

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CHURCH MEMBER AND PASTOR

In the Lutheran Church the ordained clergy are called Pastors. The root meaning of the word, pastor, is shepherd. We believe that this is an arrangement that God has established for the good of the church. The Old Evil Foe, the Deceiver, Satan, likes nothing better, however, than to stir up an unspiritual relationship between a Pastor and the members of the church. For this reason, it is good for us to give some thought to the proper relationship between pastors and members. The following statements have been drawn up on the basis of Bible principles and the experiences of consecrated pastors and lay people.

In summary: Your pastor is not the LORD and doesn't have all the answers; He is a sinner doing the Lord's work. Still, he comes to you as a witness sent by God. There is divine authority behind the office he holds, and he goes about his work by virtue of a Divine Call. His ultimate purpose is to "testify concerning the Light" and to be a "witness to that Light." He is here to direct people to Jesus Christ, the Light of the world; that the eyes of all of us should be focused on Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith and the saviour of our immortal souls.

WHAT MEMBERS EXPECT FROM THEIR PASTOR

1. Expect him to preach the Word of God plainly so that the Holy Spirit can work unhampered among us. In doing this, expect him to tell us the truth about ourselves without coddling us.
2. Expect him to admonish us for our sins lest we lose the grace of God, and because God has appointed him to "watch over our souls" (Hebrews 13:17).
3. Expect him to remember that we are weak sinners with many imperfections and to be patient with our weaknesses, always holding out to us the forgiveness of our Saviour.
4. Expect him to pray for us and our families and the congregation as a whole.
5. Expect him to rejoice with us in our blessings and weep with us in our sorrows, to help us bear the burdens and the successes of life without losing sight of the life to come. (Romans 12).
6. Expect him to be a man of God and in his life to show that he is truly a representative of Christ by a Christ-like behaviour and spirit.
7. Expect him to conduct himself in such a manner that the ministry of Jesus Christ will not be discredited (1 Timothy 3:7) in any way, and this includes being totally professional at all times and in every way.
8. Expect him to take the lead in helping us by word and example to a rich fruit-bearing life in Christ.
9. Expect him to give us responsibilities to carry. Do not expect him to carry out every project or work in the church, but to share that work and delegate responsibilities to us so that we may grow thereby and serve our Lord.
10. Expect, above all else, that he will bear witness to the true Gospel of Jesus Christ, boldly and faithfully, without fear or compromise. Expect him to hold boldly out to us and to all people, the only name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.
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WHAT A PASTOR EXPECTS FROM HIS MEMBERS

1. Pray for your pastor! Pray God to give him His Holy Spirit that he may always speak His word faithfully, that he may speak His law fearlessly and His Gospel enthusiastically. Pray that he may not yield to fear or pride. Always keep in mind that ministers are a special target of the devil, for through the fall of one, he may achieve the downfall of many.
2. Have this confidence in your pastor that he will try to do all things to the glory of God and for the good of His church.

3. Give him the benefit of your Christian love. Though he does not expect every church member to “like” him, he expects all members to love him in Christ. While he will try his best to be one in spirit with you in the Lord, he cannot share your views in all things and does not expect you to share his views in everything. But he does expect that we shall together submit to Christ and His Word and work together in harmony for Him.
4. As he is under obligation and am resolved with God’s help to treat everyone alike without partiality, do not accuse him of favouritism nor expect it for yourself.
5. Do not expect him to be a perfect person. Should something in his life appear to be out of harmony with his calling, please tell him about it. You will find him receptive to every sincere word of admonition. If you want to talk to someone else about his faults, talk to the Lord.
6. Do not expect to hear only good things about him. They said many things about our Lord and His followers that were not nice. Do not judge his motives or think evil of him on the basis of hearsay. Go to your pastor and get the facts. If he is in error, he wants to know it and to strive for improvement.
7. Do not report to him about others. If others have offended you or committed evil, go to them and tell them, as your Lord teaches you to do in Matthew 18:15-17. But whatever you say to another, be sure that you say it only to help and not to hurt.
8. Do not expect your pastor to preach, teach, or say to you only things which will please you or make you feel good. Expect him to tell you what your soul needs to hear.
9. Do not expect his family to be perfect Christians nor to be “more dedicated” to the Lord’s work than you are. They have not been called into the pastoral ministry – your pastor has.
10. Most of all, pray that the Lord’s work may be done and His name glorified in everything that we do as brothers and sisters in Christ.