

Lord, Teach Us to Pray – Part 10

Praying for Church Leaders

Crosspoint – Dave Spooner – July 3rd, 2022

Intro to Michael

- Today is a big day for Michael and Naomi, and it is a big day for us as well. God has brought a gift to us in this couple. Michael will be serving as our associate pastor focusing on youth and discipleship along with other things. He has been a personal friend for over 10 years, and a man I love. Michael has a curious mind, engaging personality, and a great sense of humor. He is a hard worker, dedicated team player, transparent connector, faithful husband, good leader, a man of prayer, a man of integrity, and a man of the word and a man of his word. He is gifted in music, relational connectivity, communications, creativity, and theology. He understands people, churches, and systems.
- Michael and Naomi have served faithfully at Redeemer Church here in Rockford for the last 10 years and have been on their full-time staff the last couple of years, and now God has asked him to join us here at Crosspoint. They have taken the courageous step to say "yes" to God by following Him to join with us. I am delighted that God has put us all together in one place. I am looking forward to working alongside Michael and to seeing what God will do in us and through us during this season together.
- I have asked Michael to share part of his story and his heart with us all.

Michael share

- There are two things that we are asking you to do, Michael, and these are the two things that I want us to be praying for Michael and all of our church leaders.

Learn from Jesus

Matt 11:29-30 ESV

Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

- Jesus invites us to get into the yoke with Him and to learn from Him. The call to ministry is a call to get into the yoke with Him. All ministry is ultimately His ministry, and we are invited to join with Him in what He is doing and where He is going. We move in His direction, and we move at His pace, and we learn to be like Him and His heart.
- He is gentle and lowly in heart. These are not characteristics that anyone puts on a resume. We usually put "dynamic leader" and "charismatic communicator." Jesus says that He is "gentle and lowly in heart." His heart is gentle and lowly. He is gentle with us, and He is a servant, humble, kind king, and brother and friend. This is who He is at heart. Learn from Him, know Him, serve alongside Him, and become like Him. Be with Jesus and become like Jesus. Shepherd like the Good Shepherd. Jesus does these things for us. Learn from Him and follow Him as a good shepherd.

John 10:10-12 ESV

I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. 12 He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd, who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them.

- Lay down your life for them by protecting them from things that will harm them, from those who look to destroy them, snatch them away and scatter them. These forces can be spiritual, philosophical, theological, relational, or physical. You have a sacred duty to watch out for things that destroy people and put yourself out there to stand in the way to protect people. This is what good shepherds do, and it is hard.

John 10:13 ESV

He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep.

- Shepherding means you run in when others run away. You are not in the pastorate or in church leadership for what you can get out of it. We are not called to be "hired hands" but those who care and truly love the sheep. Don't use people to get what you want. Love people and give them what they need. Never ever use people or hurt people. This is a sacred trust that you and we have been given. Be faithful to your calling like the Good Shepherd.

John 10:14-15 ESV

I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, 15 just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep.

- Know who they are and let them know you. Get to know people for who they are, and don't be aloof and non-transparent. Please be real with people, let them into your life, and listen to people, be involved in their life. This is not just a "pastor- parishioner" relationship but a friend-friend relationship, also knowing you have an extra responsibility of shepherding them.

John 10:16 ESV

And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd.

- Not only do you have your eyes and ears open to those in this congregation, but also there are others who God has called you to pastor and shepherd. He has also called you to connect with those who are outside this fold. Your responsibility is for this congregation and also beyond this congregation, to the greater community, and the world.

Shepherd the flock

1 Peter 5:1a-4 NLT

As a fellow elder, I appeal to you: 2 Care for the flock that God has entrusted to you. Watch over it willingly, not grudgingly—not for what you will get out of it, but because you are eager to serve God. 3 Don't lord it over the people assigned to your care, but lead them by your own good example. 4 And when the Great Shepherd appears, you will receive a crown of never-ending glory and honor.

- Care for the flock that God has entrusted you—really care for them. God had entrusted them to you so care for them well.
- Watch over them willingly, not grudgingly. Not out of "have to" but "get to." Not for what you can get but because you are eager to serve God.
- Don't lord it over them; don't be heavy-handed and authoritative. That is not the way to lead.
- Be a good example—if you want to see it in people, then have it in yourself. If you want people to love, then show them how. If you want them to serve, then serve them well. Let them see what you want them to be. Don't be like the Pharisees—do as you want others to do, and be what you want others to be.