

discipleship essentials

Essentials for Spiritual Leadership
Leader's Guide

PASTORAL BASICS

LESSON 2: PASTOR AS TEACHER

INTRODUCTION

This lesson is part of a Discipleship Essentials module titled Pastoral Basics. This module will be helpful for untrained leaders who are serving as pastors, for churches who are looking for a pastor, and for those pursuing a pastoral role. It will outline the many duties a pastor may have in a local church, and what church members should expect from their pastor. Some specific challenges are also included, such as ministry to different age groups as well as considerations for church growth.

INTENDED AUDIENCE

The intended audience for these lessons is Christians who are maturing in their faith and desiring to serve God sincerely. The lessons will also benefit church leaders who wish to encourage people in their Christian service, and identify spiritual gifts in those they are discipling.

The Leader's Guide is intended to help you as a leader in your preparation. These lesson outlines may be used in conjunction with other Discipleship Essentials materials found online at www.discipleshipessentials.org.



PASTORAL BASICS

LESSON 2: THE PASTOR AS TEACHER

PURPOSE

This lesson explores the pastor's role as a teacher through sermons, Bible studies, personal instruction, and other means.

LEADER'S NOTE

This lesson describes the role of a pastor as the primary teacher and preacher within a local church. The pastor of a congregation is to teach them the Word of God. However, God equips and calls other gifted people within the local church to share in this teaching ministry as well. In fact, all Christians should teach others to some degree. While this lesson is only an introduction to the topic, it will help those entering or currently engaged in pastoral ministry to prepare to teach their people well. The best training for teaching and preaching is doing it. If you give your participants opportunities to practise teaching or preach sermons to one another, they will learn a great deal that way! Consider asking them to prepare a sermon to deliver to an audience as a practical extension of today's lesson.

INTRODUCTION

Select two or three of the following questions to ask the group.

- ❖ Do you remember one particular sermon or teaching from God's Word? What was said, and by whom? Why has this message remained with you for so long?
- ❖ If you had an hour of someone's time to teach them anything about the Christian life, what would you teach them, and how would you prepare to do so?
- ❖ What would you like someone to teach you?
- ❖ What do you think should be taught more in churches? How could you be engaged in teaching this to others?



STUDY

Instruct the group on the following points.

TEACH

- ❖ **The Shepherd Must Feed His Sheep:** Within a local church, there may be many people with different gifts. Some people are gifted to be pastors (to shepherd the people of God), and some are gifted to teach or preach (to communicate the Word of God to the people). The role of teaching, often in the form of preaching a sermon during Sunday worship, is one of the primary tasks of the local pastor. It is merely one of many roles the shepherd of a church is responsible for, but because of its importance, is a topic worth careful examination.
 - **Feeding with the Word:** Jesus charged Simon Peter with the task of 'feeding' the lambs of God ([John 21:15](#)). Jesus put much time and effort into training His disciples, knowing He would soon leave this world and they would be His representatives on earth. The Church would be young and vulnerable. Until the words of the New Testament were written down, the truths of Jesus were conveyed to people by the preaching and teaching of the Apostles. This lesson will explore exactly what spiritual food the people of God need.
- ❖ **Why We Teach:** The pastor is responsible for teaching with authority. People may wonder what benefit there is in teaching the Bible to believers today, since most have access to the Word of God to read for themselves. The answer is that teaching and preaching are of great benefit; through them God speaks to us, convicts us, and brings about change within us. Pastors must be engaged in teaching and preaching because:
 - **We are called to preach the Word:** Servants of God (especially those who have authority, such as the pastor) must be ready to present the truth of God to others.. Preaching the Word consists of declaring what is true, not merely our opinions. We explain the Bible with the knowledge God has given us ([2 Timothy 4:1-2](#), [Acts 6:4](#)).
 - **The Gospel is good news:** The word 'Gospel' means good news – and what good news it is! To tell people that there is a solution to their sin problem and deliverance from their evil and guilt is something to shout about! We teach and proclaim God's Word because it is good news ([Acts 8:35](#), [Acts 14:7](#)).
 - **Faith comes through hearing:** God has said that faith comes through hearing the message of God, as it comes from a preacher. Those who have not believed in the Gospel need to have it preached to them. Those who have believed need to be reminded of the Gospel regularly as well ([Romans 10:14-17](#)).
 - **All Scripture is useful for training in righteousness:** Every word of God, correctly understood in its context, is useful for teaching, reproof, correction and training in righteousness. Pastors are called to teach their people the whole Word of God, so that individual believers are strengthened and equipped to take on ministry themselves. Multiplying leadership is a very powerful and effective means to grow the Kingdom of God. Those who are taught ought to go out and teach others ([2 Timothy 3:16-17](#)).



