship pastors must spend time in God's word and prayer. Yancy states, “Worship leaders can ensure that discipleship is occurring in their personal lives and ministry by keeping a daily quiet time for prayer, praise, Bible study,

²⁴ E.M Bounds, Jim Cymbala, *E.M Bounds on Prayer* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 2004), 255.

²⁵ Mel Williams, “*Jesus' Prayer Life II*” Sermon, Watts Street Baptist Church, August 12, 2001, Durham, NC, <https://open.bu.edu/bitstream/handle/2144/482/Jesus1.doc?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

²⁶ R.A Torrey, *How To Pray*, (New Kensington, Pennsylvania: Whitaker Corporation, 1983), 34.

and meditation.”²⁷ It sounds straightforward and can be for worship pastors desiring a closer relationship with God, but spending time with Him can seem extremely difficult for some worship pastors.

David Edwards makes a strong statement in his book *Worship 365*, “Jesus told us that those who are hungry and thirst after righteousness would be filled. If we do not hunger and thirst after the things of God, then we will not be filled with those things—we will be lacking.”²⁸ So private worship should begin in quiet time with the Father and allow Him to speak. Believers and worship leaders will have great insight into dealing with conflicts beginning in private worship with the Creator. Torrey writes, “When we first come into God's presence, we should be silent before Him.”²⁹ Worship pastors gain a new perspective on worship when the art of private worship occurs. Tozer writes, “We must withdraw from the world and find our repose in God.”³⁰ The act of personal worship and meeting with the Lord direct man's focus on Jesus.

So why is prayer so much of Jesus's life, and should it be in the worship pastor's life? Torrey profoundly states, “Because there is a devil. He is cunning, he is mighty, he never rests, he is ever plotting the downfall of the child of God; and if the child of God relaxes in prayer, the devil will succeed in ensnaring him.”³¹ Prayer feels the heart with joy, directs the focus on the Father, points man's feet in the right direction, gives strength and wisdom, and produces an

²⁷ Bridgette LaShawn, Yancy. "Discipleship as Understood and Practiced by Worship Leaders, Pastors, and Congregations of Selected Southern Baptist Churches." Liberty University, 2020.

²⁸ David M. Edwards, *Worship Three Sixty-Five*, 106.

²⁹ R.A Torrey, *How To Pray*, 33.

³⁰ A.W. Tozer, *The Purpose Of Man*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Bethany House Publishers, 2009), 178.

³¹ R.A Torrey, *How To Pray*, 10.

attitude of worship. Man has been created, called, and commanded to worship, praise, sing, and pray to the Father.

God desires for his children to gather with Him. Worship leaders who pray are already starting the day about God, not themselves. Prayer focuses on King Jesus and limits pride and selfish desire from creeping in. Pride is a dangerous thing for anyone, especially for worship leaders in the church. It can affect the ministry and their life in many ways, and God will not honor or bless a heart about themselves. The act of fully surrendering is laying aside one's pride and self-desire and offering to the Lord as an offering. When people encountered the Lord, they worshipped him by bowing down. The Hebrew word most often translated as "worship" is the word *shachah*, which means "to bow."

People worshipped in the Old Testament would physically bow down and humble their hearts to worship God. The Father wants to soften man's heart so we can fully experience His presence. The worship response is not from our outward expressions such as standing, sitting, jumping, or kneeling but rather about man's posture of their hearts toward God. The nature of a believer should be "I am yours, use me as only you can." King Solomon writes, "Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall" (Proverbs 16:18 ESV). Prayer is discussing one's needs, desires, wisdom, and help with the Father. The Lord is there to comfort, strengthen, and make way for His children.

How To Pray

This section will highlight many areas in the book on prayer by R.A. Torrey. Torrey offers excellent insights into the power of prayer, how Jesus prayed, and how believers can learn from His example. R.A. Torrey was an American evangelist in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. He was known as a pastor, writer, educator, and theologian. He wrote a book on prayer

and how Christians should focus on spending time with God. Torrey states, "Jesus chose the early morning hour for prayer. Many of the mightiest men of God have followed the Lord's example in this. In the morning, the mind is fresh and at its best."³² Torrey makes the reader see the importance of prayer through Jesus's example. He points out why to start the day with prayer, "The first thing we do each day should be to go alone with God and face the duties, the temptations, and the service of that day, and get strength from God for all. We should win before the hour of trial, temptation, or service comes."

Pastor Torrey shares the Savior's forces of spending time with the Father and how believers should learn from His example. The Son of God has private worship and communion with the Father before meeting with the people. Jesus is putting prayer before ministry, food, fellowship, and Himself. The Son of Man focused on the Father and private worship. His example of personal devotion shows that prayer is the piece that will defeat the enemy. Jesus displays to humanity what it looks like to place on the whole armor of God. Torrey writes, "When the early hours are spent in prayer, the whole day is sanctified, and power is obtained for overcoming its temptations and performing its duties."³³ Jesus' day began with prayer and fellowship with the Father many times before sunrise.

The apostle Mark writes that Jesus would rise early in the morning for prayer "And rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he departed and went out to a desolate place, and there he prayed" (Mark 1:35 ESV). Torrey states, "Jesus chose the early morning hour for prayer. Many of the mightiest men of God have followed the Lord's example in this. In the

³² R.A Torrey, *How To Pray*, 61.

³³ *Ibid.*, 55.

morning hour, the mind is fresh and at its very best."³⁴ Jesus chose the morning hours for private worship because He valued time with the Father and allowed prayer to come before anything. A believer can accomplish much in prayer in the early morning hours. Torrey says, "When the early hours are spent in prayer, the whole day is sanctified, and power is obtained for overcoming its temptations and for performing its duties."³⁵

Jesus began each day with God, which shows that humankind's most influential ministry starts with private worship with the Creator. The acts of praying, listening, and communicating with God will help us face the difficulty and trials of this world. Torrey says, "Every child of God who would make the most out of his life for Christ should set apart the first part of the day to meeting God in the study of His Word and in prayer. The first thing we do each day should be to go alone with God and face the duties, the temptations, and the service of that day, and get strength from God for all."³⁶

Mark documents Jesus' prayer life and notes the time of day He would pray. Even the Son of God needed time to pray; how often do worship pastors give themselves time out of the everyday craziness to collect their thoughts and offer them to the Lord? Torrey states about private worship, "We should get victory before the hour of trial, temptation or service comes. The secret place of prayer is the place to fight our battles and gain our victories."³⁷ Jesus displays a hunger, need, and desire to meet with His Father before the day begins. He yearned to spend time with the Father and show man the importance of private/personal devotion to the Lord.

³⁴ R.A Torrey, *How To Pray*, 55.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 55.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 55.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 55.

If Jesus needed multiple times a day with the Father, man must spend time with God. Torrey writes, "He prepared for every important crisis by a long season of prayer. So, ought we to do also. Whenever any life crisis is approaching, we should prepare for it through a season of very definite prayer to God. We should take plenty of time for this prayer."³⁸ Jesus was praying in the night, sometimes the entire night in prayer. Here too, man would do well to follow the Savior's footsteps. Torrey profoundly states, "Nights of prayer to God is followed by days of power with men. In the night hours, the world is hushed in slumber, and we can easily be alone with God and have undisturbed communion with Him."³⁹

Worship pastors should follow the Shepherd's actions and spend time with God at night. When people begin to spend time with God throughout the day and night, it changes how they think and act. God gets a hold of their life and completely changes how they deal with people. Torrey states, "A night of prayer should be put entirely under God's control. We should lay down no rules as to how long we will pray, or as to what we shall pray about, but be ready to wait upon God for a short time or a long-time He may lead."⁴⁰ Worship pastors should see through Jesus's life that prayer should be at the forefront of their lives. Before dealing with the Pharisees and conflict, Jesus spent time with His Father.

The King of Kings began His day with prayer and private worship with the Father. Torrey makes mention of Jesus's private worship by saying, "Evidently prayer took much of the time and strength of Jesus, and a man or woman who does not spend much time in prayer, cannot properly be called a follower of Jesus Christ."⁴¹ His life revolved around prayer and spending

³⁸ R.A Torrey, *How To Pray*, 62.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 56.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 56.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 12.

time with His Father. The Son of God, fully God and human, centers His life and mission around private prayer, which Torrey writes in the book, "Jesus is our model in prayer as in everything else. We find in the study of His life that His manner of returning thanks at the simplest meal was so noticeable that two of His disciples recognized Him by this after His resurrection."⁴²

Jesus's disciples recognized their Savior by His prayer and the words from their Lord's mouth. Believers who walk in the Lord will show Christ's love through speech and actions. There should never be a set time for prayer but rather a longing to spend time with God. One will find Jesus praying before great crises in His earthly ministry, before choosing His disciples, before sermons, in His public ministry, and more. In every critical problem, crisis, and difficulty, Jesus prayed and spent time with the Father. Torrey says, "He prepared for every important crisis by a protracted season of prayer. So, ought we to do also. Whenever any crisis of life is seen to be approaching, we should prepare for it by a season of very definite prayer to God."⁴³

Jesus taught in hardships and trials that prayer is the place to turn. God is the one who worship pastors need to turn to in difficult, stressful, and demanding times in ministry. Jesus prayed before significant events such as feeding the five thousand or the multitudes desiring Him to be king, and His response was prayer. Jesus sent them away after so He could meet with the Father. Torrey reminds believers, "If we would pray after the great achievements of life, we might go on to still greater; as it is, we are often either puffed up or exhausted by the things that we do in the name of the Lord, and so we advance no further."⁴⁴

⁴² R.A Torrey, *How To Pray*, 52.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 57.

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, 57.

Pray Like Jesus

The segment will look through the book *Pray Like Jesus* by Mark Driscoll and Ashley Chase, gleaning from the lessons Jesus taught worship pastors about private worship and how they can apply these lessons to church Pharisees. Driscoll states, "If you want to learn about prayer, study Jesus Christ."⁴⁵ Studying the life of Jesus Christ, one will find that He prays scriptural prayers. A healthy, growing, loving relationship requires that both people speak openly and respectfully and listen carefully and compassionately.⁴⁶ Worship pastors must begin with praying and reading Scripture daily, and one will find transformation in that daily routine. When worship leaders pray, they speak to God; in Scripture, God speaks to them. Worship leaders study the life of Jesus Christ and find that Jesus prayed warfare prayers. When examining Jesus's life, He prayed for forty days, and the devil still appeared.

Driscoll shares, "Do not be surprised when life gets more difficult simultaneously; your prayer life gets more devoted."⁴⁷ Worship pastors face problems and many times deal with hurting people. Often, hurting people hurt others because of the pain they are experiencing. They take it out on others and sometimes on their church leader. It can discourage worship leaders with the many attacks people take against them. Driscoll notes, "When Jesus faced the cross, He took His pain to God in prayer. The more we hurt, the more we need to pray."⁴⁸

Jesus shows worship leaders that even through the hurt, pain, and disappointment this world brings, they continue to pray and seek the Lord. Driscoll states, "If you stop praying for

⁴⁵ Mark Driscoll, Ashley Chase, *Pray like Jesus*, 47.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 47.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 52.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 52.

people, you will stop caring about them. But if you keep praying for them, your heart will grow tender toward them."⁴⁹ Prayer will change a worship pastor's view of people and begin seeing church Pharisees how Jesus views them. Worship pastors must view hurting people the same way Jesus viewed the Pharisees. If worship pastors keep praying for people, they will grow in love for people.⁵⁰ Observing Jesus' prayers, worship leaders learn the importance of praying for people who hurt them.

Praying does not mean ignoring reality, pretending everything is fine, trusting, or becoming close to church dragons. It shows that a person chooses forgiveness over hatred and extends grace to that individual. Driscoll states, "When you pray for someone, it begins the healing process so that you can move on from the person who hurt you to the person who can heal you."⁵¹ Jesus is praying for His accusers and the Pharisees on the cross. His heart is full of compassion, grace, and love for those crucifying him, so He asks the Father to forgive them.

Jesus is showing worship leaders how to forgive someone who is causing harm and pain to them. Worship pastors will deal with Pharisees seeking to disrupt their ministry, make a mess of their life, and find ways to discourage them. They love to push harder for a person so that they can be heard and allow their presence to be known. So, when and where does the worship pastor need to pray? Worship leaders must pray daily, early, all the time, corporately, privately, with their ministry, and with their families. Driscoll says, "For disciples of Jesus, anytime is prayer time."⁵²

⁴⁹ Mark Driscoll, Ashley Chase, *Pray like Jesus*, 67.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 67.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 68.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 78.

Jesus prayed in the morning when it was dark, dedicating His day to the Father's will. Worship leaders need to save their day for the Father's business and start each day praying alone. Ashely Case states, "You cannot give to people in public what you have not gotten from God in private."⁵³ Worship leaders gain a new perspective on worship when the art of private worship occurs. Whether through public or private worship, prayer should be routine. Prayer is, first and foremost, a reflection of the heart, and all other prayers (including public prayer) must stem from this.

Driscoll reflects on Jesus' prayer life by saying, "After standing before crowds, Jesus was kneeling before God as "he was praying alone." The secret to Jesus' power in public was His persistence in private prayer."⁵⁴ Worship pastors will understand worship in a new way through private worship, and God will reveal Himself in a new way through personal devotion to Him. Driscoll states, "Sometimes prayer moves God's hands. Most of the time, prayer moves our hearts."⁵⁵ The heart begins to take shape, and the worship pastor will view people differently. Driscoll says, "Praying for your enemies also keeps you from becoming like them. The natural response to being hurt is hate. But once we have welcomed bitterness and hate into our hearts, we have welcomed bitterness and hate into our hearts and poisoned our souls."⁵⁶

This action of praying for one's enemies should be embraced by worship pastors when faced with church Pharisees. Worship pastors should strive for unity in their ministry and handle church Pharisees with love, grace, and compassion. Driscoll states, "Unity is godly; division is

⁵³ Mark Driscoll, Ashley Chase, *Pray like Jesus*, 83.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 82.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 98.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 74.

demonic.”⁵⁷ When there is unity in the church, God can work and move in the lives of His believers. Driscoll says, "Don't declare war on a fellow Christian. Declare allegiance to Jesus. Unity will result when we all do that.”⁵⁸

Prayer will soften the heart and transform the mind to think like Christ. Driscoll says, “God is real, salvation is real, forgiveness is real, and healing is real.”⁵⁹ A believer will begin to see what Jesus sees in people and realize the greatest commandment in a fresh new way. Driscoll states, “Prayer sometimes changes our circumstances so that we can get around hardship, but most of the time, prayer changes us so that we can get through our hardship.”⁶⁰ Worship pastors can hold on to prayer and have confidence that God will help them with the difficulty and stresses of ministry. The act of prayer is coming humbly before the Father, laying down burdens, thanksgiving, and simply conversing with the one who created everything.

