

Hello. We will begin the sixth lecture on pastoral theology. /At this time we will study pastoral visitation.

/9. A Pastor and Visitations. /Pastoral visitation refers to the pastor's visits to each believer's homes to examine their circumstances and encourage them in faith. /Some people claim that common visitations make believers weak and make believers rely too much on the pastor.

/Other claim that common visitations can stand in the way of a pastor's prayer life and his studies. /They say that visitations make sermons preached on the pulpit seem weak, and hence, visitations are harmful.

/However, pastors must make visitations. /It is without a doubt that a pastor must devote himself to Scripture and prayer. /Yet, it is also important that a pastor visit believers and listen to each of their situations and stories.

/A pastor devotes himself to Scripture and prayer, and he makes visits to believers, and he cannot become careless about any of these. /When prayer, Scripture, and visitations appropriately come together in harmony, a pastor can succeed in ministry.

/The prophet Jeremiah's words are a good teaching to those who neglect visitations. /Jeremiah 23:2 says, "Therefore this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says to the shepherds who tend my people: "Because you have scattered my flock and driven them away and have not bestowed care on them, I will bestow punishment on you for the evil you have done," declares the LORD."

/It says, "have not bestowed care on them," which means that God entrusted shepherds with the responsibility to look after the flock. /"Bestow care" originally means, "visit."

/Today, God entrusted pastors with God's flock, and God requires that pastors look after the flock. /Therefore, pastors must diligently visit believers, and must not become lazy with visitations. /Now, let's first look at Jesus' example of visitations.

/(1) Jesus' example. /Jesus the true Shepherd showed us a good example of pastoral visitations. /In Mark 1:29, Jesus visited the home of Peter and Andrew, and Jesus healed Peter's mother-in-law of her fever.

/Jesus then had fellowship with them. /In Luke 10:38-42, Jesus visited Mary and Martha who were grieving for the loss of their brother Lazarus. /Jesus comforted them.

/Jesus also did not visit only those He was close with. /In Matthew 22:23-33, Jesus visited the Sadducees. /In Matthew 12:2-6, Jesus visited the Pharisees. /In Matthew 22:15-22, Jesus visited the Herodians.

/In Luke 7:2, Jesus visited the Roman. In Luke 6:15, Jesus visited the Zealot, and in Luke 19:1-19, Jesus visited the tax collector. Jesus visited people of all classes.

/Jesus did not only make visits to homes, but also to those by the sea, by the well, on the road, in the marketplace, in the temple, and other places where people lived or worked. / Jesus taught us important elements of visitations for pastors today.

/First, a pastor must visit all believers of all classes without discrimination. /Even if there are believers who defy the pastor, the pastor must not exclude them from visitations. /Instead, the pastor must show more interest for them, pray for them, and actively visit them when he gains the opportunity to do so.

/Second, the pastor should not limit himself to home visitations but make the attempt to visit believers in various places when conditions allow him to. /For example, if a believer works at the marketplace, the pastor can make a visit, share greetings, and take the time to pray for the believer.

/If circumstances allow, it is good to have lunch together and have fellowship. /Pastors today must diligently visit believers just as Jesus did. /Second, let's look at the necessity of visitations.

/(2) Necessity of visitations. /A. Pastors can learn more about believers' situations through visitations. /A pastor cannot properly know each believer's situation through public worship service at church. /A doctor must examine his patient in order to figure out the patient's illness or condition.

/In the same way, a pastor must visit his believers so that he can learn of stories and their current situations.

/B. Pastors can gain information for sermons through visitations. /If a pastor does not make visitations, his sermons on Sundays will not be applicable to the believers' lives. / When a pastor makes visitations and learns in detail about the situations the believers are in, he will be able to give more effective sermons.

/C. Pastors can receive prayer requests through visitations. /A pastor's prayer is very important. /If a pastor prays only about general topics, his ministry cannot be effective.

/A pastor must specifically pray for believers who are going through trials, believers who are troubled by problems, believers who are discouraged, and believers who are encountering different problems.

/D. Pastors can strengthen the faith of believers, and evangelize to unbelieving family members. /Believers can indeed grow in faith through worship services. /Yet, through visitations, pastors can preach about God's word that is directly applicable to a believer's life.

