

A CHARGE TO THE CONGREGATION FOR AN ORDINATION SERVICE

By Rev. Paul R. Shockley

www.prshockley.org

I. INTRODUCTION:

When pastors gather they often find humor in comparing the most discouraging “*encouragement*” regarding the sermon they received for the week from their loving congregation. Consider the following statements people have made to pastors after their sermons were given:

- “Well, that was real!”
- “You always manage to find something to fill up the time.”
- “I don’t care what they say, I like your sermons.”
- “If I’d known you were going to be that good today I would have brought my neighbor.”
- “Did you know there are 79 men in our church who are growing bald?”
- “Dear, we shouldn’t make you preach so often.”
- “Shoot for a fourth grade level and everyone can understand.”
- “I apologize for not being able to listen to you. I will be honest-it was because you parted your differently today; I can’t handle change.”
- Pastor, I would have paid closer attention but the temperature in the room was freezing.”¹

Transition:

II. CHARGE TO CONGREGATION:

Seriously, this morning we have the privilege and responsibility before God to stand behind, support, nurture, and defend _____ calling, integrity, and mission as minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Too many times the minister’s greatest obstacle is not what is before him, namely a lost and dying world, but what lies behind him, *the* congregation. Because of “friendly fire,” good soldiers are taken down. Pained, hurt, and discouraged, they are “chewed up and spat out,” and headed into different directions and careers. While _____ from **2 Timothy 4:1-2** has charged _____ [person being ordained] stand firm against the world, flesh, and devil, to preach the Word, touching lives with Scripture with personal integrity, I charge each of you in this church to:

Love God with your whole heart, mind, soul, and strength-to intimately and passionately love God. If we will proactively seek to follow this commandment-with all diligence, humilily, integrity, and enablement, then _____ [person being ordained] will not this “friendly fire”; rather, he will be maximized for God’s glory.

¹ This illustration is adapted from www.bible.org, “illustrations” folder, under “pastor.”

Or we could say it this way using the words of Ravi Zacharias: The Christian life is “not merely content, but conviction; not merely conviction, but communication; not merely communication, but consistently.”

_____ [first name] needs to know that we are praying for him.

_____ [first name] needs to know that we are standing with him.

On a hard day, _____ [first name] needs to know that he can call all on almost anyone in this very room for a listening ear and encouragement.

On a good day, _____ [first name] needs to know that he has a family who is rejoicing with him.

When _____ is in need, he needs to know we will stand by ready to assist him.

_____ needs to know that we care about his family. They are also a part of his ministry and may suffer for it.

Dr. John F. Walvoord, the late president of Dallas Theological Seminary from 1952-1986, once said to a group of us students that if you are a person who is teaching biblical truth, the devil will put an “X” on your back. His method is typical. He will start with your ministry. If he can’t get you there, he will go after your personal life, your moral integrity. If he can’t get you there, he will then go after your spouse. If he can’t get you there, he will go after your children.

We *will* consistently cover you and your family _____ with our prayers.

_____ needs forgiveness when he errs, grace when he makes mistakes, and room to grow and exercise creativity. He needs to know we do not expect perfection from a work in progress, which is what we all are.

We will be charitable in our words to _____. We will give him the benefit of the doubt. We will appreciate his unique giftedness and affirm his special “*divine design*.” We should not expect him to be like anyone else.

_____ does not need to be unnecessarily criticized, slandered, taken advantage of, or put under a microscope. He does not need to face an environment that buries his new ideas or causes him to look elsewhere for acceptance and love.

Though we as Christians are called to love without partiality, we as a church must recognize that _____ has been specially chosen as a minister of the gospel with unique responsibilities, pressures, and requirements that go with that calling.

You are special among men, _____. As we pray for your success in fulfilling God’s will for your life, may we not fail in our obligation to you.

III. IN CONCLUSION:

God give us men...ribbed with the steel of Your Holy Spirit...men who will not flinch when the battle's fiercest...men who won't acquiesce, or compromise, or fade when the enemy rages. God give us men who can't be bought, bartered, or badgered by the enemy, men who will pay the price, make the sacrifice, stand the ground, and hold the torch high. God give us men obsessed with the principles true to your word, men stripped of self-seeking and a yearn for security...men who will pay any price for freedom and go any lengths for truth. God give us men delivered from mediocrity, men with vision high, pride low, faith wide, love deep, and patience long...men who will dare to march to the drumbeat of a distant drummer, men who will not surrender principles of truth in order to accommodate their peers. God give us men more interested in scars than medals. More committed to conviction than convenience, men who will give their life for the eternal, instead of indulging their lives for a moment in time. Give us men who are fearless in the face of danger, calm in the midst of pressure, bold in the midst of opposition. God give us men who will pray earnestly, work long, preach clearly, and wait patiently. Give us men whose walk is by faith, behavior is by principle, whose dreams are in heaven, and whose book is the Bible. God give us men who are equal to the task. Those are the men the church needs today.²

And God when you give us these men, help us to treasure them, support them, and not badger them, discourage them, hurt them, reject them, or even kill them.

May we, as members of this church, love and uphold this man of God and his family for the rest of his earthly days. _____ [name of person being ordained] you keep your eyes looking forward; we've got your back!

By Rev. Paul R. Shockley,
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² *The Growth Factor*, Bob Moorehead. This prayer is from www.bible.org under illustrations "pastor."