Driscoll states, “Prayerful intercession for those who sin against us preserves us from becoming bitter. Bitter people become sad, lonely, unpleasant, and joyless people. But when we ask God to help us forgive and then we “let it go” through forgiveness, we battle embitterment and refuse vengeance.”⁶¹ Worship pastors forgiving their people need to proactively pray against sin so they can surrender to God before they give into sin. Driscoll says, “Unity begins by valuing our relationship with God and others above our personal and pet issues.”⁶² They need to

⁵⁷ Mark Driscoll, Ashley Chase, *Pray like Jesus*, 195.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 201

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 139

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 99.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 105.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 172

pray bold prayers because, being followers of Jesus Christ, Satan will try to attack with temptation. Driscoll says, “Praying in advance against evil and temptation, our minds are kept from deception, and our hearts are kept from pollution.”⁶³

Worship leaders must guard against evil and invite the Holy Spirit to pull them up and deliver them from Satan. Prayers should come from a place of humility, and the primary point is for God to change the heart and make it more like His. Driscoll states, “Getting God to do what we want is not the primary point of prayer. Jesus reminds us that the primary point of prayer is not to move God but to change us.”⁶⁴ God is the author and perfecter of man’s existence. He has the right to His will, not man’s will. Humankind’s sinful nature struggles to agree with the Father and trust that His plans are better than theirs entirely. Driscoll says, “Prayer is about God changing us, not about us changing God.”⁶⁵ Worship pastors are to be humble servants asking for God’s wisdom, strength, humility, and compassion for His people. They will face difficult seasons and challenging times in ministry, but their focus should be on the Savior and allow Him to work in their lives.

The Lord will give resilience, courage, and steadfastness to Christian leaders who seek His wisdom and will. Worship pastors should glean from the apostle Paul’s prayer: “God... fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding.” (Colossians 1:9 ESV). Worship pastors will become great leaders immersing themselves in the Word and prayer. God will bless those who call on His name and fully surrender to His purpose.

⁶³ Mark Driscoll, Ashley Chase, *Pray like Jesus*, 110.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 111.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 126.

Pray Like Jesus

This dynamic book was written in 2019 and viewed the prayer life of Jesus Christ. One reads that Jesus Christ praises His Father and worships Him for how He works in the world. Robert L. Morris Jr. has been a pastor for over 30 years of ministry experience. Morris writes about the six recorded prayers of Jesus in the book's first segment, starting with Matthew 11 and ending with John 17. There were six prayers of Jesus and one being a prayer of praise. The apostle Matthew writes, "At that time Jesus declared, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children; ²⁶ yes, Father, for such was your gracious will (Matthew 11:25-26 ESV).

Morris challenges worship pastors by saying, "How often do we stop and praise our heavenly Father for how he works in the world? For most of us, the praise of God usually only happens while singing a hymn at church or if God does something out of the ordinary in our lives."⁶⁶ He shares, "One way to change our hearts is to do what Jesus did. Take some time (even during difficult times) to praise our heavenly Father for what we have, his goodness, his mercy, and even what he is doing in our lives."⁶⁷ Worship pastors must have the attitude for the Lord to use them to serve the kingdom fully. The Father is looking to servants who will follow Him, pray, seek His face, and worship and praise Him.

The example Jesus gives to pastors is the heart behind the prayer and the attitude that comes from it. In Jesus's second recorded prayer in John 11:1-44, He taught pastors that there is a God who listens. In this prayer, Jesus raises His beloved friend Lazarus from the dead. Morris states, "Jesus knew God would hear his prayer. Jesus thanked God for hearing him at a dear

⁶⁶ Robert L. Morris Jr. *Pray Like Jesus*, 17.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 20.

friend's funeral.”⁶⁸ From observing His public prayers and worship, the reader learns of Jesus's nature and heart. Morris reminds worship pastors in the middle of the book that prayer brings strength, as found in John 12:20-36. In the text, one will find Jesus dealing with temptation, which comes with “popularity and fame—the temptations to abandon what God had sent him to do and give in to the popularity and to what the people wanted from him.”⁶⁹ He constantly points others to the Father and ultimately dies for humanity's sin.

Jesus was under so much pressure and constantly dealt with conflict. Morris states about Jesus dealing with peer pressure by saying, “Jesus was put under the kind of pressure, one key thing that sustained him was his prayer life.”⁷⁰ He was asking the Father to glorify Himself through His words and actions. Jesus was troubled in His spirit, knowing He would face the cross. When Jesus experienced hardships and trouble, He would result in praying. Morris says, “He does not pray for strength, for faith, for his enemies to be vanquished, and to be happy, to be safe, or for himself. In his crisis, Jesus prayed for his heavenly Father to be glorified.”⁷¹

Jesus shows worship pastors in times of crisis, pain, trouble, and hardships not to stop praying. Prayer is the thing that will get a pastor through difficulties and valleys in church ministry. Morris focuses on the prayer request of Jesus, which He prayed for unity. Worship pastors should learn through Jesus to pray for unity in their ministry and for people to work together. Jesus prays for His disciples “to be guarded, guided, and unified.”⁷² He ends the chapter by reflecting on Christ's prayer life and challenges the reader to have a prayer life like

⁶⁸ Robert L. Morris Jr. *Pray Like Jesus*, 22.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 32.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 34.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 35.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 48.

Jesus. One of the best ways to know Jesus Christ is through personal devotion and prayer. It will change a person's life and transform their thoughts and actions. Morris makes a few points at the end, "Pray daily—Jesus's prayer life was regular...The important thing is to set aside time every day to pray."⁷³ Jesus was committed to prayer and showed His longing and desire to spend with the Father. He shows worship pastors that a fruitful ministry begins with prayer, devotion, speaking with God, and seeking His wisdom for the day ahead. Morris challenges worship pastors to "Start your prayer time by reading scripture."⁷⁴ So, worship pastors must start their day by seeking the Father's will by reading scripture, praying, and spending time in God's presence. Morris writes, "Adoration—We begin prayer with adoration. When a person experiences the presence of the Lord, they experience a life change. Worship pastors experiencing the presence of God should give Him adoration for what the Lord has done. Telling God how much I admire who He is. How much His love, justice, mercy, and grace personally mean to me."⁷⁵

Worship pastors beginning with worship, will change their mindset from personal worship to Godly worship. Morris gives worship pastors six challenges, "abide in Jesus, be led by Jesus, have a missional heart, be unified with a church or missional body, be guarded against evil, and be sanctified (made more like Jesus)."⁷⁶ Worship pastors who apply this great encouragement will see their lives change, and their ministry will begin to take on a new meaning. Morris finishes the book by motivating worship pastors, "Give it a try, and it will change your life and those you love. That is how Jesus prayed, and with time, the Holy Spirit,

⁷³ Robert L. Morris Jr. *Pray Like Jesus*, 83.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 84.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 84.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 84.

and an open heart, we can learn to do the same.”⁷⁷ God will bless and honor a Worship pastor who desires to love Him more and desire to spend time in His presence. The presence of the Lord will renew, strengthen, and give the wisdom to worship pastors who humbly come before Him.

Handling Conflict

This section will view Jesus dealing with conflicts and how worship leaders should follow His example. Like the last section, viewing Scripture is the best way of starting. King Solomon writes, "A hot-tempered person stirs up conflict, but the one who is patient calms a quarrel (Proverbs 15:18 ESV). Believers read what they should do in handling different situations. This Scripture reminds the church about competition, "The greedy stir up conflict, but those who trust in the LORD will prosper (Proverbs 28:25 ESV). A great way to see how Jesus believed a person should handle conflict is in Scripture. The apostle Matthew records Jesus saying,

“If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector” (Matt. 18:15-17 ESV).

Jesus gives clear instructions on handling conflict and how a person should deal with the problems. He had many conversations with the Pharisees and religious leaders in His ministry and dealt with much discouraging conflict. Jesus showed boldness, love, and courage around this people group. The apostle Matthew records Jesus's interaction, "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You shut the door of the kingdom of heaven in people's faces.

⁷⁷ Robert L. Morris Jr. *Pray Like Jesus*, 90.

You yourselves do not enter, nor will you let those enter who are trying to” (Matt. 23:13-14 ESV).

Jesus unashamedly speaks truth to the people and calls out the religious leaders in front of His followers. Ken Blanchard raises a great point, “Jesus was often confronted with quacking behavior from the Pharisees and leaders of the synagogues. These religious leaders were more interested in protecting rules and regulations than hearing Jesus’ message of love, forgiveness, and grace.”⁷⁸ These scriptures show Jesus's interactions with people and how He handled conflict. It rose in Jesus’s midst many times throughout His earthly ministry. When observing His communication with the Pharisees and other groups who hated Jesus, He chose to speak truth and allow Scripture to be the decider.

He was bold in speaking with people “You snakes! You brood of vipers! How will you escape being condemned to hell?” (Matt. 23:33 ESV), “Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You shut the door of the kingdom of heaven in people's faces.” (Matt. 23:13-14 ESV). Jesus shows worship leaders dealing with challenging individuals that are okay with having tough conversations and speaking truth to church Pharisees for the gospel’s sake. Ray Jones states, “Love your people but do not be afraid to have tough conversations.”⁷⁹ Jesus faced tough conversations and dealt with conflicts in his three-year ministry. He was constantly under attack and was always handling differences of opinion by people. Shelley states, “The goal in handling dragons is not to destroy them, not merely to disassociate from them, but to make them disciples. Even when that seems an unlikely prospect.”⁸⁰

⁷⁸ Ken Blanchard, Phil Hodges, *Lead Like Jesus* (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, 2005), 103.

⁷⁹ Ray Jones, interview by Dr. Jerry Newman, February 1, 2021.

⁸⁰ Marshall Shelley, *Well-Intentioned Dragons Ministering To Problem People In The* (Bloomington, Minnesota: Bethany House Publishers, 1985), 39.

Well-Intentioned Dragons

This part focuses on the hardships of church ministry and shows how worship leaders can handle conflict in a Christ-like manner. Studying the life of Jesus, one will find His interactions to be bold, kind, compassionate, loving, and spoke with grace. His conversations with the Pharisees would not classify as lovely, pleasant, agreeable, or delightful. Jesus was fearless with the religious leaders and spoke courageously to the ones who seemed to get Him. Jesus spoke with humility and grace but communicated the truth with confidence. The audience was amazed by Jesus' interaction and knew through the words spoken; He was an important man.

They were astonished by the words spoken but never accused Jesus of being arrogant, puffed up, and full of Himself. Jesus had a heart for people, desired everyone to follow Him, and for lives to experience transformation because of the gospel. Observing the life of Christ, a pastor's heart should be compassionate, graceful, loving, and forgiving. They should be bold leaders unafraid to shepherd their people, pastors who desire to lead their people closer to Jesus, and servants willing to care for their cross for the gospel's sake. Worship pastors must be spiritual leaders to the congregation and pastors to their people. They must realize their position is to lead, love, and lead people to Jesus. J. Oswald Sanders states, "The spiritual leader will choose the hidden path of sacrificial service and approval of the Lord over the flamboyant self-advertising of the world."⁸¹ Marshall Shelley shares about the adversity, trials, and affliction a pastor faces in church ministry and shares great points on dealing with them and how a person can overcome discouragement.

Often, these church members are doing what is best in their eyes, which often results in not being kind to the pastor. This book covers ministry's hardships and can give worship pastors

⁸¹ J. Oswald Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership* (Chicago, Illinois: The Moody Bible Institute, 2007), 71.

great information on handling difficult situations. He explains what a well-intentioned dragon is, “Dragons can be as friendly and charming as non-dragons...The distinguishing characteristic of a dragon is not what is said but how it’s said.”⁸²

These dragons or church Pharisees are often adversaries to the pastor and slow to apologize. Shelley notes, “Perhaps the greatest damage done by true dragons is not their direct opposition. It is more intangible. They destroy enthusiasm, the necessary morale for church health and growth.”⁸³ They mostly see themselves as kind individuals who believe they are godly and helpful in looking out for others. Shelley says, “In the church, most dragons see themselves as godly people, adequately gracious and kind, who hold another viewpoint they honestly believe is right.”⁸⁴ They are incredibly critical, self-centered individuals who love to condemn people, spread gossip, and tear people down to be heard. They do not care for others, hate to apologize, never like to compromise, and are a very hard person to love. Shelly states, “Dragons are best known for what comes out of their mouths. At times their mouths are flame throwers; other times, the heat and smoke are not apparent.”⁸⁵

Church dragons make life complicated and challenging for people, especially ministry leaders. They focus only on themselves, never desiring to share God’s love with people, serve the church, or spread encouragement to others. Shelley challenges pastors by saying, “When attacked by a dragon, do not become one. Not encountering a dragon is a failure unless one fights venom with venom. No victory is worth winning if it forces us to become bilious.”⁸⁶

⁸² Marshall Shelley, *Well-Intentioned Dragons Ministering To Problem People In*, 40.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 41.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 47.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 51.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 61.

Worship pastors must understand that they must shepherd, serve, pastor, and show compassion to unkind church dragons. Jesus dealt with dragons in His ministry, which He handled with mercy, grace, kindness, boldness, truth, and humility.

Shelley notes, “We are to be wise as serpents and innocent as doves, streetwise peacemakers, compassionate confronters, and above all, patient disciples who understand that God can redeem even the worst situation for His glory.”⁸⁷ Dragons sometimes attack for the sake of power and never intend to make it personal. The worship leader may feel hated, despised, and rejected by this person and may labor. It may cause doubt and discourage to creep for the worship pastor and may affect their ministry. Worship pastors must face people directly, no matter how difficult or uncomfortable. They must eliminate problems with people and address dragons seeking power in the ministry. A worship pastor, when facing dragons, should avoid church fights becoming holy wars, which can disrupt a church if left unintended.

