



A Guide
to
Faithfulness
in
Pastoral Ministry

pastor
Hershael
W. York well

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A Guide to Faithfulness in Pastoral Ministry

Hershael W. York



**THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST
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Pastor Well: A Guide to Faithfulness in Pastoral Ministry
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To Tanya York, who has selflessly, lovingly, patiently
helped me Pastor Well

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Introduction

My entire life has been spent with pastors. Not only was I born into a pastor's home, but I was deeply influenced by the hundreds of pastors I knew through the unending circuit of Bible conferences, revivals, church camps, and fellowship meetings my family annually attended. My whole world was attuned to the rhythms, raptures, pleasures, and pains of those who shepherd God's people. While still in college, I joined a church staff and have been in pastoral ministry ever since. I gained practical pastoral experience in the church and academic pastoral knowledge in the seminary. While fulfilling God's call as a pastor, for nearly three decades I have also taught thousands of students studying for the pastorate in hope that they might love the life that I have loved so passionately. Most of my friends are pastors. By God's grace, one of my sons is a pastor.

I simply do not know who or what I would be if Jesus had not allowed me to be one of his shepherds. Consequently, I think about pastoral ministry seven days a week, twelve months a year. I never tire of talking with pastors who are thinking through the challenges and opportunities they face. I love having conversations with those shepherds who are looking for answers because they desperately want to honor the Lord in everything they do, but they are facing challenges the Bible doesn't explicitly address and seminaries don't usually mention. In other words, I love talking with pastors about how to pastor well!

The Pastor Well podcast has been my attempt to apply a rich pastoral theology firmly rooted in the Word of God to the arduous, complicated, intricate challenges that pastors routinely face. I have always attempted to be entirely committed to the Word of God, but also willing to be painfully honest about how complicated ministry can be. I am, as I frequently confess, a pragmatist within my convictions. I will never compromise

my convictions for the sake of convenience, but within my convictions, I want to know what works. What is the best course of action in any given situation? How can a pastor lead a church to practice church discipline without getting fired? What can a pastor honestly say without upsetting a grieving family when he preaches the funeral of an unbeliever? How does a pastor explain communion and who should partake of it? How much should a pastor tell his wife?

The articles in this book are taken from the recordings of the Pastor Well podcast. They have been only slightly edited and retain my natural conversational style. These were originally delivered with no manuscript but with years of experience and a heart full of love for God's servants. I hope this book still feels like I am sitting at your table talking about what it means to be an elder, an overseer, a pastor in one of the Lord's churches today.

May this small book yield big dividends in your life as you serve the Lord Jesus and care for the people he bought with his blood. May it give you strength for the journey and the confidence that, by God's grace and to his glory, you really can pastor well.