

What Does a Lead Pastor Really Do?

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Pastors are men and women that God calls to lead a local church, providing both spiritual and practical oversight. The Bible has much to say about responsibilities of a lead pastor. Governments have laws about pastors and how churches are set up and run. The needs of people in our world require certain practical ministry. God, the Bible, civil government, and people's needs all contribute to the responsibilities a lead pastor willingly accepts.

Not every lead pastor has the same ministry description as another. However, in this article, the purpose is to share a general idea of the responsibilities of a lead pastor. Keep in mind that some pastors are employed fulltime, some part-time, and some receive no compensation at all. Therefore, some pastors are bi-vocational, causing their availability to the church to be less. Also consider that some pastors have employed staff with job requirements, and others work with volunteers who are often less available and less reliable because they are under no obligation. In addition, recognize some churches have had years of development and are well established in their functionality, while others are young and developing fundamental operations. These factors will somewhat determine what responsibilities a pastor can assume.

The majority of congregants only see the side of ministry that happens during a weekend service. Some who participate during the week observe more, perhaps the activity in the church office, small group teaching, outreach, or ministry team preparations. Most people do not have a comprehensive understanding of the all requirements of what it takes to operate a local church; however, when we realize that a lead pastor is the one bringing oversight, we can have a better idea of how the church body functions and find value in participation – as Paul says in Ephesians 4, “every part doing its share.”

We will begin by looking at a pastor's personal responsibilities, then point out the pastor's church responsibilities, and finally, consider how we can be a blessing to our lead pastor. Remember, these responsibilities are only a general listing and vary from church to church and pastor to pastor.

PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

A church will not be healthy if the lead pastor is not healthy. Like anyone else, the pastor's health includes personal wellness in spirit, soul, and body. If married, wellness includes a strong marriage with a spouse that loves God and loves people. If the lead pastor has a family, he or she needs both quality and quantity time with children, parents, and extended family. A pastor's wellbeing includes management of stress, including mental pressures, emotional pressures, and physical pressures. A pastor's wellbeing includes management of personal finances and financial freedom. Pastors need to consider savings, investments, medical coverage, and retirement. A lead pastor needs to give attention to home management, including maintenance for a household, vehicles, etc. A pastor needs to daily rest, weekly rest, and take time away on vacations. A pastor needs to exercise and eat nutritionally. A pastor needs time for personal spiritual growth. A pastor is built up by attending spirit-filled conferences with spirit-led teaching. A pastor needs other people around him or her who will impart wisdom, share advice, and give counsel and accountability. God is aware of this, Satan is aware of this, and we should be aware of this. We all need to do our part to support our pastor's personal life.

CHURCH RESPONSIBILITIES

A lead pastor is an overseer and an equipper. The lead pastor is to equip the saints to do the work of the ministry and give oversight to all areas of ministry. If a lead pastor is tied up doing the work of the ministry in addition to the oversight, it will pull that leader away from the leadership required to grow a church. It could also lead to burn out, since the leader would be trying to do his or her responsibilities as well as the saints' responsibilities. If a lead pastor is trying to do too much of the ministry while working a secular job, it could also be detrimental to the pastor and the church. There needs to be a balance. Here are some of a lead pastor's responsibilities for the church:

SPIRITUAL RESPONSIBILITIES

- Spends time with God to catch the Lord's vision for that local church and in that season of development, to continually be motivated by the Father's heart, and to hear a fresh and timely message for the church body.
- Oversees worship, to aim it to be authentic and heartfelt, to keep it pointing to the Father, to foster an atmosphere where the Holy Spirit has freedom to move and impart God's gifts, to manifest through anointing, and to heal and make whole.
- Cares for a church family with genuine love, overseeing their spiritual growth, as someone who will give account.
- Oversees provision for Bible education, fellowship, and pastoral care.
- Offers counseling or recommendations counselors who give guidance in line with God's Word.
- Brings in other ministry gifts, such as evangelists, teachers, and prophets.
- Protects a church against false doctrine, division, and sin.
- Oversees the ministry, safety, and care to children and youth.
- Oversees special services, including communion and holidays.