Church members want people to hear them and make them feel needed, valued, and appreciated. These people think the church might owe them something or that they are irreplaceable in the church. Shelley notes, “Prevent church fights from becoming holy wars. Nothing is bloodier than a religious war.”⁸⁸ Worship pastors should understand that disagreement or people who challenge another person is not always bad. A person facing challenges can view it as a lesson or a problem. These church members can help worship pastors by addressing their needs and pushing them to become better individuals.

⁸⁷ Marshall Shelley, *Well-Intentioned Dragons Ministering To Problem People In*, 62.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 77.

The worship pastor, a good shepherd, will embrace hardships, discouragement, and challenges from the people and continue to move forward for the gospel's sake. P.T. Forsyth states, "You must live with people to know their problems and live with God to solve them."⁸⁹ So in church ministry, what are the best defenses for a worship pastor to withstand the problems? Shelley describes the best reasons to deal with weeds with a healthy lawn same goes for preventing dragons from rising with a strong, healthy congregation. Shelley states, "Taking opportunities to build a close, cohesive church will produce better results than the shrewdest political maneuvers after problems sprout."⁹⁰ God has called worship pastors to be spiritual leaders to their people and overseer with character, integrity, and firmness of purpose for the church's sake. Worship pastors are to be humble individuals passionate about serving their people and pointing others closer to Christ.

A well-intentioned dragon could seek power and imagine swaying people against the worship pastor. Shelley writes about this dragon, "They have good reasons for seeking power, for swaying votes, for pressuring leaders-usually because the church is heading in a direction they think needs to be changed."⁹¹ This people's group seeks power to elevate themselves in the church, a way of control, and even dominance over the church leadership. They try to obtain this church supremacy and pressure the administration in hopes of agreeing in their favor. The New Testament dealt with church dragons, and the problem has not changed. It shows that people are broken individuals who seek to promote and exalt themselves over God. Worship pastors must lead these people with boldness, courage, and willingness not to be understood. They must also

⁸⁹ Marshall Shelley, *Well-Intentioned Dragons Ministering To Problem People In*, 81.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 83.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 108.

ask themselves, “Is it worth fighting for, damaging friendships, and possibly splitting a church? It is a question for worship pastors, “How much firepower is appropriate in a church fight?” Shelley states, “The problem is that most church members imagine themselves as basically “nice,” willing to bend to keep the peace.”

It gives lots of leverage, sometimes complete control, to those hard-nosed individuals willing to make a public scene.”⁹² Worship pastors tend to be “the nice person” and ready to bend to keep the peace or be liked by others. Shelley says, “Simply because leaders are servants doesn’t mean they must passively accept injustice or ignore threats to the body.”⁹³ It can result in trouble and destruction in the worship ministry if a worship pastor leads by giving in to everybody's wants and pleasing them to avoid possible disagreement. Shelley states, “Dragon taming is not giving in, becoming a doormat. Appeasing dragons and hoping they won’t spew their wrath throughout the church rarely works long term.”⁹⁴ It means the worship pastor must fight the battle or abandon the field to the dragons. Shelley writes, “A healthy congregation doesn’t allow one or two members to set the church’s direction or change its mission.”⁹⁵ He lays out a few points for the worship pastor to learn about handling conflict and how to approach disputes.

Shelley states, “Boundary setting can feel cold, but it is necessary for pastoral effectiveness. Worship pastors need to communicate clear boundaries with their people, which will help with burnout, family neglect, stress, and personal well-being. Indeed, for many, loving

⁹² Marshall Shelley, *Well-Intentioned Dragons Ministering To Problem People In*, 110.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 169.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 169.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 110.

acceptance with boundaries fosters spiritual growth.”⁹⁶ It can often be difficult for worship pastors to fight against the hardships of ministry and create a positive atmosphere in the worship ministry. There are ways worship leaders can place to help with the negative and holding back some church dragons. Shelley states, “Find that the best way to prevent dragon blight or minimize its damage is to concentrate on developing a healthy church. Taking opportunities to build a close, cohesive church will produce better results”⁹⁷ for the worship pastor and the dissatisfied follower. Worship pastors can avoid dragons or minimize the attacks by learning the church's history, loving the people, and building trust and healthy relationships before initiating changes.⁹⁸ People are likelier to follow a worship pastor if they know him, trust him, and have built a relationship with their leader.

The worship ministry sheep are more willing to follow their shepherd, not because of the idea or project but because they trust the worship pastor. Shelley writes, “Too many quick changes tell the people, “You do not understand Christianity. I am the expert; you need to do it my way.”⁹⁹ This worship pastor has not gained the people's trust, which can result in church Pharisees and dragon attacks. A worship pastor who walks humbly before their people will earn respect and soon be able to take their people anywhere. The worship leader has gained the respect of the people resulting in a smoother and more positive environment. Shelley says, “Often the pastor gains more influence by being a gentle friend than grabbing for control.”¹⁰⁰

⁹⁶ Marshall Shelley, *Well-Intentioned Dragons Ministering To Problem People In*, 100.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 128.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 133.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 134.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 135

The people know their worship pastor would not harm them but rather make changes for their and the church's good. Worship pastors must build trust with the people before changing the worship ministry. People rarely love and enjoy church change but are more likely to embrace change with a humble and gentle worship pastor. Shelley states, "Often the pastor gains more influence by being a gentle friend than grabbing for control."¹⁰¹ It will eliminate some dragon attacks because of the trust built with the worship members.

Worship pastors must be on the lookout for church dragons and deal with those people with humility, grace, compassion, and love. Those church Pharisees cause significant damage to a ministry if not dealt with and shepherded by their worship pastor. The themes that come from this book are trusting God, leading well, servant leadership, shepherding, boldness, and compassion. It serves as a great reminder to worship pastors that church ministry is difficult, discouraging, and hard. In leading a ministry, a worship pastor faces many trials, hardships, pain, adversity, and troubles. They are facing many dragons and church Pharisees desiring to interfere in their ministry, which can cause discouragement and church burnout.

A worship pastor is reminded in the book to keep pushing forward and not allow church dragons to destroy them. Shelley says, "In weakness, God's strength can be revealed. Joseph was jailed, David driven into hiding, Paul imprisoned, and Christ crucified, but even in defeat, God's servants are not destroyed."¹⁰² Worship pastors must be courageous leaders who are never afraid to pastor their people and have tough conversations with church Pharisees. Their calling is to

¹⁰¹ Marshall Shelley, *Well-Intentioned Dragons Ministering To Problem People In*, 135.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 126.

serve, defend, love, shepherd, and tame the dragons in the church. Their job is not to slay but to tame the beast, to prevent further destruction in the church or themselves.¹⁰³

The problematic lesson worship pastors are to learn is that hard conversations are not bad but needed to keep a worship ministry moving forward with few distractions. One may ask, what is the point of confrontation and dragon taming? Shelley says, “Not stifling people’s ideas but protecting the church from those acting in destructive ways. The right attitude, atmosphere, and approach are essential.”¹⁰⁴ Worship pastors must remember to confront church dragons with thoughtful love viewing the person as a child of God and seeing their worth. They should never look at church Pharisees as lions but as wounded sheep.

Worship pastors much learn this important lesson, “Be gentle but firm. If you’re a church leader, the authority is on your side, and people expect you to take the initiative.”¹⁰⁵ Worship leaders must care for their people and be firm with their dissensions. They must face the problems with courage and boldness for the church’s sake. The worship pastor's approach to hard conversations with church dragons should be listening, loving, respecting, and resolving the issue. Shelley states, “The spirit needed for confronting dragons is neither one of fear and withdrawal nor one of arrogant power. It is gentleness and firmness—an attitude of smart love.”¹⁰⁶

Shelley challenges worship leaders to approach confrontation with private conversations, “Initially, this is not a confrontation but an attempt to understand the other person and see him or

¹⁰³ Marshall Shelley, *Well-Intentioned Dragons Ministering To Problem People In*, 168.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 169.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 173.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 175.

her as Christ does.”¹⁰⁷ The encounter with a dragon can be heated and challenging for the worship leader to resolve the issue. This misunderstanding or issue could result from the individual dealing with something personal or may even have a heart problem; one conversation is not the cure. Shelley profoundly states, “The most common mistake in dealing with dragons is approaching them judgmentally, assuming theirs is a sin problem.”¹⁰⁸

The problem may be that dragons may try to cause trouble in the church and disrupt the worship ministry. The worship pastor must remain faithful and continue to show compassion, grace, love, and heroic courage through that time. Shelley states, “Despite our best efforts, the problems of contentious people are not quickly solved. Tensions can linger in limbo, no resolution in sight.”¹⁰⁹ The worship pastor may find that conversations between dragons can be challenging to find a commend ground. Shelley states, “Time can bring healing. For new pastors, it also often brings an increasing ability to handle dragons.”¹¹⁰

Worship pastors must remember their calling, have patience, and have a larger perspective in worship ministry. Shelley says, “Sometimes enlarging the frame of reference helps remind us that one mouth isn’t the whole church, one critic isn’t the end of our ministry, and even one church isn’t the whole body of Christ.”¹¹¹ They must remind themselves that God is sovereign and controlling the problem. He is always faithful, and God will protect His people no

¹⁰⁷ Marshall Shelley, *Well-Intentioned Dragons Ministering To Problem People In*, 178.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 179.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 186.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 187.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 190.

matter the storm, problem, or situation. Shelley states, “Anyone who looks closely knows the church’s biggest problem is people—sullen, sassy, sometimes savage, always sinful people.”¹¹² Worship leaders can go through ministry with a better attitude if they look at their sheep as sinful, broken people who need love and compassion.

The dragons will notice the worship pastor loving them and, in return, may disengage with the conflict against their leader. Shelley reminds worship leaders, “If we lose some battles with dragons, what does it matter? Of course, it matters to us now, but ultimately it doesn’t.”¹¹³ What matters the most is that God’s name is glorified and honored through His people and that lives would see a transformation, healing, and recovery. Worship pastors are the leaders in the worship ministry and are to put dragons before themselves. Shelley says, “Our job is to remain faithful to the two greatest commandments to love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, and to love even dragons as ourselves.”¹¹⁴

Lead Like Christ

In this section, one observes Jesus’s prayer life and His interactions with people and finds ways to apply the wisdom drawn from these occurrences to their ministry. Worship pastors should take the application and wisdom drawn from their study of Jesus’ prayer life and the study of well-intended dragons to be their catalyst towards their time in ministry mirroring the heart of Christ. In A.W. Tozer’s book *Lead Like Christ*, he states, “A critical aspect of our spiritual leadership is understanding the value Christ puts on His people. Once we begin to

¹¹² Marshall Shelley, *Well-Intentioned Dragons Ministering To Problem People In*, 191.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 191.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 192.

understand how He thinks about us, it will change how we think about the people we lead and minister to.”¹¹⁵ When worship pastors view people as Christ sees them, their perspective changes, and they begin to love the church as Jesus intended His followers to do. Jesus paid the ultimate price for humanity by dying on everyone’s behalf. He humbly went to the cross and died a sinner’s death so everyone could receive His perfect gift. Tozer states, “Our Christ Jesus paid a deep price that we might be redeemed.”¹¹⁶ So, if Jesus died for sinners, then worship pastors are called to serve, extend grace, and display compassion to everyone, especially church dragons. Worship pastors see their calling to serve people and show care to individuals who are not easy to love.

AW Tozer says, “The church can silence critics with good works and in no other way...Godliness and good works shut the mouths of everybody. Critics may take you out and hang you, but they will respect you while you die.”¹¹⁷ Worship pastors who serve will significantly impact their people and hopefully tear down walls with church Pharisees, allowing them to become supportive and a great assist to the ministry. Tozer states, “To lead like Christ demands that we understand entirely what it means to be a leader in the spiritual realm. It is not a job but rather a commitment to Christ. And the path to this kind of leadership is absolute surrender and sacrifice to Jesus Christ.”¹¹⁸ Worship pastors desiring to make an impact and spiritual leaders in their ministry must learn to be a commitment to Jesus Christ, honoring Him with their life and allowing the Father to work through them. Tozer states, “A significant aspect of Christ-led leadership is to understand ourselves from God’s point of view. The next step is to

¹¹⁵ AW. Tozer, *Lead Like Christ* (Bloomington, Minnesota: Bethany House Publishers, 2021), 127.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 129

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 132.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 137

understand how God sees the people we minister to. If we cannot get that dual perspective, we certainly will not lead like Christ.”¹¹⁹ Worship pastors desiring to be spiritual leaders must see church dragons as Jesus did. They must extend grace and love to dragons and dare to face them.

Tozer says, “Everything God has done since the beginning of time is out of grace. Nothing is by law; it all is by grace.”¹²⁰ He sees them as broken, sinful people who need grace and redemption. A Christ leader will see church dragons not as enemies but as people who need God. Tozer says, “To be a Christ-centered servant means we will have quite a bit of suffering along the way. It will not be easy, and none of it will come naturally. It will come from the Holy Spirit’s work flowing from the center of our life, Jesus Christ.”¹²¹ It will help worship pastors face the struggles of ministry by allowing God to work through them to reach people with the gospel.

Worship pastors are not there to save people, fix their problems, or change their hearts. That is God’s job, and He is the only one who can do just that. Worship pastors must remember they are to be servants, shepherds, and pastors to the church that speaks with courage and authority but also with a compassionate and loving spirit. Tozer says, “Unless we pull all the truth together, we will not be able to exercise the leadership that Jesus Christ modeled for us when He was here on earth.”¹²² Spiritual leaders are to be humble servants to the church and speak to people with a meek spirit. Tozer states, “To lead like Christ, we will need to deal with hard things. It is not easy to be involved in spiritual leadership, so Paul warned that a “novice”—a

¹¹⁹ AW. Tozer, *Lead Like Christ*, 145.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 121.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 155.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 44.

new concert—should not be an overseer of the church.”¹²³ Pastors must conduct themselves with a heart to serve, not desiring accolades or recognition from people. They are to pastor the people the Lord has entrusted them with and lead their ministry well for the kingdom of the Lord. Tozer says, “I pray that God would give us this kind of spirituality so we can pour ourselves out.”¹²⁴ Worship pastors should say that as a prayer to the Lord and ask Him to help them pour themselves out to their people and the church. The Lord will honor and bless a worship pastor who leads people as Jesus did. A worship pastor should be a spiritual leader and pastor the worship ministry well for Jesus Christ.

