

How to Honor a Man of God

A Study Guide on Philippians 2:29–30

Overview

Pastors carry one of the heaviest burdens in Christian service, yet churches are rarely taught what Scripture says about honoring them. This study walks through Paul's instructions to the Philippian church regarding Epaphroditus and draws out what it means, biblically, to receive and honor a man of God.

Key Text: *"Receive him then in the Lord with all joy, and hold men like him in high regard."* (Philippians 2:29)

Memory Verse: *"Trembling before man brings a snare, but he who trusts in Yahweh will be set securely on high."* (Proverbs 29:25)

Background

- Epaphroditus was Paul's "fellow soldier and workman" (Phil. 2:25), a minister to Paul's needs, and Philippi's own sent representative.
- He nearly died serving in the work of Christ.
- Paul's words in verses 29–30 are not a suggestion — they are an apostolic command regarding how the church should treat him.

Sobering statistics cited in the sermon:

- 1 in 4 pastors leave the ministry.
 - 2 in 5 seriously consider resigning.
 - 22% cite burnout; 23% cite church conflict; 12% cite stress on the family.
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I. A Man of God Is to Be Welcomed

Key word: *prosdechomai* — “to lean forward with an open heart and wide arms,” to cherish with hospitality (used in Acts 24:13, translated “cherish”).

A. With Kindness

- Received warmly, “in the Lord” — as if receiving Christ Himself (Matt. 10:40; Gal. 4:14).
- Marked by hospitality, familial warmth, and genuine appreciation.

B. With Gladness

- “*Pas chara*” — “all gladness.” The same joy of the man who found treasure in a field (Matt. 13:44).
- A faithful pastor is God’s good gift (Matt. 7:11); he should be received with thankfulness, not grudging tolerance.

II. A Man of God Is to Be Honored

Key word: *entimos* — “to honor, respect, prize, highly value.”

A pastor is pictured as a “star” in Christ’s right hand (Rev. 1:16, 20) — held in a place of power, purpose, and nearness to Christ.

The church should value God’s man because of:

1. **Their work** — He labors for the church’s maturity (Eph. 4). This work is to be esteemed “very highly... beyond all measure” (*hyperekperissou*, 1 Thess. 5:12–13).
2. **Their need** — A church without a shepherd is exposed to danger, weakness, and error (Acts 20:29; Eph. 4:11).
3. **Jesus’ value placed on them** — Christ entrusts His most valuable possession, the church, to a pastor’s care; this is why teachers “will receive a stricter judgment” (James 3:1).

III. Seven Practical Ways to Honor a Pastor

#	Practice	Key Text
1	Obeying their instruction	Hebrews 13:17

2	Praying for them daily	1 Timothy 2:1–2
3	Giving encouragement often	Galatians 6:6
4	Allowing for their humanity	James 5:17
5	Caring well for them financially	1 Timothy 5:18
6	Caring well for their rest	Mark 6:31
7	Ministering to their wife and children	—

A few notes worth drawing out in discussion:

- Obedience is owed to *God’s Word*, not a pastor’s personal opinions — a faithful pastor never binds consciences with anything but Scripture.
- “Allowing for humanity” is not an excuse for disqualifying sin (e.g., infidelity) — it’s a caution against impossible, superhuman expectations.
- A pastor’s wife is often the most overlooked and overburdened person in the church; honoring the pastor includes protecting and caring for his family.

Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think churches rarely teach on how to honor a pastor? What fears or assumptions get in the way?
 2. Read Philippians 2:29–30. What stands out to you about the *tone* Paul commands — not just the action, but the heart behind it?
 3. How does viewing pastoral honor as honor “in the Lord” (Matt. 10:40) change how you think about your relationship with your own pastor?
 4. Of the seven practical ways to honor a pastor, which one is most neglected in your experience — either by you personally or by churches you’ve been part of?
 5. How can a church care for a pastor’s rest and family without becoming intrusive or making the family feel like “on display” servants?
 6. James 3:1 says teachers face stricter judgment. How should that truth shape the way you pray for and treat your pastor?
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Application

- Choose one of the seven practices this week and act on it concretely (e.g., write an encouraging note, commit to a specific prayer time, ask how you can serve his family).
 - Examine your own expectations of your pastor. Are any of them unrealistic or unbiblical?
 - Consider how your church currently handles pastoral compensation and rest, and whether it reflects “double honor” (1 Tim. 5:17–18).
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Closing Thought

“To fail to esteem a man of God is to fail to esteem the Lord he represents.”

A healthy church honors its pastor — not for his sake alone, but because doing so honors the Christ who sent him.