

How We Ought To Conduct Ourselves

1 Timothy 3:15

..but if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.

NKJV

The Personal Conduct Of Those Who Minister Publicly To The Local Congregation

The following statements are the personal convictions and policies of Douglas L. Crook concerning the personal testimony of those who desire to publicly minister in any capacity in the local assembly and are believed to be the proper application of the Bible's teaching on Church order and discipline as they apply in this modern day. Church leaders include: Sunday School Teachers, Preachers, Youth Leaders, Choir Members and Singers Of Special Songs.

The following expectations and ministerial prerequisites pertain only to those who desire to minister publicly, in any official capacity to the congregation. There are no prerequisites to attend or participate in any event in the local assembly. There are no specific expectations that an individual must meet to be considered a member of the congregation and participate in the study of God's Word or public worship. Any and all are welcome to come and take in the Word of God that will transform them, little by little, from glory to glory. *(2 Corinthians 3:18)*

Individuals who desire to minister publicly in any capacity to the congregation over which I have been given charge to watch for their spiritual well-being and protection will need to be aware of certain expectations that are placed on those who stand publicly before the congregation to minister. My convictions and policies in these areas are simply the Biblical standard of godly living for the child of God of which spiritual leaders must be an example. (*1 Timothy 3:1-16, Titus 1:5-9*)

1 Timothy 4:12-13

12 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.

13 Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.

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Since not everyone understands what it means to be an example to and of the believer in Jesus Christ in this modern day in which we live, here are a few statements of clarification. These are not extra policies, rules and regulations in addition to Scripture; they are simply the teaching of the Bible concerning proper Christian conduct for God's people in the day and society in which we live.

I have publicly preached and taught on these subjects many times and the following statements do not differ from anything I have taught or practiced for many years. They are made public to clarify my personal convictions in several areas that have been areas of confusion and contention in the past because they were not made available in this present form.

When I have acted on my convictions in these areas some have been surprised and offended because they felt they have been unjustly singled out and not properly informed of what they perceived to be such strict policies. My acting on these convictions in these areas has been in accordance with my public teaching on these subjects for many years. Nevertheless, for clarification and with the desire to avoid any future misunderstanding in these areas, I offer the following clarifications of my personal convictions and practices as a Pastor in the following areas. I am accountable first and foremost to the Lord who called me to be a minister of His Gospel. I hold and practice these convictions because I believe them to be the will of God for His people and because I believe that I will be held accountable for whether or not I have acted in the best interest of God's people for the glory of God.

1 Timothy 3:15

15 but if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.
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1 Corinthians 14:40

40 Let all things be done decently and in order. NKJV

**Prerequisites For Anyone Who
Desires To Minister Publicly To The
Congregation**

1) Regular attendance of as many Church services as possible where sound doctrine is taught is required for those who minister in any official capacity to the congregation. No specific number of services attended is required, but a desire to learn more of the Word and to assemble together with God's people are to be essential parts of the Christian's spiritual life. Therefore, those who publicly minister in any capacity must be an example of such a godly practice. **Hebrews 10:25**

2) Decent, modest attire that properly reflects the Biblical teaching of covering our nakedness in public so as not to incite the lust of the flesh in the opposite sex is required at all times. **1 Timothy 2:9** Modest apparel does not

only include decency, but also appropriate attire that does not draw undue attention to one's self or one's person. If your attire is a distraction to others it will hinder your ministry to them.

3) Sexual morality. Anyone involved in pre-marital or extra-marital or homosexual sex will not be permitted to minister publicly in any capacity in the worship services.

4) Abstinence from alcoholic beverages is expected from all those who minister in the public services. The Bible teaches that drunkenness is a sin and being "buzzed" is the same as being drunk because your decision making is impaired. With as little as .04% Blood Alcohol Content (BAC) secular science tells us that the judgment is impaired. Some studies put judgment impairment with as low as .02% BAC. Since, with today's alcohol content percentages in beers, wine and liquor, it is a very small step from having a drink of alcohol to being drunk, I believe that abstinence from alcohol is the most uncompromising testimony for every believer who wants God's best. Some individuals may have a beer or glass of wine with their food and it may not result in impairment of judgment or result in the sin of drunkenness. However, the second glass likely will quickly push you over the limit. For others one glass of today's beer or wine is enough to impair judgment.