/More important, visitations give pastors the chance to look after each individual believer more closely. /Therefore, pastors can change the hearts of believers whose hearts have

left the church. /Visitations also give pastors the chance to help believers stand firm in faith.

/Furthermore, visitations provide the opportunity for pastors to naturally evangelize to unbelieving family members. /Next, let's look at the types of visitations.

/(3) Types of visitations. /Normally, visitations are categorized into home visitations, general visitations, and special visitations. /The “**home visitations**” refer to visitations of all believers of the congregation, one or two times a year. /For example, the purpose of spring visitations is to help believers start a new year in faith.

/The purpose of fall visitations is to encourage believers to bear an abundance of spiritual fruit so that they could serve with faith in the upcoming year. /For home visitations, pastors must choose a group of people in advance who will make visitations with them.

/A large number of visitors can be a burden on the family or believer, so pastors must take caution. /Upon arriving at the home of the believer, the pastor must first ask for specific prayer requests, and then they may begin the service together. /The length of time of visitations differs depending on the situations of believers.

/Normally, thirty minutes would be appropriate. /When the pastor prays for the family, he must pray for each member of the family without leaving anyone out. /Visitation services are different from public worship services at church.

/The atmosphere must not be overly formal or solemn. /It is best to worship together with warm attitudes. /When visiting, the pastor must closely pay attention to each person. /Those receiving visitations must be pleased with the visitations.

/Sometimes, the family might prepare a meal for the home visitation. /Cell group leaders must make sure that believers do not feel pressured into preparing meals for visitations. /If a believer wants to share a meal together, the cell group leader must make sure that the believer does not overdo it.

/There are pros and cons to home visitations. /Home visitations allow pastors to visit believers without discrimination. /Pastors also gain the opportunity to grow closer to believers and learn of their spiritual states through home visitations.

/Members of the congregation accompanying the pastor can also grow closer to other believers. /However, home visitations might be difficult because other members of the congregation will be there with the pastor.

/This means that a believer might not be able to share his deepest worries with the pastor. /Sometimes, accompanying visitors are immature in their actions, and as a result can cause damage to the family they are visiting. /The pastor must train those who will accompany him so that they will be careful with their words and actions and not make mistakes.

/Next, “**general visitations**” are visits made by cell group leaders for the members in their “district.” There are also visits made to “absentees.” /Cell groups are commonly made up according to the neighborhoods believers reside in if the size of the church allows it.

/It is common for cell group leaders to visit the homes of their members every Friday. /Then they usually report this to the pastor. /Yet, if there are absentees, it is best for the pastor to make visitations himself.

/If a believer does not want the leader to visit his home, the pastor must give his regards on the phone and appropriately encourage the believer. /If the church is large in number and the senior pastor is unable to look after each absentee, the cell group leader or associate pastors can do so.

/If a believer needs special attention, the senior pastor can be alerted about it, and the senior pastor can make a visit.

/Lastly, let’s look at “**special visitations.**” /Special visitations include patient visitations, elderly visitations, and newcomer visitations. /Patient visitations are crucial in ministry.

/Those who are bedridden want people to visit them. /A bedridden believer will want a pastor’s prayer and God’s help in his heart.

/The pastor must visit sick believers in the hospital, pray for them, and comfort them with God’s word. /Patient visitations must not exceed fifteen minutes. /The pastor must always be careful not to bother other patients in the hospital.

/If the patient hopes to speak longer with the pastor, it is good to listen to the things the patient has to say. /An important part of patient visitations is to encourage and comfort patients with suitable passages from the Bible.

/The pastor must remember and prepare many biblical passages so that he can preach accordingly in each situation. /The pastor must show compassion for the patient, but he must not show too much sadness. /There is an intimate connection between the heart and the body.

/One’s illness can grow severe if the heart is troubled. /On the contrary, one can be healed of a severe illness if he is joyful in heart. /The pastor must comfort the patient, and the pastor must always be at peace in his attitude.

/The pastor must show an attitude of faith that all things happen according to God’s will, and the patient will be healed if it is God’s will. /If the patient has been in the hospital for a long time, the pastor must regularly visit the patient and show concern for him.

/Because the patient will have missed many sermons on Sundays, the pastor’s regular

visits will be a great strength and comfort to the long-term patient. /Pastors are God's servants, and they must always and actively go where they are needed.