¹²³ AW. Tozer, *Lead Like Christ*, 99.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 24.

Chapter Three: Methodology

Introduction

When formulating the thesis subject, the researcher feared that gathering the research needed for the chosen topic would prove difficult. After all, people's perceptions of worship leaders and their daily challenges can be very subjective. Initially, the plan for gathering research was entirely qualitative, with interviews with worship pastors being the primary method. While seeking out questions to ask worship pastors during these interviews, interview questions proved minimal. The initial qualitative research plan evolved into a more quantitative approach when the statistics of worship pastors left the church due to conflict and hardship. After some research, the results showed statistics on pastors leaving the ministry and listing the reasons pastors were leaving the ministry. The research needed for this topic best aligns with the historical, texted-based qualitative research method. This method provides the best approach to collecting data in church ministry and helps find the results in handling this major issue. Creswell states, "Qualitative researchers collect data themselves through examining documents, observing behavior, or interviewing participants."¹²⁵ Research data in chapter four reflect scholarly reports and websites on pastors in ministry and the struggles resulting from conflict with church members. The statistics used in this report involve pastors who have served in ministry for many years in full-time positions. This research proposes to study and observe the worship pastor's struggle with church Pharisees and how conflict plays a big part in leaving the ministry. In this section, many websites are helping to conduct statics about worship pastors in ministry, which include Lifeway Research, Barna, and a worship book.

¹²⁵ John W. Creswell and J. David Creswell, *Research Design*, 181.

Qualitative research is the right choice because of the use of survey questions. This research approach commonly rely on a person's spoken or written word as the principal data source for analysis. Creswell states, “Qualitative methods rely on text and image data, have unique steps in data analysis, and draw on diver designs.”¹²⁶ The research process consisted of the investigator collecting public documents, including books and scholarly websites. Creswell states, “Qualitative researchers tend to collect data in the field at the site where participants experience the issue or problem under study.”¹²⁷ This research will use a website questionnaire and a book interviewing pastors in full-time ministry. The standard questionnaire system in answering questions concerning ministry struggles and prayer life would yield qualitative data. The questionnaire and results are from Lifeway Research, Barna, and Dr. Richard J. Krejcir's report on “Statistics on Pastors.” The information provided by each source will be documented and reported by their extensive research on pastors in ministry.

This thesis seeks to show the connection between the daily stresses and hardships that a worship pastor faces in problematic congregants and their personal lives and discover how through proper study and application of Jesus' prayer life, the worship pastor can use those tools to overcome occupational challenges. To best determine why or how a pastor reaches the point of deciding to leave the ministry, the researcher must also define what it means for a pastor to be burnt out and drained. This definition will create a standard by which others can fully understand the term.

¹²⁶ John W. Creswell and J. David Creswell, *Research Design*, 179.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 181.

Design

This research project seeks to find a correlation between pastors leaving ministry because of church dragons and their personal life struggling because of ministry. As a result, the research focuses on these two concepts. First, the researcher checked and examined scholarly articles on the topic. The desire was to find a large study that has conducted such research on pastors in ministry to find a more accurate percentage. The larger the research group, the more precise the answers can be from interviewing pastors. The research can be authoritative, with a sizeable group of pastors answering the same questions. The research revealed the statistics of ministry worship pastors and why they leave each year. The research gathered from Lifeway Research, Barna, and Dr. Richard answer questions that pastors face through ministry struggles and their devotion. There were three concepts regarding ministry struggles—lack of prayer/private worship, allowing church Pharisees to influence the pastor negatively, and having little training in dealing and interacting with church dragons. After much research, the qualitative research information and statistics displayed in chapter four are from Barna and Lifeway Research. Pastors ask these questions in ministry, seeking to find out why they are leaving and evaluate their devotion. The research answers how church Pharisees affect a pastor's ministry and how the church's struggles can negatively affect the pastor. The qualitative research approach was the best option because one could find the reason for the pastor leaving and a possible solution.

Questions and Hypotheses

Questions

The primary question this thesis project seeks to answer is how worship pastors can learn from Jesus's prayer life concerning conflict and the significant impact conflict has on ministers.

The connection between a prayer life and handling conflict is discussed further in chapter four. To answer these critical questions, the researcher had to find statistics relating to these essential questions. The researcher found three questions concerning prayer and numerous questions on conflict.

Prayer:

- 1) I feel like my spiritual formation too often takes a back seat to my other pastoral responsibilities: Strongly agree, somewhat agree, neither agree nor disagree, somewhat disagree, and strongly disagree.
- 2) How much concern do worship pastors take with their devotion, including prayer and reading the Bible for personal devotion and worship?
- 3) How many pastors study the Bible for personal growth rather than preparing for a service or worship event?

Conflict:

- 1) How soon will a seminary student most likely leave the profession after entering the ministry?
- 2) What are some of the hardships pastors face while casting a vision for a ministry?
- 3) What percentage of pastors consider leaving their current position or ministry entirely for another occupation?
- 4) What does it mean for a pastor to be burnt out or drained?
- 5) How many pastors are leaving the church as a direct result of conflict?
- 6) What is the cause of most of the conflict that pastors face?
- 7) As a pastor, does your family suffer due to the demands of your job?

Hypotheses

1) Conflict is the leading cause of pastors leaving the ministry.

Conflict comes in many forms and for many reasons. When a pastor experiences frequent and consistent conflict in various areas of their ministry, over time, it can impact the health of their ministry negatively. The consistency of conflict and stresses of the pastor can cause the pastor to feel discouraged or even question the calling the Lord has placed on their life. It contributes to why pastors frequently leave their position and ministry entirely.

2) A pastor's prayer life plays a significant role in the impact of conflict in his ministry.

The health and prioritization of a pastor's prayer life can tremendously impact how equipped and prepared they are to overcome the conflict they are bound to face. By intentionally taking time to pray and studying how Jesus used prayer to sustain his ministry despite how he was treated and ridiculed, pastors can find strength and be encouraged to endure occupational challenges better when they arise.

3) The direction the pastor wants to take in his ministry and the decisions made in the process can cause the pastor to experience conflict with unhappy and dissatisfied congregants.

In many cases, those who are unhappy and dissatisfied are often the loudest voices of any congregation. Many times, those people can cause strife and conflict within the ministry. This behavior and subsequent actions can ultimately change the ministry's effectiveness and entire projection if not dealt with properly. Dealing with internal conflict can ultimately wear down a pastor, which is unhealthy for the life of the ministry. It leads to pastors questioning their effectiveness and ultimately doubting they are calling into

ministry or walking away from the ministry altogether. The overarching goal of the ministry is to do kingdom work. If the ministry leader is preoccupied with creating a solution to the conflict, it will be physically impossible to prioritize sharing the gospel, discipling people, and fulfilling his calling to said kingdom work.

Chapter Four: Research Findings

Introduction

There are many great resources concerning pastors and the struggles of dealing with people. Many colleges offer worship pastors training in leading worship and how to pastor a church. However, most of these training resources focus primarily on leading worship and little about the struggles of ministry. This research shows that pastors struggle to deal with people resulting in them leaving the ministry. The charts below will show the statistics and examples of pastors struggling with the ministry, the lack of personal devotion, and how conflict seriously affects the church's worship pastors. This chapter will have three sections: spiritual formation, ministry struggles, and strategies for dealing with conflict. The information provided is there to give awareness of the struggles of ministry and assist worship pastors in navigating ministry.

Through this study, the researcher seeks to identify parallels between the Pharisees whom Jesus interacted with throughout his ministry and currently dissatisfied church congregants, as well as study Jesus' prayer life and identify the application that worship pastors can use to help navigate these struggles. The first research question was, "Whether worship pastors could extend grace to the adverse and dissatisfied congregates by developing compassion, empathy, kindness, and tolerance to church members who target them with negativity and dissatisfaction." The second research question was, "Strategies that could benefit worship leaders when dealing with adversity from church members are prayer, personal devotions, and intentionally surrounding themselves with trusted individuals who can provide wisdom in coping with pessimistic individuals." The research provided below is information taken from Barna group research, Lifeway Research, and dissertations. The statistics are to bring awareness to worship pastors and share the struggles of ministry.

Pastor's Prayer and Devotion

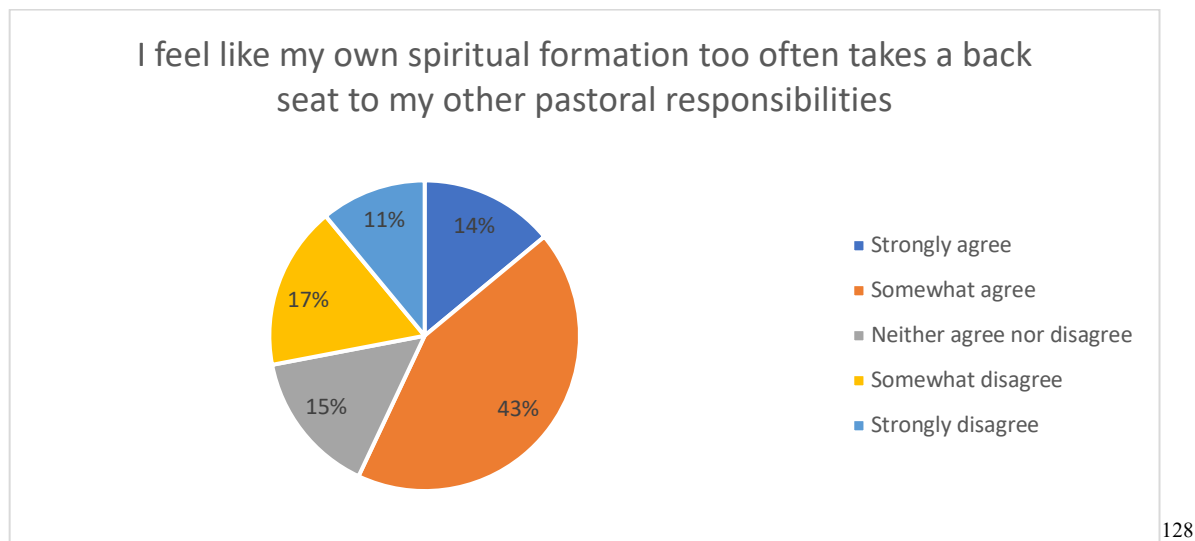


Figure 1



Figure 2

¹²⁸ Barna Research Group, “For Pastors Who Want to Quit, Self-Care & Soul-Care Slip”, June 15, 2022, March 7, 2023, <https://www.barna.com/research/spiritual-formation-back-seat/>.

¹²⁹ Ibid.



Figure 3

The three graphs presented above were a study on pastors in full-time ministry. The survey had pastors answer questions about church ministry; the above data is from Barna Group Research and Dr. Richard J Krejcir's "Statistics on Pastors" report. The Barna research group surveyed 510 pastors, discussing a sequence of questions about the ministry. The data presented in the first two graphs are from Barna, in which the pastor's questions were about their private worship. Surprisingly, the results show that over half of pastors strongly/somewhat agree that their devotion takes a back seat to their pastoral duties. They allow their ministry to overtake their positional devotion, resulting in abandoning their private worship of God. The second chart is from the same report, which shows that the lack of prayer, reading the Bible, and worship affects pastors continuing in ministry.

¹³⁰ Richard J. Krejcir, "Statistics on Pastors", Accessed March 7, 2023, <http://pirministries.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/FASICLD-Statistics-on-Pastors.pdf>

The lack of effort pastors show in private worship will ultimately affect their church ministry long term. These charts went along with the first two charts in personal devotion. While all pastors prioritize praying throughout the week, pastors who have considered leaving are less likely than other pastors to prioritize reading the Bible for personal devotions (70% vs. 80%) and time to worship (58% vs. 68%) weekly.¹³¹ The third chart reflecting the statistics provided by Dr. Richard J. Krejcir in his report “Statistics on Pastors” shows that out of 1050 pastors interviewed, 756 or 72% of pastors only study Scripture in preparation for Sunday. Krejcir surveyed pastors in full-time ministry, and the results of neglecting private worship are astonishing.

The results of pastors neglecting to spend time with God and allowing the ministry to overtake their wait time is heartbreaking. The results in the charts below deal with pastors and conflict in the church, but the major issue begins with the statistics on pastors not valuing private worship. The graphs below show pastors dealing with struggles in ministry and finding difficulty overcoming battles. The problem may lie with the upper results in disregarding time with the Father. The numbers show that the problems began with not valuing prayer, reading scripture, or spending time in God’s presence. God says in His word, “If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land” (2 Chronicles 7:14 NIV).

