

# **PETE BUMGARNER MINISTRIES**

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**MINISTERIAL ETHICS**

**STUDY GUIDE**



# MINISTERIAL ETHICS

## SCRIPTURE READING

### I Timothy 4:12 (NKJV)

Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity.

### Titus 2:7-8 (NKJV)

In all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works; in doctrine showing integrity, reverence, incorruptibility, sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you.

## THEME

The life of a minister will often have more impact on people than his message; consequently, it is vital that ministers constantly realize Whom they represent. All aspects of the minister's life must be consistent and above reproach. Spirituality will never violate godly ethics! Purity, integrity, and consideration must be an integral part of every minister's life.

## I. INTRODUCTION

- A. **Purity** is freedom from sin and guilt.
- B. According to *Webster's Dictionary*, **integrity** is uprightness of character; honesty; the condition, quality, or state of being complete or undivided.
- C. A person of integrity is one who does what he says; he is one whose actions and words agree.
- D. A person of integrity will not embellish the truth; he will stand for and with the truth.
- E. A person of integrity is always good for his word; he honors his commitments.
- F. **Consideration** is thoughtful concern for others. One who is considerate will take into account the circumstances before forming an opinion.

## **II. MINISTRY AND THE MINISTER**

- A. From God's perspective, ministry is not a profession; it is a service.
- B. Ministers must please God as they minister to the people.
- C. The minister's appearance and conduct will be critiqued; consequently, the minister must present and conduct himself in a way that will enhance, not hurt, his ministry.
- D. The minister's family is also critiqued and scrutinized. They, too, play a crucial role in the effectiveness of the minister.
- E. The minister's life is very visible; consequently, ministry requires a higher standard than that of the nominal Christian.
- F. Ministers should encourage and support one another. They should never compete with one another.
- G. Ministry is a service, not a contest!

## **III. PULPIT ETHICS**

- A. The pulpit is not a stage for performance; it is a place to represent God to the people.
  - 1. Dramatics appeal to the flesh; the flesh should be crucified, not resurrected.
  - 2. Although humor and expression are not outlawed, they will have very little effect on the spirit man. Idle words are not productive. Often, they are counterproductive.
  - 3. If people remember our jokes but not our message, we failed in ministry.
- B. Although the emphasis should be upon the message, the messenger's appearance is important. It can enhance his effectiveness, or it can be a distraction.
  - 1. Unless God directs otherwise, the minister should dress moderately, not extravagantly or sloppily.
  - 2. There is an old adage that may help explain this rationale:

- a. "I can't hear what you are saying for seeing what you are."
- b. This message applies to both appearance and conduct.
- C. The pulpit should be a place of liberty. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty," but the liberty is one that frees us to be obedient to God. The Spirit of the Lord never grants us liberty to gratify the flesh.
- D. The pulpit should never be worshiped, but it should be treated with respect; after all, it is a sacred place. It is designed for the purpose of God, not man.
- E. The pulpit must never be used to fight the congregation or to promote **personal** beliefs or projects.
- F. The pulpit is a tool for ministry. Let us use this tool wisely.

#### **IV. MINISTRY ETHICS**

- A. All people should be treated with respect and dignity.
- B. When ministering to an individual, do not exceed his/her desire for ministry.
- C. Ask permission to minister; if permission is denied, do not proceed.
- D. When ministering by laying on of hands, be certain that your hands do not violate the individual.
  - 1. People who come for ministry should never be handled improperly.
  - 2. Also, use caution when selecting people to assist in ministering; only people with clean hands and pure hearts should be chosen to assist.
- E. Ministry is ineffective unless power is both transmitted and received.
  - 1. If the power is not there, do not try to force an issue.
  - 2. If the individual is not receiving from the Lord through your ministry, stop and instruct the individual.

3. It is vital that the minister have faith to deliver the power and that the recipient have faith to receive the power.

## **V. RELATIONSHIP ETHICS**

- A. Relationship ethics include family, friends, parishioners, ministers, and ministries.
- B. The minister's family relationships will influence relationships in the church.
  1. There must be a mutual respect between the minister and his family.
  2. A healthy, open relationship between the minister and his wife can eliminate many potential problems.
    - a. It is imperative that the minister and his wife be in agreement concerning the procedure and direction of ministry. (Amos 3:3)
    - b. The sexual relationship between the minister and his wife must also be healthy.
    - c. Fellowship enhances the relationship.
  3. It is imperative for the minister to demonstrate a loving, Christ-like acceptance of his children, even when they miss the mark.
- C. Although a minister may have close friends, he must guard against partiality.
  1. Jesus had close friends, but He did not display partiality.
  2. Peter, James, and John were allowed to go places others did not go; this privilege directly affected the ministry of Jesus; it did not promote partiality.
  3. Friendships should not be avoided; however, they must be guarded.
- D. The minister must treat the parishioners with respect; they are God's property.