- ❖ **What We Teach:** The Bible tells us that Jesus and His followers went out to teach and to preach. What is the difference between teaching and preaching, and should a pastor be engaged in both? Let's look at some examples of these two words being used together:

- o [Matthew 11:1](#)
- o [Luke 20:1](#)
- o [Acts 5:42](#)
- o [Acts 15:35](#)
- o [1 Timothy 5:17](#)

A pastor is a person with authority, and who should be engaged in teaching and preaching. Pastors should also equip others to do the same. But we must know what should be taught and preached.

- **Teaching:** The goal of teaching is to inform the mind so that behaviour can change. This is always done with a measure of authority. This comes from having received truths through careful study of the Word, and then putting them into practice in order to model and instruct others. Teaching is often systematic, instructional, or in response to an invitation. The Bible mentions the following specifics to be taught:
- o **Commands of God** ([Matthew 5:19](#), [Matthew 28:20](#))
 - o **Doctrines of God** ([Matthew 15:9](#), [Titus 2:1](#))
 - o **Way of God** ([Matthew 22:16](#), [Luke 20:21](#))
 - o **Word of God** ([John 7:16](#), [Galatians 6:6](#))
 - o **Wisdom of God** ([Colossians 1:28](#), [Colossians 3:16](#))

From these verses we see that teaching is instruction in the commands, doctrines, ways, words and wisdom of God as seen in Jesus Christ. A teacher is someone who has engaged in study of the Word in order to handle it correctly, putting into practice all that is learned so that they are worthy to teach others. A pastor should not teach earthly wisdom, personal opinion, but the truth of God only ([2 Timothy 2:15](#), [James 1:22](#)). Teaching should include explaining the Gospel, what it means to be a Christian, the difference between the Church and the world, Christian living and discipleship.

- **Preaching:** The goal of preaching is to declare or announce the Word of God. This is done with a sense of excitement or urgency, and is an act of worship for the preacher. Preaching is often passionate, affecting the heart and mind together. Some may describe preaching as proclaiming short important messages, which is different than long teaching sessions revealing the truths of God. The Bible mentions the following specifics to be preached:
- o **Repent and Believe** ([Matthew 4:17](#), [Matthew 12:41](#), [Mark 1:5](#), [Luke 3:3](#))
 - o **Good News of the Kingdom of God** ([Matthew 11:5](#), [Luke 3:18](#), [Acts 8:12](#))
 - o **Jesus is the Christ** ([Acts 5:42](#), [Romans 16:25](#))
 - o **The Gospel** ([Acts 14:7](#), [Acts 16:10](#), [Romans 1:15](#))

Preaching, then, should get the attention of the hearers and call for an immediate response from them. While preaching and teaching overlap somewhat, when there is



a specific call to action (such as turning from our sin and believing that Jesus is the Christ), we call this preaching.

- **Teaching and Preaching that Honours God:** We must stay close to God through prayer and the study of His Word, asking Him to guide us in our preaching, so that what we say comes from our heart. We should be learning and putting into practice the essence of what we preach to others. Having the opportunity to guide others is a privilege and a gift (Luke 12:12, 2 Timothy 2:15, 1 Peter 3:15, Acts 2:42).

❖ **How We Teach:**

- **Formal Instruction:** Sermons are the primary means of formal instruction from the pastor to his congregation. A sermon requires careful preparation by reading, study, prayer, and meditation on God's Word. Reading books or using study aids, such as commentaries, can help. Some pastors benefit from writing out their entire sermon in order to read it, and others use an outline method and write out the important points. Sermons usually take one of the following forms:
 - **Expository:** This involves explaining the Bible clearly and systematically. It often takes a verse by verse approach and may cover a book of the Bible over a period of time. Through exposition, a pastor will teach the meaning of a verse, its context, its connection to other passages of the Bible, and its application. Exposition teaches the congregation how to understand and study the Bible for themselves.
 - **Benefits:** The congregation learns to study the Bible for themselves, they can follow along and know what to expect the next week, and it helps people to understand how the whole of the Bible is good and helpful. The authority is the Bible, not the teacher.
 - **Difficulties:** It does not allow a pastor to skip difficult or controversial passage of the Bible, and may not produce life application and practical advice each week.
 - **Textual:** This involves teaching on a specific topic from a particular section of the Bible; it often combines the best of expository and topical approaches. Two examples are the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5, and Heroes of the Faith in Hebrews 11. It examines how the text relates to other texts in the Bible.
 - **Benefits:** This method shows the consistency of scripture, and links the text with other supporting passages. It allows the pastor to teach on important topics that arise in the congregation and teach on many very important passages in a short amount of time.



