



# ***THE FOUR PURPOSES OF PASTORS AND MINISTERS IN THE BODY OF CHRIST***

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by James McCarroll

**What are the purposes of pastors and ministers in the Body of Christ and the faith community?**

In a day and time of distorted function and mixed understandings of what it means to be a minister and pastor, it is necessary to provide a biblical model that can provide a foundation. This list is by no means exhaustive, but for those in the ministry and pastorate, it will give the moral and ethical functions outlined in the Bible for the gospel minister.

## **Role #1 - God's heralds (2 Timothy 1:11)**

Our primary responsibility in the Body of Christ is to serve as the "mouthpieces of God." We are the official representative positioned to stand between heaven and earth as prophets/proclaimers of the eternal truths of heaven. We are instructed to preach a single message, the gospel of Jesus Christ (Mark 16:15; 1 Corinthians 1:23) and the Kingdom of God (Matthew 24:14; Luke 9:2). Our preaching assignment should aim to accomplish three distinct outcomes:

1. The belief of the truth of God's gospel and response in faith (Romans 10:14-15);

2. Transforming lives and communities through biblical correction, re-alignment and encouragement (2 Timothy 4:2);
3. Giving hope to the believers – based on the scriptures (Romans 15:4).

## **Role #2 – God’s under-shepherds (Jeremiah 3:15)**

As pastors, we are an extension of God’s appointed shepherd, our Lord Jesus Christ. He is identified in scripture as the Good Shepherd (John 10:11,14), the Great Shepherd (Hebrews 13:20), and the Chief Shepherd (1 Peter 5:4). Therefore, we must understand that the people of God are “sheep” who follow the voice of the Lord (John 10:4). Our job is to manage the sheep in the absence of the shepherd. Therefore, we must first understand that we are not the Shepherd; we are just Holy Spirit-appointed sheep (Acts 20:18) who have been given stewardship in the absence of the Shepherd (1 Corinthians 4:1-2). Our primary responsibilities are:

1. To watch over the souls of the Lord’s sheep and give an account (Hebrews 13:17);
2. To teach (feed) the Lord’s sheep with knowledge and understanding (John 21:15,17); and
3. To guard the Lord’s sheep against wolves (Acts 20:28-30).

## **Role #3 – Servants of the Lord (John 12:26)**

As ministers, we are primarily servants (translated as “slaves”) of the Lord. This language is used throughout the New Testament in greetings as the writers would describe themselves as “bond-servants” of the Lord. This reminds us that – contrary to popular display – we are meant to be viewed as servants and not “kings.” We are called by Jesus to imitate His servant behavior (John 6:38) through following the example set by him of serving others at low levels (John 13:12-17) and viewing our lives as vessels for the service of others (Mark 10:42-45) To carry out this task, we must remember:

1. Our lives are meant to be used to accomplish God’s agenda,

not ours (Hebrews 10:7)

2. We are to identify and operate in our assignment based upon our divine purpose not our human pleasure (1 Peter 4:1-2)
3. We must humble ourselves and be surrendered in unconditional obedience to the Lord (Philippians 2:7-8).

Our lives must now be fully surrendered to the will and plan of God for those we are sent to serve (Galatians 2:20).

#### **Role #4 – Construction workers (Ephesians 4:11-13)**

As pastors and ministers, we are given one of the most critical tasks on the planet: **building lives**. We are called to serve people predestined to conform to the image of Jesus Christ (Romans 8:29) and guide them through the mind-renewing transformation of taking on the character and work of Christ (2 Timothy 3:16-17). To this end, we are given the grace and assignment to build them up in the faith and ensure that the Body operates in a way that is in sync with the call and purpose of Jesus Christ (Ephesians 4:11-13). Ultimately, we are responsible for ensuring that people are operating in their gifts (Romans 12:3-8), engaging each other in unity, love, and peace (1 Peter 3:8-11), and becoming witnesses for the Kingdom of God (Matthew 28:19; Acts 1:8).

These four areas are matters of the heart. They must be accompanied by several other disciplines such as biblical study, prayer, gift development, academic training, and a regular practice of Sabbath.

As we develop in the ministry, these elements will be critical in assisting us in functioning in seasons of success and challenge. Ministry is not an easy assignment, but it is one that can allow others to witness the power of the gospel and the presence of the Kingdom of God.

May the LORD be with you as you seek to follow Him in the ministry of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