¹³¹ Barna Group, “*For Pastors Who Want to Quit, Self-Care & Soul-Care Slip*”, Accessed February 17, 2023, <https://www.barna.com/research/spiritual-formation-back-seat/>

Pastors Leaving Ministry

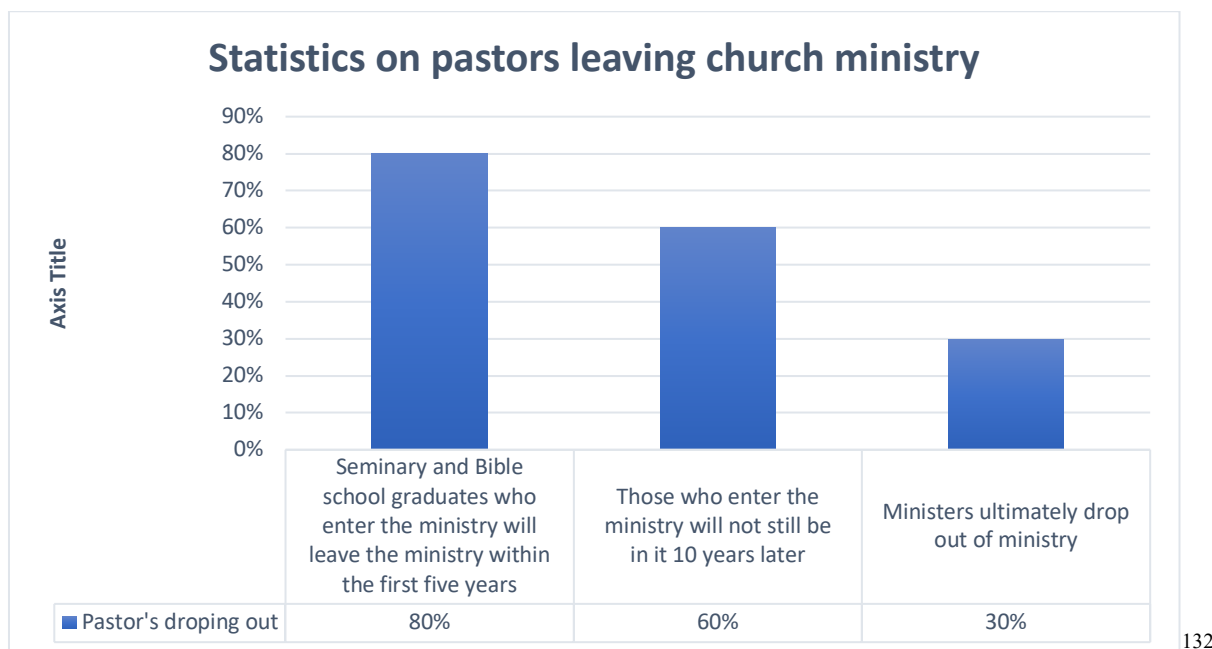
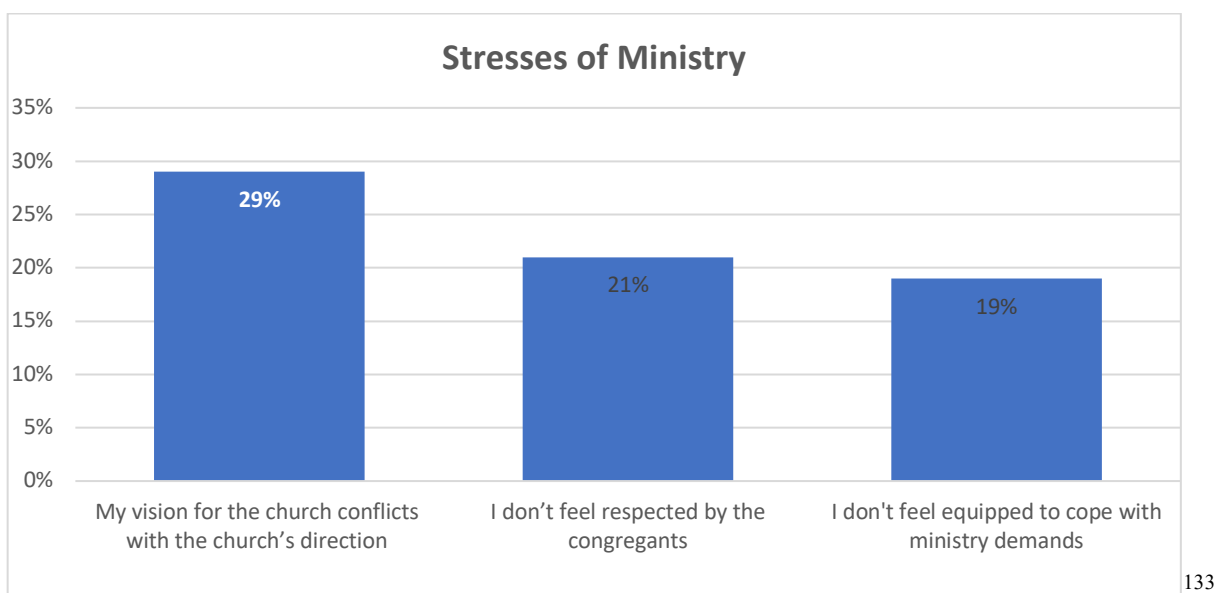


Figure 4



¹³² Richard J. Krejcir, "Statistics on Pastors", accessed March 7, 2023, <http://pirministries.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/FASICLD-Statistics-on-Pastors.pdf>

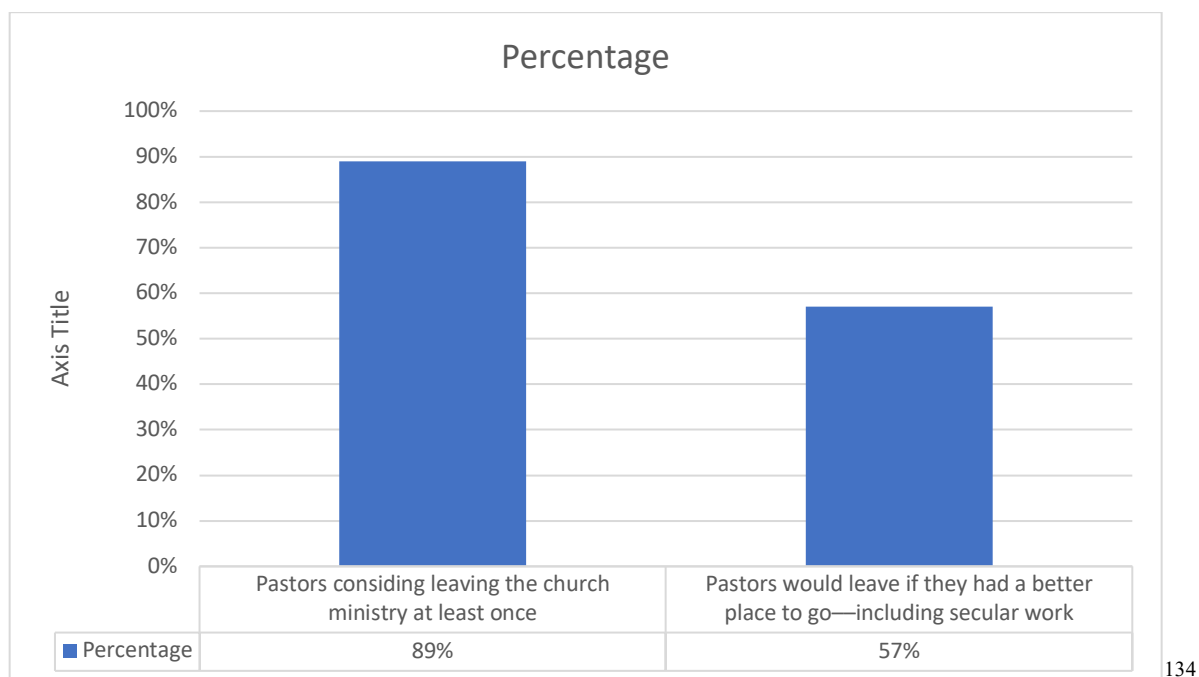
¹³³ Barna Group, "Pastors Share Top Reasons They've Considered Quitting Ministry in the Past Year", accessed March 7, 2023, <https://www.barna.com/research/pastors-quitting-ministry/>

Figure 5

The two graphs above represent the statistics of pastors, the stresses of ministry, and the problems pastors face in church ministry. The first graph represents the research that Dr. Richard Krejcir in his report entitled “Statistics on Pastor.” He reported having interviewed 1050 pastors serving in full-time church ministry and asked each pastor a series of questions. The numbers from the first graph reflect that most students studying in seminary will not hold the office of pastor in the first five years of full-time ministry. Shockingly the rate of a pastor staying in ministry for ten years is only 40%, and a pastor making a career of pastoring is just 30%. So, the data presented in the first graph shares that more and more pastors are leaving ministry because of the stresses that come with the job and church dragons that pastors encounter. The heartbreaking reality is that pastors are not willing to remain in ministry and be dependent upon the calling God has placed on their life.

The second graph reflects the results of an interview conducted by Barna Group that conferred with 413 pastors serving in full-time church ministry. In this graph, the data presented reflects the problems that pastors are experiencing in the church which 29% of pastors are not allowed to share their vision because it conflicts with the congregation's desire. Conflict becomes disheartening and ultimately devastating to the pastor resulting in their leaving. In some cases, the congregation is not encouraging, loving, or respecting the pastor because 21% of pastors are experiencing church dragons in their ministry. According to Barna Group, some pastors feel seminaries are not equipping pastors to cope with ministry demands and the stresses of church ministry. The research shows that pastors struggle with the congregation, and many do not remain pastors. This research displays that church ministry has been challenging for pastors to remain serving a congregation, and the stresses of church ministry have resulted in most pastors never retiring from the church. It teaches pastors that ministry is challenging and complex, which

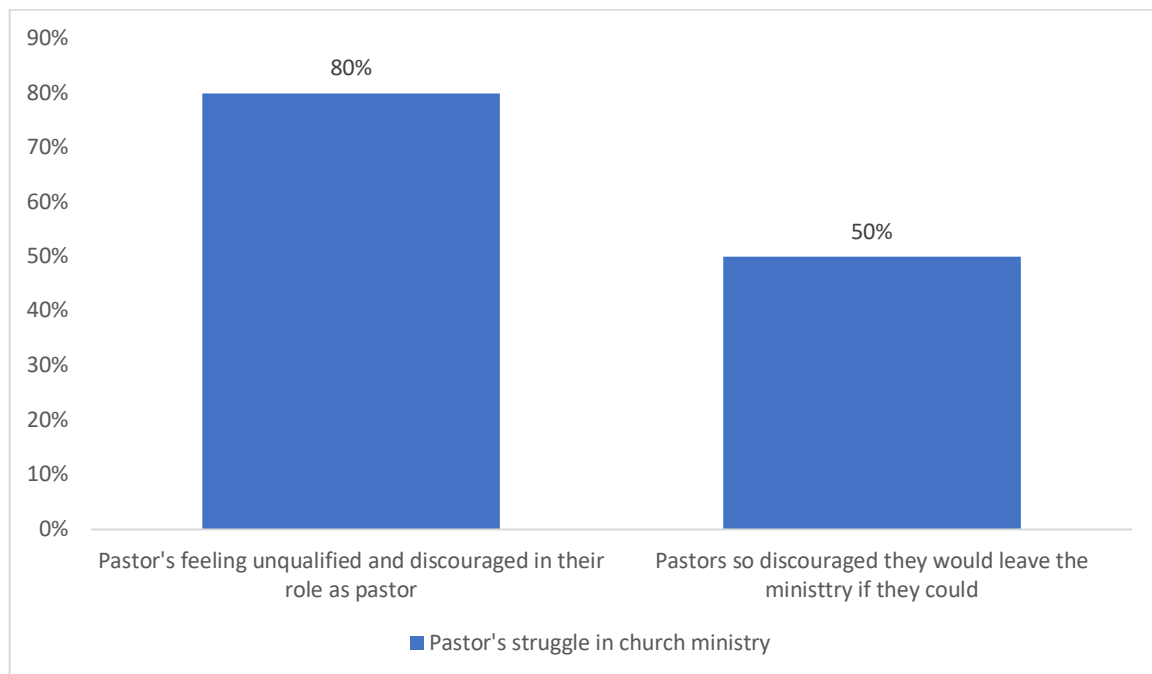
can affect their vocation if they allow the church to take their life. They must find a way to handle church dragons in ministry, resulting in success. The sooner a worship pastor learns how to handle people, the better their ministry will be. The problem many pastors face is never making anyone happy or excited about ministry. The study challenges pastors to shepherd and lead the congregation well for a thriving church ministry.



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Figure 6

¹³⁴ Richard J. Krejcir, “Statistics on Pastors”, Accessed March 7, 2023, <http://pirministries.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/FASICLD-Statistics-on-Pastors.pdf>



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Figure 7

The graphs above reflect Dr. Richard Krejcir's "Statistics on Pastor" report. These serious numbers showing pastors considering leaving, feeling unqualified, or facing discouragement was a survey of 1050 pastors. Krejcir found in the survey that pastors face discouragement, struggles, hardships, and trying times in ministry, and many pastors decide to leave because of the demands. Pastors are worrying less about their calling and vocation. God has called them to and more on allowing church dragons to affect their calling. Many are deciding to leave church ministry because of feeling unqualified for the position.

The demands of ministry through serving, church dragons, responsibility, and stresses of ministry are forcing pastors to leave church ministry. This survey continues to show that the main problem with pastors and conflict in church ministry is that they allow the church dragons to overtake their life and vocation. People's struggles and stresses constantly invade a pastor's

¹³⁵ Richard J. Krejcir, "Statistics on Pastors", Accessed March 8, 2023, <http://pirministries.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/FASICLD-Statistics-on-Pastors.pdf>

life, and he rarely receives validation from the congregation. This problem of lacking support from the church will consume a pastor, leaving them to feel discouraged, unqualified, and consider leaving the church. The surprising number is that 89% of pastors have thought about leaving the ministry at least once in their ministerial career. The interview displays that the mounting pressure of people affects the tenured pastor in ministry. It leaves pastors who say (57%) they would leave the ministry if they could find a better job that would include the secular world.

Many pastors are considering leaving their vocation and desiring to pursue a secular job because of the pressure associated with the pastoral position. The ministry struggle is becoming more substantial for many pastors, and few are staying long-term in a vocational ministry position. This study should alarm worship pastors about ministry burnout and hopefully find ways to help them avoid being weary and tired.