Even if you feel it's okay for you, your liberty may stumble a weaker brother or cause them to fall into the sin of drunkenness because they believe they are following your example of godliness. If you cause your brother to stumble, even though each one is responsible for their own choices, you share a measure of accountability for their fall into sin. Alcohol has ruined so many lives and families. Those who publicly minister in our services should be examples of what all believers should be in every area of their public and private lives and examples of those who want God's best. Therefore, abstinence from alcoholic beverages is the standard that is to be adhered to by those who minister in any official capacity.

Though it should be able to go without saying, with the rapid erosion of the understanding of right and wrong being what it is among God's people, I will say it anyway. The expectation of abstinence from things that lead to intoxication also includes marijuana and all other recreational drugs used for the purpose of getting "high."

If anyone falls short in any of these areas, there is grace for forgiveness and restoration to fellowship and a return to ministry, but failures must be acknowledged, humbly repented of and abandoned before the opportunity to minister will again be given.

Pastoral Responsibilities:

I take my own “Biblical” responsibilities and obligations as a pastor very seriously. The following statements are to clarify my practices in three common areas where a pastor’s responsibilities and obligations are often misunderstood.

Visitation of the Sick:

I will make myself available night or day for any member of the congregation who is in need of prayer or godly counsel or comfort and calls me to express such a need. However, out of respect for people’s personal space and privacy I don’t make a regular practice of “visiting” people’s homes unless I am invited. I do not call on people if they miss a service. Sometimes a call from the pastor is considered “pressure” to attend every meeting. I do not want to appear to “pressure” anyone to attend meeting nor is it my desire to make anyone feel “guilty” for missing a meeting. Your assembling together with God’s people is a matter between you and the Lord. If people are sick or having a procedure done in the hospital, I do not make it a practice to visit them unless they or their family invite me to do so, unless the Lord specifically leads me to go be

with them. Some people consider it an intrusion of their privacy to drop by uninvited or unannounced. I believe it's important for the saints to call for the elders as an expression of their faith. *James 5:14*

Weddings:

Church Building Marriage Ceremony Prerequisites

a) Both persons, one man and one woman, must be born again.

b) Must not be living together or having sexual relations before the ceremony.

c) Must have been willing to sit under my ministry or a similar ministry for an extended period of time. In other words, must faithfully attend Church where sound doctrine is proclaimed.

d) If the couple meets the first 3 prerequisites, but one or both have been married before or had live in partners, I will be willing to conduct a small private ceremony in a home, but a ceremony in the Church building will not be permitted.

The Church building is set aside to proclaim the Gospel. That Gospel promotes godliness, morality and life long marriage. Nothing we do here should conflict with that

message. However, God's grace is sufficient to receive us where we are, when we look to Him in faith. God does not throw divorced people on the scrap heap, and Scripture does give license for divorce and remarriage in some cases, but they must choose to obey God's order in any future marriage. If such a couple is willing to base their new marriage on God's Word and principles, God can bless that union. Therefore, I will consent to a private home ceremony.

e) I will not be a part of a wedding ceremony in which wine or alcoholic beverages are served at the rehearsal dinner or reception.

f) I will not be a part of a ceremony in which open, public dancing is a part of the celebration. I am not opposed to any and all forms of dancing, just the public display of sensual movement between dance partners to music that is often secular and inappropriate for Christian edification. (*Galatians 5:19* – Lewdness = unbridled lust, excess, licentiousness, lasciviousness, wantonness, outrageousness, shamelessness, insolence) Since it is difficult to control how people dance once the public dance floor has been opened, I choose simply not to be associated with public dancing at weddings. I have made some compromises in the past and performed the ceremony and not attended the reception where dancing was allowed, but I do not feel that I can in good conscience continue to make such

compromises. Nor do I believe I can stop making such compromises of my convictions in this area without offering a clear public statement of my intentions going forward.

g) I will not officiate a wedding ceremony that is scheduled on a day and time when regular Church Services, Bible Studies, Choir Practice or Prayer meetings are scheduled unless the entire congregation is invited to attend the wedding ceremony. I have made compromises in the past and in fairness to everyone in the congregation, I cannot make such compromises in the future.

Funerals:

I will not participate in funeral services with other ministers or singers who I believe to be a reproach to the Gospel.

Some or many will consider these statements of my convictions and practices to be severe and unnecessary. I pray that you will accept my humble motivation for making them publicly available in this form. It is because I love the Lord and love His people that I am constrained to exercise my responsibilities and authority as a pastor according the revelation of His Word.