1. The minister must not disdain those whom God has placed in his care.
  2. Although the minister is given oversight of the flock, he is not superior to the flock.
  3. Sheep have a significant role to play in the kingdom of God.
- E. Minister-to-minister relationships must be treated with honor and respect.
1. Give honor where honor is due. Honor the minister before the people.
    - a. Honor is not flattery or untruths.
    - b. Honor is respect given to someone who has earned or deserved it.
  2. Be grateful to those who ask you to minister, and be respectful.
  3. **Never** violate the confidence of another minister!
  4. Never promote your ideas or projects without prior permission while under the auspices of another minister.
  5. Treat every minister the way you want to be treated. **Be considerate!**
  6. Never degrade the ministry for which you work.
- F. Ministry relationships must be nurtured and maintained.
1. Structure and order assist in maintaining good ministry relationships.
  2. When working with or for another ministry, prefer the ministry with which you are working.
  3. Ministry relationships should not be built or established with ulterior motives.
- G. Maturing in the ways of the Lord is a process that builds healthy relationships.

## **VI. HOST ETHICS**

- A. It is the responsibility of the person inviting the guest to care for the guest properly.
- B. Guest responsibility begins when the guest arrives, and it does not end until the guest leaves.
  - 1. Those arriving by air or some other commercial mode of transportation should not have to wait to be picked up; neither should they have to be concerned with departing on time.
  - 2. Be prompt! Allow plenty of time for unexpected delays. It is better for the host to be inconvenienced than the guest.
  - 3. Good communication can prevent potential problems or inconveniences.
- C. Transportation, meals, lodging, etc., should be provided for the guest. The guest should not have to ask for any of these necessities.
- D. The welfare of the guest should be checked on periodically.
- E. Communicate with the guest. Be certain that he knows exactly what is expected of him.
  - 1. If time or subject parameters must be set, be certain that the guest knows the parameters.
  - 2. Assumption is the source of many heartaches and problems.
- F. Treat all guests with honor and respect, regardless of their age or social status.

## **VII. GUEST ETHICS**

- A. The guest should be considerate of the host. If the host is doing the best he can, **be content**, not demanding. (Philippians 4:11)
  - 1. If the host is not doing all he can, keep a Christ-like attitude.
  - 2. Do not allow inconvenience to affect ministry effectiveness.

- B. It is extremely important that guest ministers realize that they are guests, not celebrities or gods.
- C. Guest ministers must recognize and submit to authority.
  - 1. The ministry who invited you has authority over you.
  - 2. Never violate the parameters set by the host minister.
  - 3. Always maintain a constructive, not destructive, attitude.
  - 4. Never violate the confidence of the host!
  - 5. Ministry compensation must not dictate your itinerary; be led by the Spirit.
    - a. The gospel must be presented at no charge.
    - b. **Freely** we have received; **freely** we must give.
    - c. God, not man, is our source.
  - 6. The guest must never leave the host with unpaid bills for which he is responsible (food, telephone, hotel, etc.).
  - 7. The guest must never abuse the host's hospitality. Be considerate!

## **VIII. COUNSELING ETHICS**

- A. Never take sides when counseling. Listen attentively and respond objectively.
- B. Exercise wisdom when counseling with the opposite sex. Do not place yourself in a vulnerable or compromising position.
- C. Never give personal opinion; counsel with the Word of God. Ministers are not psychologists; therefore, the minister's approach must always be spiritual, not professional.
- D. Never betray the confidence of the one with whom you counsel.
- E. If you do not feel comfortable counseling an individual, refer him to someone whom you feel is better equipped to handle the individual's needs.

- F. Ministry is not professional counseling; therefore, ministers should not counsel beyond the Word and Spirit of God.

## **IX. HOSPITAL ETHICS**

- A. Many violations of both patient and staff have occurred in a hospital environment.
- B. We must constantly be aware of authority and our responsibility to submit to authorities.
- C. Unless we have specific instructions from God, we should not view the hospital as a mission field.
  - 1. The hospital staff has certain obligations and responsibilities to the patients and their families. Ministers must not interfere with these duties.
  - 2. Patients are entitled to certain rights and privileges; these rights and privileges must be respected.
    - a. We do not have the right to impose prayer and healing upon patients; Jesus did not impose prayer and healing upon anyone.
    - b. Always get permission from the patient before ministering to him.
  - 3. Due to injuries or illnesses, patients are often physically exposed; we must not embarrass them by intruding and showing disrespect.
  - 4. Room-to-room witnessing is a violation of hospital policy and must be avoided, unless God directs otherwise.
  - 5. We must operate with wisdom and consideration when making hospital visits.
- D. We should be courteous and respectful to receptionists, nurses, doctors, patients, family members, etc.
  - 1. The objective of the hospital should be to give its patients the best possible care. We must not interfere with this process.
  - 2. Visiting hours should be honored, not violated.