Figure 8

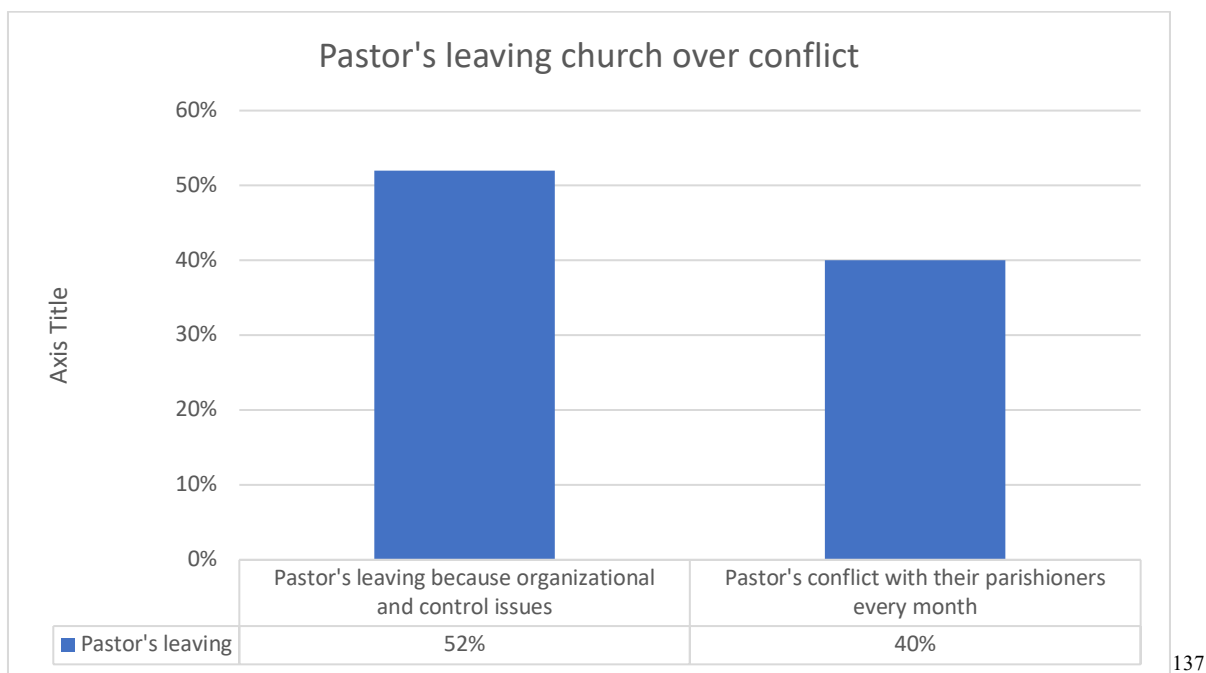


Figure 9

¹³⁶ Richard J. Krejcir, "Statistics on Pastors", Accessed March 7, 2023, <http://pirministries.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/FASICLD-Statistics-on-Pastors.pdf>

¹³⁷ Richard J. Krejcir, "Statistics on Pastors", Accessed March 7, 2023, <http://pirministries.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/FASICLD-Statistics-on-Pastors.pdf>

The graphs above reflect the statistics shared by Dr. Richard Krejcir in his report “Statistics of Pastors.” In his report, he documents that he surveyed 1,050 pastors and records what the pastors stated from the interview. He gathered that 52% of pastors leave the church because of organizational and control issues and that they deal with conflict from their parishioners every month. It shows the pastors' struggles and how many deals with the same issues in the church. The first graph shows why pastors are burning out, and 25% say they lost their love for people. Most pastors are tired/exhausted (41.7%) of ministry, and 16% are disinterested in vocational ministry, resulting from burnout.

The loss of love for people may result in the absence of personal devotion to God and not having a regular time for prayer. The issue shows that pastors have allowed the stress of ministry to affect them personally and have caused their personalities to change from church dragons. Worship pastors must be aware of the problem of burnout and address possible issues that can help change this significant problem. It is a challenge for worship pastors to seek help if they begin feeling burned out and have any of the abovementioned issues. The problems in ministry should not hurt pastors but for them to find ways of blocking out the noise and focus on what God has called them to do. Statistics on pastors' adverse effects from burnout show how difficult ministry can be. It serves as a reminder to worship pastors of their calling and the stresses of vocational ministry. They should handle them wisely and seek God for wisdom in leading a church ministry.



Figure 10

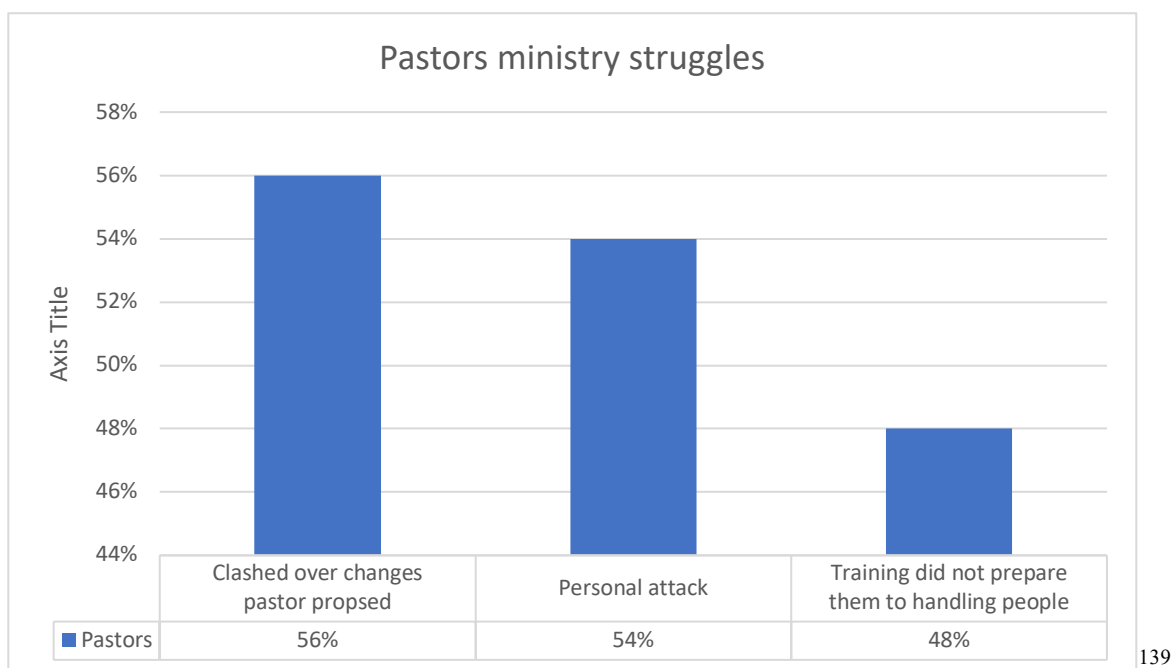


Figure 11

¹³⁸ Lifeway Research, "6 Ways to Lose Your Ministry", accessed March 7, 2023, <https://research.lifeway.com/2021/09/30/6-ways-to-lose-your-ministry/>

¹³⁹ Ibid.

The graphs above present conflicts former pastors have dealt with in ministry and how church dragons affect their ministry. Lifeway Research reported on pastors dealing with conflict by saying, “Unsurprisingly, 1 in 4 former pastors (25%) left the ministry because of conflict in their church. As pastoring involves broken people, conflict is inevitable. However, fewer former pastors than current ones say they invested in processes and behaviors to prevent conflicts.”¹⁴⁰ This heartbreaking statistic can be seen throughout this study and shows pastors allowing conflict to affect their ministry. Both graphs reflect the numbers given by the Lifeway Research Group. The first graph shows the conflicts former pastors have dealt with in ministry; 56% of pastors say that disagreements and disputes from church dragons resulted from them proposing changes to the church. The issue arose from the church members who disagreed with the pastor's direction, resulting in conflict.

Most people do not love the idea of change and do not embrace the thought of altering. People become very comfortable with the church structure, and many become distraught when changes happen. Pastors face much pushback and experience conflict with church members seeking no change in the church. Church dragons would remain comfortable in the church traditions, not allowing anything to palter their routine. Pastors seeking to change traditions will find, as presented in the chart, conflict stemming from the change. It seemed the church did not support the pastor's direction, which caused strife between the pastor and church members.

The graph shows that pastors faced problems with lay leaders (47%) and senior adults (45%) in the church, which caused pastors to experience this conflict. It shows that pastors deal

¹⁴⁰ Lifeway Research, “*6 Ways to Lose Your Ministry*”, accessed March 7, 2023, <https://research.lifeway.com/2021/09/30/6-ways-to-lose-your-ministry/>

with dragons in the church, with most conflict originating from disagreement. Most of the conflict seems to be personal rather than teaching/preaching. When viewing the statistics from the first graph, one would see that over 75% of conflict is with members disagreeing with pastors' leadership, changes, or expectations of the pastor's role. Most of the disagreement is with the church members desiring something for themselves. The second chart reports the same findings as the first graph on conflict resulting from a proposal from the pastor (56%). The second graph from Lifeway Research indicates that 54% of pastors experience conflict from church members escalating to personal attacks on them. This alarming statistic shows pastors that church members will find ways to persuade the pastor, even to the point of attacking them.

Pastors must be aware of this issue and stay alert for dragons coming after them. This reality of pastors facing major problems was never mentioned in their training because 48% of pastors indicate that seminary never prepared them for these issues. Lifeway Research Group stated, "Pastors do not have to go looking for conflict in churches. But if pastors want to maintain their ministry in their current church and beyond, they must invest in conflict prevention during times of peace."¹⁴¹ The study reminds worship pastors that conflict will happen with the music chosen, leadership style, job duties, proposed changes, and doctrinal differences. It is not a question of whether a conflict will happen; it is when it happens that worship pastors must know how to handle the situation. The worship pastor must handle the problems escalating in the worship ministry resulting from church dragons. They are responsible for shepherding, pastoring, serving, and leading the church to become Christ-like individuals.

¹⁴¹ Lifeway Research, "6 Ways to Lose Your Ministry", accessed March 7, 2023, <https://research.lifeway.com/2021/09/30/6-ways-to-lose-your-ministry/>

The sooner worship pastors can prepare for conflict and embrace issues, the better their ministry will be.

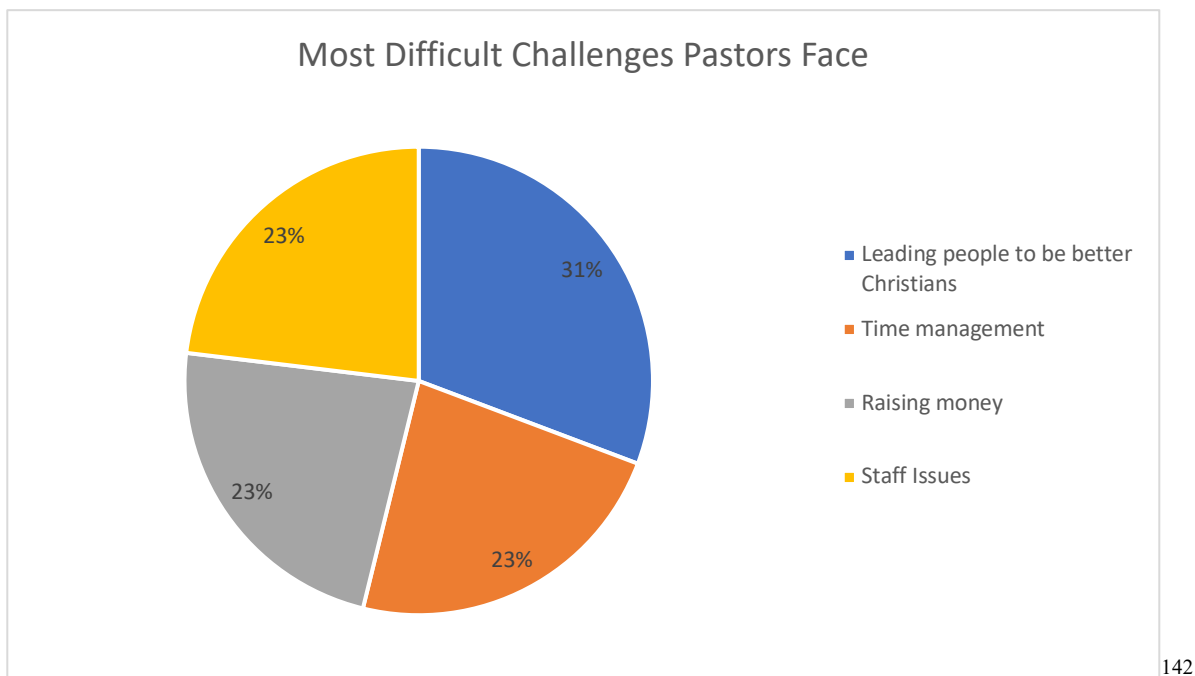


Figure 12

The graph above displays the statistics Dr. Exantus gathered in his dissertation researching pastoral burnout and leadership. It shows what pastors deal with and how these challenges make it more appealing to entirely leave church ministry. The numbers provided reflect 12 pastors interviewed by Dr. Exantus on the topic of challenges in ministry. Of the 12 pastors, 31% said leading people to be better Christians was the most challenging problem. This reality is heartbreaking that pastors would say that but very accurate in church ministry.

They find that people are so distracted with the world that very little attention is on growing as a believer. Worship pastors will find this problem so much in the worship ministry. It

¹⁴² Wall R Exantus, “*Pastoral burnout and leadership styles: A mixed-methods study of Southern Baptist pastors in Central Florida*” (PhD. Diss., Capella University, 2011), 80.

goes back to the example about church dragons in chapter 2 and how hard they can be for pastors. This graph shows the difficulty of leading dragons to be better Christians. The other three challenges that pastors face are primarily personal issues. From the Exantus's interview, a pastor noted that it was challenging "to try to grow my people in such a way so they can become more Christ-like." The reality continues to be that conflict, and people are the most challenging issues a pastor can face in church ministry.¹⁴³ This graph reminds worship pastors of their issue: church Pharisees are unwilling to grow as believers. Pastors face the struggle of dealing with church dragons and try to show them how to be Christ-follower. The issue lies in their heart; the only people who can fix it are themselves and the Holy Spirit.

