

## What A Local Church Should Expect From An Evangelist

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### Introduction:

When preachers get together, we complain that many Christians think all we have to do is work two days a week, coming up with a couple of sermons and teaching a Bible class. Regrettably, the more preachers I have met, I have learned that this derogatory stereotype may be the truth in too many cases. I have found that there are two kinds of preachers. The first preach because they can't do anything else. The second, on the other hand, preach because they can't do anything else. That is, the first preach because they are lazy and can't cut it doing "real work." There are churches that will put up with anything. And there are churches that will support a man simply because he asks. These men find jobs preaching. The churches don't expect much and the preacher doesn't do much. He couldn't work any place else, so he preaches. The second group of preachers is completely different. They live to teach the gospel. Their greatest desire is to help people go to heaven. They become evangelists because they would see their lives wasted as anything else. These men simply couldn't work any place else, except when needed as a support for their real work, so they preach. The first group is what I call the whining class of preachers. This second is a first class group of preachers. As a congregation, you are allowed to expect your preacher to be a first class evangelist. When I say first class, I am not talking about pulpit presence; I am talking about his work. The key word for this lesson is worker.

### Discussion:

- I. The local church should expect the evangelist to be a hard worker.
  - A. Do not misunderstand this, you should not expect an evangelist to be a handyman, here to do any work you ask of him. But when it comes to his work, the work of an evangelist, you have the right to expect him to be a worker. Laziness is not to be tolerated. Paul told Timothy in **II Timothy 2:15** to present himself as a worker who does not need to be ashamed.
  - B. Notice the pictures Paul uses to describe the preacher in **II Timothy 2:3-6**. He is a soldier in warfare, a disciplined athlete competing according to the rules and a hard-working farmer.
  - C. Finally, in **Proverbs 24:30-34**, we read of the fields of a lazy man. We can look at churches that have lazy preachers and see this same kind of picture. This is not to say that some first class preachers have not worked hard in lazy congregations. This is simply to say, if you get a lazy preacher, don't be surprised when you get thorns, weeds and broken down walls.
  
- II. The local church should expect the evangelist to be a worker for the Lord.
  - A. I understand that there is a sense in which the evangelist within a congregation works for the congregation, under the oversight of the elders. However, above all of that, the evangelist's real boss is the Lord. As a congregation, you are allowed to expect him to work for the Lord.
  - B. That means you should expect him to lean on God. In **I Timothy 1:12**, Paul acknowledged God in all his ways claiming, "I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me ..." Paul did not lean on his own strength. But in **Philippians 4:13** he said, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." In **I Corinthians 3:5-7**, Paul recognized that he was nothing. It was God who gave the increase. The evangelist must realize his place in the work. He is God's tool, who must work using the opportunities and resources that God has given him.
  - C. This means that you should expect two things from an evangelist.
    1. You should expect the evangelist to be a man of prayer. How many times did Paul speak of his prayers for churches, for Christians (**Colossians 1:3, 9ff**) and even request prayers for himself and his work (**Ephesians 6:17-20**).
    2. You should expect the evangelist to be a man of the book. He is working for the Lord and, therefore, must teach what God wants him to teach. In **II Timothy 3:14-4:5**, Paul told Timothy to stay in the scriptures, to preach the word and to endure affliction when people would no longer endure sound doctrine. I recently overheard a preacher's answer to an interesting question. He was asked if he had read any good books lately. His response, "Well, I just finished Acts again and now I am starting on Psalms." Certainly, there are a lot of good and helpful books out there. But above all, you should expect the evangelist to stick with God's word—even when you don't like it.

- III. The church should expect the evangelist to be a properly motivated worker.
- A. There are men who may work hard. But they are not doing these things from the proper motivation. Consider some improper motivations for work. Some work hard ...
    1. ... to be seen and praised by men (to be big name preachers).
    2. ... to be paid more money.
    3. ... to get sympathy for how much they have to work and sacrifice.
    4. ... to get to be in control (Diotrophes).
    5. ... to keep brethren off of their back.
    6. ... to make the congregation think they are indispensable.
  - B. While there are certainly other improper motivations, consider the proper motivation—Love.
    1. You should expect the evangelist to work hard because he loves the Lord. In **John 21:15-17**, Jesus asked Peter three times, “Do you love Me?” Peter three times replied, “You know that I love you.” Jesus’ response was, “Feed my lambs.” The man who works to feed and teach within God’s sheepfold is one who loves God.
    2. You should expect the evangelist to work hard because he loves people, both brethren and otherwise. Paul demonstrates this kind of love in **II Timothy 2:10** and in **I Corinthians 9:19-23**. Paul wanted as many people as possible to go to heaven and so he worked hard.
- IV. The church should expect the evangelist to be a worker with a proper goal.
- A. An experiment was once conducted on processional caterpillars, so called because they follow each other in a line. They were placed in a circle with food just inches from them, but instead of eating, they followed each other until they all starved to death. They confused activity with accomplishment. Preachers often do the same. They work hard, but never accomplish much. They confuse activity with accomplishment.
  - B. In **I Timothy 1:5** Paul wrote that the purpose of the commandment (NKJV) or the goal of our instruction (NASB) is “love from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from sincere faith.” When Paul taught or worked, he had a goal in mind. He had a picture of where he wanted people to end up. His work was governed by that goal.
  - C. Jesus described the goal of Christians in **John 15:8**. Our duty is to glorify God. You should expect your evangelist to have that goal. If he desires to glorify himself or even glorify “his congregation”, then the work will suffer. But, if the goal is to glorify God, then the work will thrive.
- V. The church should expect the evangelist to be a worker who stays on task.
- A. I am not saying that an evangelist cannot have “time off” or vacations. Everyone needs times to rest, relax, refuel and replenish. What I am saying is that a proper worker does not allow himself to be distracted from his work. He stays on task.
  - B. I think of several instances in which Paul charged Timothy and Titus to stay on task, not allowing things to get in the way of the work they had to do. Consider some examples:
    1. Repeatedly, these two were told not to get distracted by useless arguing and pointless teaching—I **Timothy 1:3-4; 6:3-5; II Timothy 2:23; Titus 1:13-14**. You should expect an evangelist to stay out of this stuff. He should stay on task.
    2. Timothy was told to flee youthful lusts, but pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace in **II Timothy 2:22**. You should expect an evangelist to flee the lusts which get in the way and pursue what will help him accomplish the proper goals. He should stay on task.
    3. Note Paul’s command to Titus in **Titus 2:1-10**. He told Titus to teach older men, younger men, older women and bondservants. But the younger women are to be taught by the older women (**vs. 3-4**). Why? Because too many preachers are distracted from the work by women. An evangelist should stay on task and keep his eyes and hands off of women.

### Conclusion:

These are the things you should expect. But keep in mind one thing you should not expect from your evangelist. You should not expect him to be God in the flesh. He is just a man. No doubt, he is growing to be more like Jesus, but he will make mistakes. So have high expectations, but expect him to fall short at times. Then simply help him grow to be what he ought to be. After all, that is what you want from him, to help you grow to be what you ought to be.