- **Difficulties:** There could be a tendency to preach only from the more popular or easier to understand portions of the Bible, and this pattern could become repetitive.
- o **Topical:** This involves choosing a topic of specific need or interest to the congregation, and using the Bible to support a particular position or thesis. It may involve sermons that build on one another, as in a series examining the characteristics of God, or what it means to follow Christ. Or it may involve single, unconnected sermons on a particular topic. Jesus and the Apostle Paul preached topical sermons, and the New Testament epistles are also topical in written format.
 - **Benefits:** The congregation hears something of pressing interest, including questions and controversies that arise within their community. And you can trace a theme throughout the whole Bible demonstrating the unity of scripture.
 - **Difficulties:** It is possible to twist the words of the Bible to fit our own thesis (or limited understanding), and to use verses out of context if a teacher is not skilled or experienced.
- o **Narrative:** This involves presenting a Biblical passage as a story. While it usually involves storytelling, it could also use an illustration to emphasize the Biblical truth (such as an object lesson or personal experience). Jesus taught in a narrative fashion when He spoke in parables, and when He used examples from real life to help people understand His message.
 - **Benefits:** This is a preferred teaching method for some cultures. It can reach multiple age groups and people at different stages of faith with a more personal connection and memorable application.
 - **Difficulties:** If not handled carefully, storytelling can result in inconsistencies or misrepresenting the teaching of the Word of God.
- **Informal Instruction:** Pastors teach others through the life they live, their work and the way they love others – not merely the words they say. The way a pastor interacts with his own family can be a powerful message.

❖ **Who, When, Where We Teach:**

- **Who:** Who is your audience as you teach and preach?
 - o **Your Church:** Those who have named you as their pastor, or those who look to you for spiritual direction. This may consist of a large congregation or a small group of believers.



- o **Your Elders and Deacons:** Those you are discipling to be leaders and teachers should receive special attention. These may be elders or deacons, or those who have grown in their faith and are ready to take on spiritual leadership. Just as Jesus taught His disciples, you should regularly instruct those with leadership skills so they can teach others.
- o **Your Community:** Your audience is also your surrounding community (those you come in contact with and those you wish to reach with the Gospel). Evangelistic campaigns, preaching in public places, and inviting people to visit your church are all ways to reach out to your community.
- **When and Where:** Formal teaching sessions commonly occur in these forms:
 - o **Sermons:** A sermon is an extended time of teaching or preaching on a specific topic or passage of scripture. Sermons are prepared in advance and usually presented during a Sunday morning worship meeting.
 - o **Bible Studies:** These can take place any time during the week, and any time of the day to accommodate people's schedules. The way a Bible study is presented is different than a sermon, and studies are based on a particular passage or book of the Bible. They allow opportunity to teach others how to study the Word and apply it to their lives in a more interactive manner.
 - o **Topical Classes:** Pastors may also teach specific classes depending on the needs of their congregation, such as preparing for baptism, membership classes, training for evangelism, leading small groups, or topics addressing our response to worldly issues.
 - o **Discipleship:** As a pastor, you may take on responsibility of discipling a particular group. Though you are not expected to personally disciple every member of your church, you should be engaged in a discipleship relationship with a few people.
 - o **Congregational Visits:** Visiting the people of your congregation may include some time of teaching or instruction, depending on specific needs. If you visit them in the hospital or during a crisis, sharing a verse from the Bible and demonstrating faith in God can be very helpful and powerful.
- ❖ **Conclusion:** Hearing the Word of God spoken out loud is an act of worship for the speaker as well as the hearer. To be reminded of the truths of God and the very heart of the Gospel is necessary for us over and over again, because our hearts and minds are prone to forget and wander. Teaching new truths, digging into the precious Word of God, and serving your people spiritual food that will satisfy their souls and challenge their minds, is an honour and privilege. Think about why and how you teach your people, and what you can do to improve your skills in this regard. You will be a blessing to your congregation and be a part of bringing many to righteousness ([Daniel 12:3](#)).



DISCUSSION

- ❖ What is your favourite preaching style to listen to? Expository, textual, topical or narrative? What style is best received by your church congregation?
- ❖ What sermon do you feel your people need to hear right now? How could you go about preparing for a sermon like that?
- ❖ When have you benefited from informal instruction from a pastor? Whom do you look to as a teacher or example of how to follow Christ?
- ❖ Do you find yourself frequently teaching the same passages of scripture? What could you do to challenge yourself to teach on the whole Bible?

PRAYER

Close the lesson in prayer. Pray that your participants would be enabled by the Holy Spirit to teach with authority, to preach with conviction, and to prepare well for the important work of declaring God's truth. Pray that they would know their audience and enjoy teaching them, and that they would passionately proclaim the Word of God and bring honour and glory to Him.