Current Pastors In Ministry

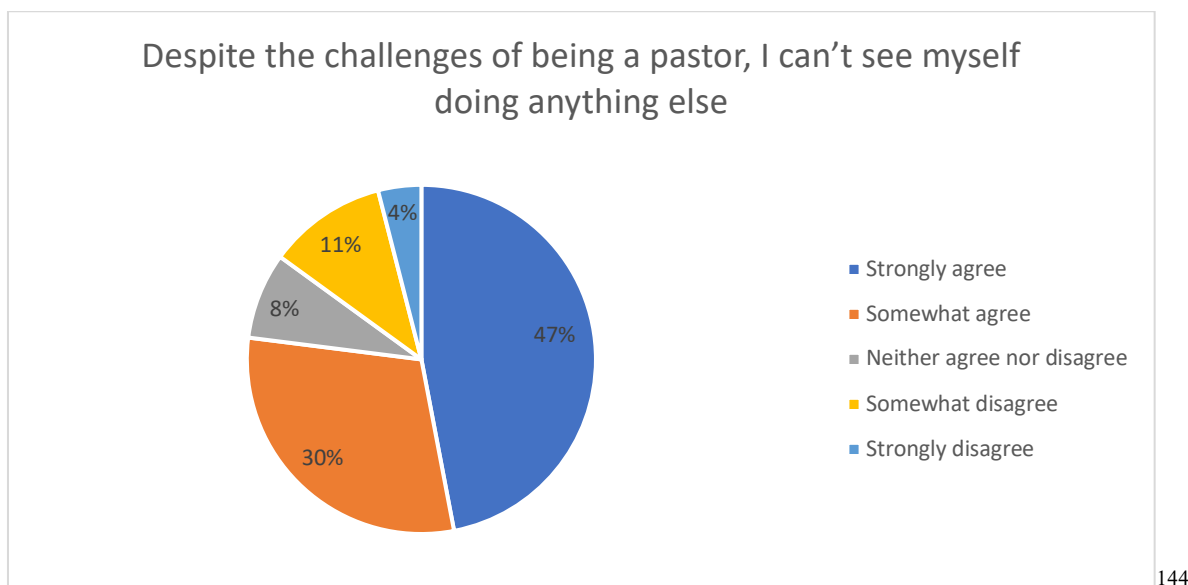
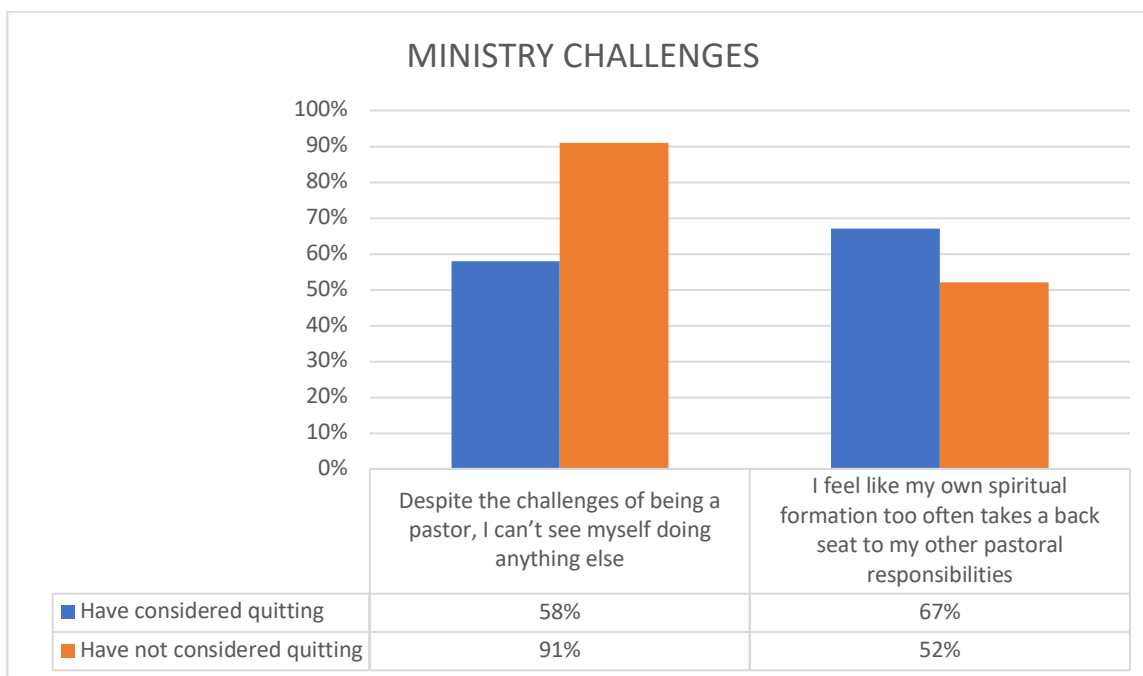


Figure 13

¹⁴³ Wall R Exantus, "Pastoral burnout and leadership styles: A mixed-methods study of Southern Baptist pastors in Central Florida" (PhD. Diss., Capella University, 2011), 80.

¹⁴⁴ Barna Group, "For Pastors Who Want to Quit, Self-Care & Soul-Care Slip", Accessed February 17, 2023, <https://www.barna.com/research/spiritual-formation-back-seat/>



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Figure 14

This entire chapter focused primarily on the negativity of ministry, the problems pastors face, the difficulty of people, and how they harm and can destroy a pastor's ministry. The statistics mainly focused on conflict and how many pastors allowed the pressure and the challenges to alter their decision to stand in ministry. The problem lies primarily in church dragons and how they push their pastor to neglect their family and ultimately leave the ministry because of the stresses of church ministry. This section has shown worship pastors the facts of church ministry and what can happen if they allow church dragons to influence them.

The final section is the opposite; new data in the last few years have shown what pastors in ministry are experiencing. It shows that current pastors handle church ministry better than former pastors. Barna Research Group conducted research in March 2022 with 510 pastors

¹⁴⁵ Barna Group, "For Pastors Who Want to Quit, Self-Care & Soul-Care Slip", Accessed February 17, 2023, <https://www.barna.com/research/spiritual-formation-back-seat/>

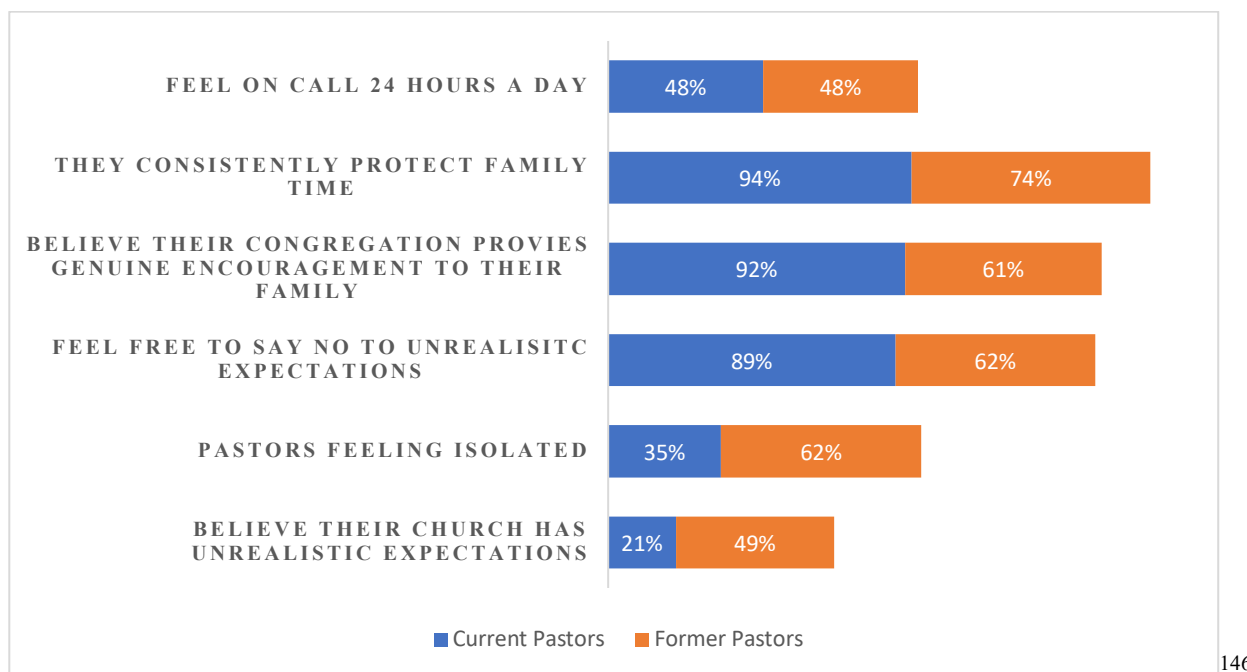
surveyed. One of the questions Barna posed was, “Despite the challenges of being a pastor, I cannot see myself doing anything else,” Surprisingly, 47% of pastors agreed. Almost half of the pastors say they feel confident enough in themselves and their calling to continue in church ministry. The second group consists of pastors who agreed somewhat with the statement “I cannot see myself doing anything else,” reflecting 30% of the total number of pastors polled. The combined total of pastors who agree or somewhat agree with their desire to stay in ministry is 70% which is a large percentage.

This number should encourage the church and worship pastors who are in or seeking to serve in a church. Based on the graph, the numbers show a significant increase in pastors staying in ministry. The second graph shows different sections, “have considered quitting and have not considered quitting.” The percentage displayed in each box reflects the group of people. In the second graph, 58% of pastors who said “have considered quitting church ministry in the past” feel strongly about leaving the ministry. That leaves 42% of the pastor group saying they would not leave the ministry. In Figure 12, 91% of pastors not considering quitting church ministry say they could not see themselves doing anything else despite the difficulties they experienced. According to both graphs, the numbers show that current pastors are considering staying in ministry even though they find it difficult. Pastors interviewed in the second graph explain their spiritual walk with God with the results of Figure 13 below.

The graph shows that 67% of pastors who have considered leaving the ministry struggle with allowing the ministry to overtake their devotion. It shows pastors are likelier to leave ministry with a shaky, inconsistent walk with the Lord. It shows that worship pastors with an irregular personal walk with God will find leaving ministry more justifiable. Of the pastors not

considering leaving the ministry, 52% say they allow their private spiritual worship to take a back seat. It is a heartbreaking statistic that pastors allow the ministry to overtake their spiritual walk with God. After observing the numbers closely, one could argue that pastors are considering leaving ministry to leave because God is not at the center of their lives. Pastors have their priorities out of line when putting God in the back seat to focus more on ministry.

It is concerning that gospel ministers have focused more on ministry than their Savior. God will not bless a person who is more focused on their ministry and less on their walk with Him. May current worship pastors never lose the focus of Jesus in their ministry and never sacrifice their devotion to ministry. A pastor's ministry will flourish and have a better impact if they allow God to move in their life. God will bless His people who call upon His name. Jesus speaks about private worship, "But when you pray, go into your room, and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you" (Matthew 6:6 ESV). The graphs above (Figures 11 and 12) should challenge worship pastors to remain faithful, trust the Lord, and allow God to be the center of their ministry. Barna Group has provided value statistics for ministers to see the importance of private worship and how their ministry can suffer if their priorities are not straight. It clearly shows the ministry's challenges; if one does not care, it will allow it to overtake their devotion.



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Figure 15

The final graph provided in this chapter is above. Lifeway Research provides these statistics. The graph reflects Lifeway Research interviewing 1,500 pastors in full-time ministry in March 2015. They surveyed former and current pastors in church ministry to find out how the church is treating pastors. Lifeway asked questions regarding ministry expectations and how they feel about the relationship with the church. The first survey asked if pastors felt on call 24 hours a day, which found that 48% felt they did. The results reflect that current and former pastors feel they are always on call and can never fully close the door to church ministry. It shows pastors feel their phone is always on and alert 24 hours daily. The interesting fact about this survey, as found in question 2, which most current pastures protect and value family time. The graph shows that 94% of current pastors see the value in family and seem to protect that time. Former pastors

¹⁴⁶ Lifeway Research, “Former Pastors Report Lack of Support Led to Abandoning Pastorate”, accessed March 7, 2023, <https://research.lifeway.com/2016/01/12/former-pastors-report-lack-of-support-led-to-abandoning-pastorate/>

are 20% lower in valuing and thinking highly of family time than current pastors in full-time ministry.

This statistic of pastors and families has seemed to improve based on the graph and figures presented. Pastors are seen intentionally spending time with their families, and the church is showing love to them. They are not allowing the demands of ministry to overtake family time. The last three questions of the graph show a much-improved relationship between the pastor and the church. The questions show that much of the church is becoming more understanding of the pastor's needs and that they love their pastor more. The former pastors show their struggles with the church; 62% say they feel isolated, 27% more than current pastors, and 49% believe their church has unrealistic expectations, 28% more than current pastors. This graph shows that current pastors are 20-30% more satisfied and less pressured than former pastors. It is very encouraging to see churches valuing their pastors and showing love toward them. The future is bright for ministers in the church, and may God continue to work in the lives of pastors to reach people with the gospel.

God's calling on ministers to serve the church as their leader and shepherd is difficult. This chapter has viewed the struggles and hardships that pastors experience in ministry. The study and statistics show that the problem with ministers becoming burnt out, depressed, discouraged, and ready to give up is due to one of two reasons: lack of private devotion or allowing church dragons to control their ministry. Pastors have faced struggles with church dragons, and the adversity will continue if something does not change. Worship pastors must lead the people with boldness, courage, kindness, gentleness, and compassion. They should lead, shepherd, pastor, minister, and direct their people to Jesus.

God will not stand for a minister that allows ministry and the people's needs to replace private worship. He is a loving God who expects His people to call upon His name. Those who do will experience the Lord's blessings, fulfillment, and strength to endure church ministry. It should serve as a challenge, bring awareness to worship pastors about ministry and keep their priorities in line.

Chapter Five: Discussion

Summary of Study

God has called ministers to serve the church, but pastors often leave their calling because of their struggles and conflicts with their people. This study has given worship pastors a view into Jesus's interactions with the Pharisees and a glance into His prayer life. It gives worship pastors a clear understanding of what the Savior dealt with and how He overcame those struggles. The study focuses on worship pastors, how much conflict is in church ministry, and how it personally affects them. Looking at the life of Jesus, there was a plan of action and methods for worship pastors to use in times of trouble and difficulty in the church. Chapter 2, where worship pastors observe Jesus's prayer life and read about overcoming church dragons in the book *Well-Intentioned Dragon*, includes the action plan.

Research has covered the hardships of ministry, the struggles that worship pastors face, the problems that arise, and how to overcome them. The questions raised by ministers and church ministries test the hypotheses. Is it possible for worship pastors to overcome this problem? Is ministry too hard for pastors? What can worship pastors learn from Jesus's ministry? How can worship pastors serve well in church ministry? This research found the importance of worship pastors observing Jesus's prayer life and interactions with dissatisfied followers and applying the lessons learned through His example in church ministry. Worship pastors have a straightforward way of enduring and fighting against church dragons. The statistics in chapter four show worship pastors' struggles and where they need to become more knowledgeable in dealing with church members. The figures in chapter four show a need for worship pastors to be trained and equipped for church ministry.

This thesis has covered an essential topic in which very little research has occurred for worship pastors in church ministry. This topic addresses the problems worship pastors are facing and gives insight into how to deal with current church Pharisees in a way that is reflective of the life of Christ and his interactions with the Pharisees of his day. The worship pastor is dealing with more straightforward issues that Jesus dealt with, and through the research, worship pastors are better equipped to face church hardships. It has been a journey to find resources that worship pastors can use and have a plan of action for church ministry.

