

MADRID CHURCH OF CHRIST

SUNDAY, JUNE 11, 2017



"PUT ON THE WHOLE ARMOR OF GOD, THAT YOU MAY BE ABLE TO STAND AGAINST THE SCHEMES OF THE DEVIL" (EPHESIANS 6:11).

RETHINKING WHY CHURCHES SUPPORT PREACHERS

Why a preacher is supported in a local church seems pretty cut and dry to most church members: "Our preacher" serves this congregation – he visits the sick, he counsels, he evangelizes, he preaches, he teaches, he puts the bulletin together, he does work around the building – and he does just about everything else we expect of him. This is why we support him.

Is this the way we should think about the preacher and why he receives support from the church? I don't believe so. Here are some things to consider:

1. Stop Thinking the Preacher Does It for the Pay

Most church members think their preacher does the things he does because they pay him to do it. I believe this is an upside-down way of thinking

about the situation. It's so much healthier to think of it like this, "**The preacher has committed his life to the proclamation of the gospel and we support him financially in that effort.**" He doesn't do it because you give him money; you give him money because he does it. If you didn't give him money, he would more than likely work to support himself while still doing the work he desires to do for the Lord. The apostle Paul surrendered his right to collect financial support from many of the congregations with whom he worked, and he worked as a tentmaker so he could support his work for the Lord. But he did teach that congregations should support those who work spreading the gospel (1 Corinthians 9).

2. Stop Thinking the Preacher Does It For You

Most church members think of their preacher as "the minister" (servant) of the congregation. They consider it his job to do the counseling, visiting, evangelizing, teaching, etc. And whether we want to admit it or not, much of this stems from the fact that we don't want to do this work, or don't think we have the time, so **we have hired it out.**

We say things like, "I don't know how and I don't have time to go to the hospital and visit all those sick people or have Bible studies with lost people; that's what we pay the preacher for." Or "I am happy that the men don't share the preaching, because I don't want to preach and I don't have time to prepare lessons." But we couldn't be more wrong for this way of thinking.

There is absolutely no biblical precedent for hiring someone to do the work we should be doing. There is not a biblical precedent for hiring a preacher to do the work of the elders, the deacons, or the other men within the church. Besides, "the preacher" visits widows, evangelizes, is hospitable, and counsels people because that is what the Lord desires of him as a CHRISTIAN, not because the church expects it of him because he is supported as "an evangelist." The primary task of an evangelist is to, alongside the elders, "equip" God's people to do "the work of ministry" (Ephesians 4:11-12). You don't support a preacher so you can relieve yourself of work; you support a preacher, in part, to help equip and motivate you to do the work *you* ought to be doing.

3. Stop Thinking the Preacher Belongs to You

When a congregation thinks of a preacher as their employee, they misunderstand the situation. The preacher does not work for the congregation. He does not work for the elders. He works for the Lord. Paul

calls preachers, “the Lord’s servant” (2 Timothy 2:24); and that’s what a preacher is, the Lord’s servant. Not *our* servant. Of course the preacher, when he is working with a specific local church, is under the oversight of the elders. The elders shepherd the preacher and help him be focused on his work, his family, and his own spiritual life. But he does not work for the elders. It’s a shame when a congregation believes their preacher “belongs to them” and they are resentful about the time he spends preaching and teaching other places. They believe his only focus should be in the local church he is a member of. This is not a belief that comes from any commands or examples within the New Testament.

4. Let the Preacher Be a Member of Your Congregation

When congregations think of their preacher as an employee who belongs to them, they often fail to treat him as a fellow-member of the congregation. Our preachers need to be able to learn, confess their sins and struggles, be encouraged, be counseled, and have all the benefits we enjoy as members of a church family. But we often deny them those blessings because we treat them as our employees. Consider some of these questions:

- Is your preacher always teaching a Bible class, or do you let him be a student sometimes?
- Does the preacher have to spend so much time in preparing for classes and sermons that he needs to neglect his other responsibilities to the Lord as a Christian (his family, evangelism, visiting, etc).
- Do you expect your preacher to always be the one to teach, counsel, and encourage you, or do you sometimes offer him your listening ear?
- Does your preacher feel like a member of your congregation or an employee of your congregation?

This is not an exhaustive list of the ways we need to rethink why we support preachers. The bottom-line is this: we must stop thinking that the money we give to the Lord’s preachers makes them indebted to us. Instead, we ought to consider it our privilege to be able to support men who faithfully and diligently proclaim the gospel message in our congregation and elsewhere. We ought to encourage them any way we can in the work they do. Preaching the Gospel can be very rewarding whenever the evangelist can feel like he is a fellow-brother and servant of the Lord, but he can also be discouraged whenever he feels like brethren believe he is their property, not looked at as a fellow-member of the church, and when expectations

are given to him or commanded of him which are the traditions of men. Do we expect of “the preacher” what God expects of him, or do we have expectations of his work that are based more on denominational ideas and traditions? We need to remember that every Christian is held to a high standard. “...my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord... (1 Corinthians 15:58). The Lord’s work is for all of us to do, not just a select few.

VISITORS: THANK YOU FOR COMING!

If you have any questions about what you have seen or heard today, please fill out a visitor’s card or ask to talk to one of our elders. You can also contact Jason Smith using the information below. We would be happy to schedule a time to sit down with you and to answer your questions from God’s word.

Call or text Jason @ 412-999-4837 or email him @
preacher@madridchurch.com

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- 06/18 – Apps and dessert at the Smith’s @ 6PM
- 07/02 – Song Service @ 9AM
- 07/19 – Labor Day Planning Meeting @ 6PM
- 07/30 – Next Invite Sunday - *The Best Possible News: Jesus is Risen*

Do you have any interest in doing a group bike ride on the trail on 6/17? If you interested and have a preference regarding the time or distance your family could ride, let Jason know.

DAILY READING:

- **06/12** – Ecclesiastes 5-8; Psalm 9
- **06/13** – Ecclesiastes 9-12; Psalm 10
- **06/14** – Song 1-4; Psalm 11
- **06/15** – Song 5-8; Psalm 12
- **06/16** – Jeremiah 1-3; Psalm 13
- **06/17** – Jeremiah 4-6; Psalm 14
- **06/18** – Jeremiah 7-9; Psalm 15

