

Dear Diane,

Thank you for writing us at Christian Questions Radio. You wanted to know what three relationships a pastor holds to his flock.

The first relationship of a pastor to the flock is one of a shepherd or overseer. Just as a shepherd cares for the lives of his sheep and will go to great lengths to protect them, so must the pastor care for the personal and spiritual lives of the members of the flock he serves. He must be aware of the abilities and shortcomings of his congregation and keep careful watch over it so that no member will stray too far from the fold. If one member does stray, the pastor must make every effort to restore such a one through counseling and prayer. "Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the holy spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of the Lord, which he bought with his own blood." (Acts 20:28)

The second relationship of a pastor to the flock is one of a teacher. In this role the pastor is to guide his congregation towards the truth and away from error. In order to be effective in this endeavor, he must prayerfully study the Bible and share his studies and findings with the congregation. He must be aware of false biblical doctrines and have the scriptural evidence to refute them. He should be quick to recognize false teachings and worldly philosophies and know how to deflect them. He must also know how to counter the acceptance of the lowering of biblical moral standards so prominent in the world today. The pastor's role as teacher is crucial for the health and well being of the congregation. "Therefore, . . . be on guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of lawless men and fall from your secure position. But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." (2 Peter 3:17-18)

The third relationship of a pastor to the flock is one of example. The pastor's life of consecration to the Lord should be evident to all. His personal conduct and moral and ethical standards should be above reproach and his demeanor should reflect the joy he has in the Lord and the desire to do God's will in all matters of his life. The pastor should be a model for the flock to emulate. The Apostle Paul admonishes, "Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ." (1 Corinthians 11:1) The pastor's example should provoke the desire in others to live a life dedicated to doing the Lord's will. He should "set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity." (1 Timothy 4:12)

In summary, the three relationships a pastor holds to the flock are shepherding, teaching and to be an example of a life lived for Christ. We hope we have answered your question. Please write us again.

Sincerely,

Christian Questions Radio