3. Many staff members are very lenient to ministers; we must not take advantage of their leniency.
  4. When limited visitation privileges are given, priority should be given to the family members. Ministers should always prefer family members in cases of limited visitation time.
  5. Ministers should never violate patient/doctor consultations. When the doctor enters the room, it is proper for the minister to excuse himself.
- E. Most hospitals provide designated parking for the ministers; we should not abuse this privilege.
1. Ministers should park in these designated areas only when visiting a patient.
  2. Consideration must be exercised when parking in designated areas. There are usually more ministers than designated parking spaces.

## **X. SOCIAL ETHICS**

- A. Social ethics include home, community, business, and church activities.
- B. Ministers are representatives at all times; consequently, we must guard our conduct at all times, even in our homes.
1. When people come into our homes, they must not see a double standard; ministers must be consistent in every area of their lives.
  2. The minister's home should be a place of warmth and peace. The atmosphere should be inviting, not tense.
  3. We must be **real people**, dedicated to God and led by the Spirit. Our objective is not **to appear** spiritual, but **to be** spiritual.
- C. It is extremely important for the minister to conduct himself properly in the community.
1. Our conduct in grocery stores, shopping malls, restaurants, hotels, hospitals, etc., will influence our effectiveness in ministry.

2. We must not act like the devil in the market place and God in the pulpit. We must display the character of Christ wherever we go.
  3. People whom we do not even know observe our attitudes and actions. Through our conduct, we influence people either in a positive or negative way.
- D. Ministries should operate with absolute integrity in all business dealings.
1. The minister's word should be his bond. He should be honest and trustworthy.
  2. Deception and manipulation are tactics of the devil; therefore, it is unacceptable for a minister to use these tactics.
  3. The business dealings of a minister should be professional and governed by wisdom.
  4. Contracts and written agreements can eliminate many potential problems. These tools will help prevent communication problems.
- E. Participation in church-related activities can help or hurt the minister. The deciding factor is the minister's appearance and conduct.
1. Ministers are not exempt from "fun" activities; however, the minister can lose respect and effectiveness if he does not display godly character and actions at all times.
  2. When the minister is viewed as one of the "good ole' boys," his ministry gifts will be less effective.
  3. The standard of the minister must always be higher than the standard of nominal Christians.
  4. The conversation and dress code of the minister must be governed by wisdom and discretion.
- F. The spiritual life of the minister should never be compromised for the sake of social activities.

## **XI. DISCIPLINE ETHICS**

- A. Discipline is training which produces a specific character or pattern of behavior. Punishment is a part of discipline that is executed when training is rejected.
- B. One who has the responsibility of oversight also has the responsibility for administering discipline when violations occur.
- C. The purpose of discipline is correction and restoration, not humiliation and vengeance.
- D. One who administers discipline must be disciplined.
- E. Discipline must be administered with respect; hate sin, but love the violator.
- F. Correction must be administered with respect and consideration. (Jude 9)
- G. Consequences of refusing discipline must be revealed; however, threats are unacceptable.
- H. If possible, discipline should be administered privately.
- I. Discipline should be a way of life; punishment should be applied only when the lifestyle of discipline is refused.

## **XII. SUMMARY**

- A. We must recognize ministry as a service, not a profession.
- B. The minister must please God as he ministers to the people.
- C. Pulpit ethics must be realized and practiced.
- D. The pulpit is not a stage for performance; it is a place to represent God to the people.
- E. Relationship ethics are critical in ministry.
- F. The minister's relationship with his family, friends, parishioners, ministers, and ministries will directly affect his effectiveness and influence in ministry.

- G. Both guest and host ministers should treat one another with mutual respect and consideration.
- H. All ministerial counseling should be governed by the Word, Spirit, and principles of God.
- I. The social conduct of the minister will influence his effectiveness in ministry.
- J. Discipline is both necessary and beneficial when administered in love with the objective of restoration.

### **XIII. CONCLUSION**

- A. Ministerial ethics are a vital part of ministry; therefore, they must be practiced.
- B. Gratefulness and graciousness never compromise one's respect and authority.
- C. In the eyes of God, the greatest must consider himself the least.
  - 1. Those who practice this principle will be respected. They will be considered a delight, not a burden in ministry.
  - 2. Those who violate this principle will ultimately hurt themselves and lose respect.
- D. Both guests and hosts have been guilty of many ethical violations; we must not succumb to these violations.
- E. As ministers, we must conduct ourselves in such a way that others can follow our example of lifestyle and ethics.
- F. Paul said, "Follow me as I follow Christ." People will follow our example; let's be certain that we are following Christ in all things.