/When visiting long-term patients, pastors must especially comfort and encourage family members who are suffering in heart. /Even if there are family members who do not have faith and stand against the church, they will have good feelings toward the pastor when they see the pastor regularly visit and comfort them and the patient.

/When the time comes, the family of the patient can receive the gospel by the grace of God. /When a patient is scheduled for a surgery, it is best for the pastor to visit the patient the day before the surgery. /At times, the pastor can visit the patient on the morning of the surgery.

/When visiting a patient undergoing surgery, the pastor must pray earnestly for God's help. /The pastor must encourage the patient so that he will trust in God and find peace.

/The pastor must pray that God's wisdom would be with the doctor and nurses, and that the surgery would be successful. /If a patient is facing death, the pastor must carefully check the patient's faith.

/For example, the pastor may ask, "OOO, do you believe that Jesus is Savior?" /"Do you have confidence that you will enter the kingdom of God when you leave this earth?"

/If the believer answers with confidence, the pastor must encourage and comfort the patient so that he will face death with hope for salvation, grace, and heaven, and with peace.

/If the patient grow dark in expression or cannot give a firm answer, the pastor must take the chance to share the gospel with the patient.

/Next, let's look at "**elderly visitations.**" /It is important to socially respect the elderly. /The church must also treat the elderly well. /It is easier to visit the elderly because they tend to spend more time in their homes.

/The elderly are physically weaker and do not have many companions, and hence, they wait for pastoral visitations. /Therefore, the pastor must show interest in the elderly at church, and they must help them walk in faith.

/When the faith of the elderly stands firm, they will be an unseen but great strength in ministry. /This is because the elderly pray more for the pastor and the church because they have more time to pray. /The elderly also influence their descendants.

/If a father or a grandfather respects and admires the pastor, they will be a positive influence on their children's faith and adaptation to the church.

/Regarding newcomers, the church must welcome them and teach them. /The pastor must

regularly visit them and help them grow in faith. /When visiting newcomers, the pastor must inform them of different things taking place in the church.

/The pastor must ask newcomers if they have questions about faith or church, and he must answer their questions with sincerity. /There are also visits made to mothers who have recently given birth. /There are also visits to those who have moved homes.

/Pastors also visit believers who have started new businesses. /Pastors also visit believers who are greatly troubled or facing trials.

/When visiting believers who are suffering, the pastor must comfort and encourage believers with appropriate messages from the Bible. /Next, let's look at some things pastors must be careful of when making visitations.

/(4) Things to be careful of when making visitations. /First, the pastor must absolutely keep each believer's private lives a secret. /Believers trust and rely on the pastor, and they pour out their personal stories to the pastor.

/Yet, if the pastor went and told others about them, the believer would be in great shock. /The believer will think that the pastor took their stories lightly. /In some cases, the believer might think that the pastor is looking down on them.

/Moreover, the pastor's authority will fall. /No one will then want to speak about deep matters with the pastor. /The pastor must show that believers can trust them. /Believers must believe that their pastors will not share their conversations with anyone else.

/When the pastor keeps believers' stories confidential, his will grow closer to the believers and maintain good relationships with them. /The pastor must be a man of few words. /The pastor must not mention believers' private lives with others.

/When the pastor makes visitations, he must not go by himself to visit a female believer who is home alone. /The devil can use it as an opportunity to entice him. /Even if the devil doesn't entice him and there are no problems, it will not benefit the pastor.

/The pastor might be innocent, but unfortunate rumors can spread. /If this happens, both the pastor and the church will get hurt, even if the pastor later explains himself.

/Also, one female believer must not accompany the pastor during visitations. /This must not happen, even if the pastor believes that he has overcome all temptations. /The devil can also work and spread false rumors.

/Therefore, it is best for the pastor to make visitations with his wife. /If the pastor cannot make visitations with his wife, it would be wise to take an elder or deacons with him.

/The congregation's expectations and reactions to pastoral visitations differ. /Some believers want the pastor to visit them as often as possible. /Other believers do not want

the pastor to make general visitations.

/Some believers are very grateful when the pastor makes visitations. /However, believers will feel burdened if the pastor visits them too often. /It is necessary for the pastor to grasp the different thoughts believers may have.

/The pastor must absolutely make visitations to those who have been in accidents, been diagnosed with illnesses, or face great sufferings.

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/Here we will conclude the sixth lecture on pastoral theology. /Thank you.