



Dear Brothers,

The Peace of God.

The Word of God teaches us that Elders who govern well are worthy of double honor, especially those who preach the Word. They are responsible to teach and counsel the brethren and should care for the flock with love and patience so that no one is weakened or lost.

The prophet Ezekiel, inspired by the Spirit of God, protested against the unfaithful shepherds of Israel:

“Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool, ye kill them that are fed, but ye feed not the flock. The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost; but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them. And they were scattered, because there is no shepherd; and they became meat to all the beasts of the field, when they were scattered; My sheep wandered through all the mountains, and upon every high hill; yea my flock was scattered upon all the face of the earth, and none did search or seek after them. (Ezekiel 34:3-6)

In both the Old and New Testaments, the responsibility of the shepherd was to care for and watch over the flock. The hireling or hired hand also cared for the sheep but his motive was only financial gain. Jesus set the example by the love and care He had for His sheep, who were His followers. He said:

“I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep.” (John 10: 11-13)

The Lord Jesus, speaking to his disciples by the Sea of Tiberias, asked Peter three times:

“...Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?..” (John 21:16)

After Peter answered, the Lord said:

“...Feed my sheep.” (John 21:16)

To “feed the sheep” means to nourish and care for the sheep. This is the duty of the shepherd. In the New Testament, the word “shepherd” refers to the provider, protector and guide of the people of God. The apostle Paul wrote about the different spiritual gifts that Christ bestowed:



“And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;” (Ephesians 4:11)

In Miletus, when the apostle Paul bid farewell to the elders from Ephesus, he exhorted them:

“Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.” (Acts 20:28-31)

This happens when the preacher attracts people to himself with pleasing words, making them his disciples and not the disciples of Christ.

It is necessary to diligently watch over and guard the flock, also remembering those who stop congregating, treating them with love and compassion. The apostle Jude exhorted:

“And of some have compassion, making a difference. And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.” (Jude 1:22-23)

We cannot deny that countless sheep have gone astray because they were not treated with patience and love. There are others who have been excluded from the flock.

How many brothers have been scandalized by the attitudes of some ministers of the Word or of Piety who were not vigilant, and by their misguided preachings or rough words gave reasons for some to leave!

Some use the pulpit to directly attack the brethren who come to hear the Word of God. Others, in an effort to please the people, preach extravagant promises of blessings, deliverance and material prosperity. When these things don't happen, the people doubt the Word of God and are scandalized, thinking that God didn't fulfill what He spoke.

Some complain that there is no spiritual food—only promises of success without teaching the sanctification needed for salvation. Many preachings are eloquent but lack the substance to lead the people to the truth and to sanctification. They stir up the people without providing a full understanding of the truth of the Gospel for salvation.

We know that to escape the corruption that is in the world today through lust, the people must diligently seek to receive more faith, love, holiness and other virtues of God. Where these things do not exist and abound, the person will be barren and unfruitful in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is blind, not seeing afar off, having forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.

This spiritual blindness prevents the minister from recognizing the lost sheep, since he doesn't

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care that they stopped congregating. Some ministers murmur and reject those who have repented of their sins and return to the church seeking the pardon of God. Because of their reckless judgment of these souls, they denounce and even refuse to greet them. They forget that the place for the repentant sinner is in the house of the Lord. These misguided judges do not know the meaning of the verse:

“For I desired mercy and not sacrifice...” (Hosea 6:6)

To exercise the ministry of the Word or of Piety, constant vigilance is needed. This means to always be in communion with God through prayer and also by meditating on the Holy Scripture. Paul exhorted Timothy:

“Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.” (1 Timothy 4:15-16)

To take heed of ourself and obey the divine commandments means to be careful to maintain a good testimony in all parts of our life – whether in the family, or in business or in our interactions with anyone, in any place, so that our ministry will not be criticized. It is biblical that the life of the minister should show faithfulness to Christ in such a way that it is an example of conduct before the congregation (1 Peter 5:3, Titus 1:6-9).

The true minister of the Word of God honors Christ in all things, perseveres in prayer, manifests the fruits of the Spirit, (Galatians 5:22-23) strives to save the lost souls, (1 Cor. 9:19-22) and loves and receives everyone without distinction (Luke 15). He abhors evil and preaches against sin (Mat 23, Luke 3:18-20), always guiding the people toward sanctification (Acts 26:18, 1Cor.6:18), and he announces the entire Gospel without compromise or corruption (Matt. 28:18-20).

Holy services and other divine events must be presided with utmost care, observing the recommendations regarding inappropriate expressions or statements that are contrary to the Scriptures. Those who do not follow these guidelines are responsible for their own actions, as stated in the Congregation’s bylaws:

“The Christian Congregation is not responsible for the personal acts practiced by any of its members.” (Article 12)

It is our duty to be vigilant and prudent in all areas of our life and in the exercise of our ministry, so that we can please God.

Your brothers in Christ,

Council of Senior Elders