The initial chapters of the thesis spoke to help pastors deal with difficult church members and treat them as Jesus treated the Pharisees. The methods portion of the report focused more on providing data about why pastors leave or consider leaving the ministry. The prominent problem worship pastors face in church ministry is conflict and dealing with unsatisfied, ungrateful, self-center church members. Worship pastors must navigate this issue and find a way to shepherd and lead this complex people group. The methods section of the thesis focused on conflict and burnout in pastors in full-time ministry. The research found that a high percentage of pastors are leaving ministry because of conflict in the church.

The researcher began the examination of the topic with hopes of finding a solution to the conflict and finding strategies that worship pastors can use in avoiding conflict. The original desire was to interview worship pastors about conflict and find solutions for pastors in church ministry. The cause of conflict and difficulty from other people is from the fall of humanity. In Genesis 3, one finds that sin entered the world due to Adam and Eve's sin. It caused the world to become cursed, resulting in sin, death, and the separation of God and man. Through the sacrifice and gift offered by the Father, humanity can live forever and no longer in the bondage of sin.

People are sinful and constantly hurt others because of their sinful nature. Jesus experienced conflict with dissatisfied followers and faced challenging trials with the Pharisees. The Son of God embraced the conflict and chose to love, show kindness, speak the truth, and extend compassion to His followers. This report has strategies for worship pastors to deal with conflict and hardships in church. The reader finds in chapter four research findings the impact conflict has on worship pastors. It is a significant problem and issue in the local church, forcing many worship pastors to leave. In the initial chapters of the report, the worship pastor finds strategies and a plan of action for handling conflict in the church. Chapter 4 shows the reality of conflict consuming a pastor's life and the problems they face resulting from the conflict.

The beginning chapters show that worship pastors will deal with problems, and chapter 4 shows they should embrace issues when faced with them. If a worship pastor can fight through the conflict and problems in ministry, they will receive an immense blessing. Worship pastors should draw from Apostle Paul's writing: "Finally, be strong in the Lord and the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. Therefore, take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm" (Ephesians 6:10-11, 13, ESV). God will honor a minister who endures ministry battles and follows the Lord's calling. Pastors must also realize whom they are battling: "For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places" (Ephesians 6:12, ESV). So, this report has given worship pastors tools for battle but also given the reality of church ministry.

Worship pastors have the tools for success found in God's word and through prayer. In Chapter 4, one finds pastors neglecting private worship because of ministry, which contributes to not handling conflict well. This topic has displayed the hardships, challenges, and results conflict has on ministers and the strategies worship pastors can take to overcome those battles. Worship pastors must immerse themselves in God's word and allow the Father to speak with them. When church dragons begin to apply this critical principle to life, the church will begin changing:

If we put bits into the mouths of horses so that they obey us, we guide their whole bodies as well. Look at the ships also: though they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are guided by a tiny rudder wherever the will of the pilot directs. So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great things. How great a forest is set ablaze by such a small fire! And the tongue is a fire, a world of unrighteousness. The tongue is set among our members, staining the whole body, setting on fire the entire course of life, and set on fire by hell. For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by mankind, but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people who are made in the likeness of God. From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers these things ought not to be so (James 3:3-10, ESV).

Summary of Purpose

There are many excellent resources today for worship pastors, from conferences, seminars, and degree programs to books and magazines. In one way or another, these resources enhance the value and practice of worship ministry in the local church. Some resources equip those who lead worship in ministry, and others equip worship pastors to lead a worship ministry more effectively. However, after research, it was discovered that there are very few books written regarding pastors leaving the ministry, how worship pastors should protect their ministry, extend compassion to the church Pharisees but not be afraid to lead them, and how to block out the unnecessary noises to fulfill God's calling.

There is little on the topic of a worship pastor, which seems avoided because no one wants to face the truth of ministry hardships. However, there is little knowledge concerning overcoming discouragement, leading a church dragon, and learning lessons from Jesus's ministry. Some resources speak about worship renewal incorporating ancient practices or more excellent knowledge of the theology of worship. Most resources are available concerning worshipping God, leading authentic/genuine worship, studying biblical worship, theology of worship, and so much more. It is crucial and should be available for worship pastors and those seeking to lead worship. The issue is that worship ministers are struggling with the difficulties of ministry and the conflict that arises in church.

Numbers show many pastors leaving the ministry because of conflict. Suppose more resources covered this issue; worship pastors would be able to lead dragons better. This study aimed to educate worship pastors on church ministry and apply lessons that Jesus did with the Pharisees with pastors handling church Pharisees. The research focused on the problems pastors face in ministry, addressed how conflicts affect pastors, and found ways to succeed in church ministry. Research from this study helps educate worship pastors by viewing Jesus's prayer life and conversations with Pharisees and finding an action plan, so worship pastors can navigate church ministry and have a vital ministry for the Lord.

Summary of Procedure

Initially, the researcher considered a quantitative approach to research this topic, but after carefully reviewing and examining it, it transitioned to a more qualitative approach. The topic lends itself to the qualitative approach with interviews with pastors in ministry and gathering statistics from these examinations from trusted research groups and scholar reports. The desire

for the beginning was to focus solely on worship pastors, but the statistics provided in chapter four apply to all pastors in church ministry. Since the research seeks a worship pastor to mirror Jesus's prayerful approach to dealing with dissatisfied followers, questions were necessary to target this inquiry specifically.

Instead of a traditional qualitative approach consisting of the researcher creating a questionnaire for the interviewees, the approach found scholarly research interviewing pastors regarding ministry. The desire was to have a larger group of pastors answering the question, which resulted in better statistics for the topic. The graphs and charts provided in chapter four reflect each scholarly report and website. The questions from the website/reports combine the percentage with no direct quotes or statements from any pastor interviewed. The number of pastors verified on each website—the research conducted by Dr. Richard J. Krejcir's report, where he interviewed 1050 pastors in church ministry, showed his numbers to be accurate and gave a clear picture of the questions.

The Barna Research Group interviewed 510 pastors serving in the local church. The research provided by Lifeway Research was from 1,500 pastors in ministry. Each research resource had many pastors, which helped with the correct statistics and accurate information. The purpose for choosing numbers from another research group instead of conducting a personal interview with worship pastors was the number of participants. The information provided in Chapter 4 gives a clear picture of the struggles of ministry and the problems that worship pastors are currently facing. Since the research sought to show how conflict affects worship pastors and connects with the internal chapters of the report, the questions asked needed to cover both areas. The research focused on respondents answering questions about their struggles in ministry, the

cause for leaving it, the conflict that arose in ministry, and their spiritual life. The charts and statistics in each area provided additional qualitative data for worship pastors handling conflict. If the hypothesis regarding a pastor's prayer life playing a significant role in the impact of conflict in his ministry is correct, there is a noticeably different response in leaving ministry with worship pastors who focus on their private worship and those who do not. The health and prioritization of a pastor's prayer life can tremendously impact how equipped and prepared they are to overcome the conflict they are bound to face.

Summary of Findings and Prior Research

Of those surveyed, 57% strongly or somewhat agreed (43% and 14%, respectively) with the statement, "I feel like my own spiritual formation too often takes a back seat to my other pastoral responsibilities" (see Figure 1). The research shows that pastors in ministry fail with their private worship, which affects their interactions with people. It shows that worship pastors neglect the scripture and allow the ministry to overtake their private worship. They are seen studying the Bible only in preparation for a worship service or Sunday morning service (see Figure 3). The search indicates that the significant problems and factors for worship pastors leaving ministry are conflict and dissatisfied church members.

It is a significant issue among pastors, evident in the charts provided in Chapter 4. The research correlating the data on conflict and the struggles worship pastors face in ministry shows a strong relationship between conflict and pastors leaving the ministry. The research indicates that church dragons clash over changes proposed by the pastor, which ends with personal attacks (see Figure 11). The act of conflict is a significant problem with worship pastors permanently leaving the ministry. The research indicates that worship pastors do not handle conflict very well

and find them giving up on their calling. Pastors are leaving the ministry because of organizational and control issues from the church (see Figure 9). It shows that pastors' conflict with their parishioners happens at least every month (see Figure 9). Many worship pastors are not fighting for truth, standing firm on the gospel.

Limitations

The researcher carefully examined the thesis, dissertations, and research books to find reliable statistics used in the report. The research topic was taken from experts in the field of ministry experience in the literature review section and examined thoroughly. These ministry experts are very knowledgeable in the field, and the results came from their expertise. The researcher has removed the names of the pastors involved in the research conducted in chapter four, and these came from pastors who were in full-time ministry. Although the researcher is unaware of the names interviewed in the scholarly reports, the statistics provided in the report are by trusted and dependable websites and articles.

The four scholarly reports found that pastors are leaving ministry and worship ministry mostly from conflict. The charts indicate that most pastors are not returning to ministry, and many seek to leave their calling because of conflict—the responses from the scholarly articles used to develop chapter four to educate worship pastors in ministry. The research displayed the difficulty of ministry and ways to overcome the problem. The researcher has minimal experience in this topic, which is the reason for addressing this subject.

The researcher's sample was taken from three websites and scholarly reports making the size group larger. The limiting factor was not having individual pastors speak on ministry and

quote them directly in the report. Many research projects involve large sample sizes numbering thousands of participants. The researcher allowed the statistics to speak through the charts and the percentage display with a large group of pastors. The investigator analyzed the data statistically but chose not to use any questions or interviews in the report. The research results give a clear and direct issue pastors deal with in ministry.

Recommendations for Future Study

The primary topic of pastors dealing with conflict has very little information on managing and tackling this issue. Pastors have the overwhelming task of shepherding church dragons who seek to intimidate and attack them to obtain what they desire. Based on the report, worship pastors should seek practical ways to enhance the worship ministry further. A Christian research group such as Lifeway Research or Barna Group should tackle the subject further, resulting in a more in-depth study of worship pastors' interactions with church dragons. The research should study Jesus's interaction with the Pharisees and evaluate how pastors handle church Pharisees. They could survey a large or small group of pastors with the resources at their disposal. The large sample size displayed the facts of worship pastors in ministry and the struggles they face. The extensive research groups could find small survey groups discussing ministry problems and hopefully educate and instruct worship pastors in dealing with significant conflict.

Worship pastors need to clearly understand worship ministry, be given beneficial information concerning church Pharisees, and find guidance in handling church dragons. The research provided is a tip for the possible study on this topic which can significantly benefit worship pastors. A Christian research group could put their expert resources into creating a

questionnaire on managing conflict in church ministry. It could find solutions in dealing with church Pharisees and how one should care for themselves. Much material discusses worship planning, leadership, discipleship, pastoring, shepherding, and servanthood. The material focuses on the big picture of worship leadership: leading others in public worship; very few speak about private worship, handling conflict, and how a pastor does not allow hardships to affect their vocational ministry.

Conclusion

Studying Jesus's ministry and how He dealt with conflict has been an incredible journey. Worship pastors are needed more in the church than ever before. The church is at a critical moment in history where they need worship pastors who are bold for Christ, lovers of the church and ministry, leaders in their families, and pastors to the congregation in worship. They are courageous leaders who are unashamed of the gospel, sing sound doctrine in the music, lead in the worship ministry, and conduct themselves as shepherds who are very protective of the sheep God has given them.

This thesis has related to Jesus' handling of dissatisfied followers and worship pastors handling church Pharisees. In the process, one will find the difficulty of ministry and how a worship pastor can allow the church dragons to overtake their life if they allow them to. God has called a worship pastor to lead and shepherd dissatisfied followers. Their calling is to lead people where conflict may arise from leadership decisions. This report shares about prayer and how Jesus spent time with the Father in preparation for His ministry. He pulled away from the crowd to spend time with His Father. The apostle Luke writes, "But he would withdraw to desolate places and pray" (Luke 5:16 ESV). The Son of God withdrew from the crowd to spend time in His Father's presence.

So, worship pastors learn through Jesus's example in this report that the presence of the Lord is needed to have a successful ministry. Worship pastors should seek time in God's presence, read the material, and find resources to help them with their ministry. J. Oswald Sanders writes, "Leaders should determine to spend a minimum of half an hour a day reading books that feed the soul and stimulate the mind."¹⁴⁷ They should strive to grow as leaders, pastors, and shepherds to better benefit their church and people. Worship pastors are presented with material to help guide and give wisdom to them when faced with difficult situations. Hopefully, this report will assist worship pastors with dealing with church Pharisees and give them the tools to have a successful ministry. May God continue to raise worship pastors who pastor their people well and extend compassion and boldness to church dragons seeking self-elevation and destruction of a pastor's ministry.

There are five takeaways worship pastors can draw from this thesis report: people are who matter, good shepherding requires a faithful personal devotion, choosing the right words to say, discerning when to speak, and letting God do the rest. Worship pastors must understand that their ministry starts with the people and their responsibility to lead them to God. They are first a pastor to their congregation, a spiritual leader to their team, and then a musician. Kevin Navarro reminds worship pastors, "Our congregations need to know that believers love them. People do not care how much a person knows until they know how much they care."¹⁴⁸ To be a good leader, a worship pastor must be in the word and grow in their private worship. God will bless a person who is faithful to Him and relies on His strength. Worship pastors must practice what they preach because they will face trials and hardships, and their relationship with Christ will get

¹⁴⁷ J. Oswald Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership* (Chicago, Illinois: The Moody Bible Institute, 2007), 126

¹⁴⁸ Kevin J. Navarro, *The Complete Worship Leader* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books 2001), 127.

them through the valley. The words spoken and the discernment of when to speak are vital for a worship pastor. A spiritual leader must know when to speak and choose the right words. Worship pastors should seek to reflect Paul's writing, "Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person (Colossians 4:6 ESV)." The final lesson for worship pastors is to let God do the rest. Let God move in the ministry and allow Him to work in the people and transform the worship ministry into something pleasing to Him. A worship pastor is a servant of the Lord and must allow Him to work through them. Worship ministry should be about Jesus Christ and a place where people experience transformation with the gospel. God has placed a great responsibility on worship pastors to be the servant leaders, musicians, and pastors needed for the church.

May the Lord receive the glory and the honor and transform lives with the gospel. The worship pastor's role has become critical and imperative in the current church and should require humility and meekness. It has been an incredible journey studying and learning more about ministry and the problems worship pastors deal with in church. The Lord should receive the praise and allow His will to work in this position.

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