



forgotten followership the grace of following

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Trends that tend to erode the value of biblical followership:

1. The 'baptism' of democracy in the church...
2. Over-exposure to business leadership gurus...
3. A dominant culture of individualism...

The biblical responsibility of our pastors:

1. Provide a _____ for the church to imitate...

Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith. Hebrews 13:7

2. Set the _____ of our church...

*Obey your leaders and submit to their authority...
Hebrews 13:17a*

3. Give an _____ for the stewardship of lives...

Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you. Hebrews 13:17

The responsibilities we have to our pastors:

1. Hold them in the _____.

Now we ask you, brothers, to respect those who work hard among you, who are over you in the Lord and who admonish you. Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work. 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13

2. Imitate their lifestyle.

Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ. 1 Corinthians 1:11 (ESV)

Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you. Philippians 4:9

I urge you, then, be imitators of me. That is why I sent you Timothy, my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, to remind you of my ways in Christ. 1 Corinthians 4:16-17

3. Submit to their authority.

Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you. Hebrews 13:17

4. Challenge destructive _____ and _____.

Join with others in following my example, brothers, and take note of those who live according to the pattern we gave you. For, as I have often told you before and now say again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is on earthly things. But our citizenship is in heaven. Philippians 3:17-20

5. Pray for them.

He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us, as you help us by your prayers. Then many will give thanks on our behalf for the gracious favor granted us in answer to the prayers of many. 2 Corinthians 1:10-11

Scripture passages from the NIV unless otherwise noted.
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What if I do not agree with my pastor?

Being a godly follower does not mean that we can never disagree with our pastors. It may actually be wrong to remain silent or refuse to discuss our point of view with a pastor. Pastors need feedback. Here are some practical steps to follow when a conflict arises.

1. Ask yourself why you disagree. Spend some time thinking through the conflict, and especially examine your own thoughts, feelings, attitudes and motivation. List your reasons.
2. Talk it over with God first. Don't gossip, or criticize your leader to others. Read through Colossians 3:12-14, and ask God to enable you to apply these principles. Confess any resentment, and ask for a right attitude. Ask God to give your leader a receptive attitude. Ask Him for the ability to state your case clearly, and with an open mind to hear your leader's point of view.
3. Go to your pastor, and discuss the situation. Be sure the place and time are right for good conflict resolution. It's almost always better to discuss it in private.
4. Try to communicate your respect, esteem, love and your desire to submit. Let your pastor know you want to understand his or her point of view also.
5. Let your pastor know you could be wrong, but you disagree and want to discuss it. You can honestly state that you could be wrong even if it's only a small possibility in your judgment. This admission helps develop an atmosphere of open dialogue.
6. Tell your pastor that you really want to understand his or her point of view, and ask him to explain the situation so you can better understand. As the leader explains, keep quiet until he or she stops talking. Don't interrupt, even if you disagree strongly. Demonstrate non-verbally that you really are listening. Then ask any questions you have to further clarify the situation and his or her reasons.
7. Present the facts, as you see them, as objectively as possible. Bring in new information your pastor may not be aware of. Most pastors respond better to a statement of objective facts than to an emotional outburst.
8. Give your pastor an opportunity to respond, again without interrupting or arguing. Really listen, and be open to change your point of view.
9. If possible, help find creative alternatives. Try to work together to discover a solution which both of you will be happy with.
10. If your pastor doesn't agree or change his decision, decide whether to appeal to the plurality of elders. If you do decide to appeal, advise him or her and proceed, without animosity if possible. Otherwise, decide to accept the decision as from the Lord, and obey as unto Him. Be very careful about discussing it with others.