LEGAL RESPONSIBILITIES

- Oversees a nonprofit corporation that must comply with current nonprofit law of the governing nation and state/province.
- Oversees a board of directors, adheres to a constitution and bylaws, and assures minutes of meetings are accurate and recorded.
- Oversees financial administration, budgeting, bookkeeping, reporting, and tax contribution responsibilities.
- Oversees employee regulations, income tax requirements, and filed records.
- Oversees property zoning, building inspections, property insurance, and liability insurance.

TEAM LEADERSHIP RESPONSIBILITIES

- Gives oversight to a team of leaders, manages church responsibilities through delegation, and provides leadership development.
- Oversees ministry development, ministry leaders, volunteers, maintenance, and navigates ministry growth.
- Protects the team and has their back.
- Resolves conflict, finds solutions, and makes crucial decisions for unity.
- Brings correction for the purpose of admonition and with the motive of love.
- Discerns and removes a rebellious spirit and confronts offense.
- Offers restoration for leaders who have been hurt or wounded.

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PRACTICAL MINISTRY RESPONSIBILITIES

- Oversees pastoral care for people in the hospital, the elderly, and those with a disability.
- Gives oversight for ministry teams and their leaders.
- Gives oversight to small groups and their leaders.
- Oversees connection for visitors, water baptism, a discipleship program and growth track.
- Oversees service to a crowd through guest services, parking, ushers, greeters, parking and security.
- Oversees office management, interoffice communication, record keeping, and resources.
- Oversees church communication and community communications.
- Performs weddings, funerals, baby dedications, and assists with special life occasions.
- Oversees community outreach, giving to the poor, and distribution of funds towards local, national, and international ministries.
- Oversees the church engagement in the community, fosters community relationships, and helps bring community connection.

Churches that grow are churches where leaders are developed and the saints share responsibility of the ministry. The more leaders are activated, the more increase God is able to bring to the local church. A lead pastor's oversight of an involved, qualified, diverse team is a major factor for the church's position for increase in effectiveness.

12 WAYS WE CAN BE A BLESSING TO OUR LEAD PASTOR AND CHURCH

1. We can adhere to the mission, vision, and values shared by the lead pastor and help carry them out.
2. We can be there at services and events. Our attendance not only will bless us, but it also will bless others. Our focus is not only on ourselves, but it should also be on the church family. Be friendly and reach out to visitors or those who need encouragement.
3. During worship, we can participate by engaging from our hearts and express our love to the Father.
4. We can go through the Growth Track (discipleship classes) so the pastor is confident we are educated on basic Bible doctrine.
5. We can do what we can to help carry the responsibility of ministry by committing to and serving on a ministry team.
6. We can get involved in events, activities, and special projects.
7. We can participate in or lead a small group or Bible study.

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8. We can give our tithe and offerings. We can work hard and trust God to increase us to help finance the kingdom.
9. We can commit to growing spiritually by reading our Bibles, praying, and listening to the Word taught. We can make right choices to honor the God's Word and follow God's ways. When we are submitted to God, we live a better life, be a blessing to the church, and not be a reproach on the church or Christ's name.
10. We can participate in outreach, helping to communicate and demonstrate the love of God to the community. This gives God and the church credibility and involvement among the people we want to reach. We can also come alongside and built up other churches, blessing them and showing the world our love for one another.
11. We can pray for our pastor and each other. When we make ourselves available to God to pray, God not only uses us to ask for His help, to declare His purpose, but He also will develop a heart within us for the spiritual father or mother He has placed in our lives.
12. We can yield ourselves to the pastor's spiritual authority and make strides towards unity and harmony through a submitted posture and a humble attitude.

When a local church comes together and each one commits to gathering, growing, giving, and going, not only is it a blessing to an overseer; but it also causes a church to grow and be more effective in the kingdom. Jesus is coming back; it's imperative we do our part to prepare for His return by supporting our leaders and participating in our local church.

SCRIPTURES TO STUDY:

Hebrews 13:17, Acts 6:4, Acts 20:28, Jeremiah 3:15, I Corinthians 4:15, II Timothy 4:2, Titus 1:9, I Peter 5:1-4, Proverbs 27:23, I Corinthians 11:1, James 3:1, I Thessalonians 1:2-10, Titus 2:3-5, I Thessalonians 5:12-13, I Timothy 3:1-3, I Corinthians 12:18, Ephesians 4:11, John 21:16-18, I Timothy 5:17, I Corinthians 9:14, Colossians 1:25-28, Galatians 6:6