

Pastoral care at Immanuel – part 2

While waiting to begin please read and start discussing the case study below...

Recap: Biblical pastoral care e.g., Ephesians 4:11-16, Colossians 1:28-29

both pastors and church members...

sharing both the Bible and practical care...

for the purpose of sanctification

= an overflow of the covenant relationship: “I will be your God, you will be my people”

An imaginary case study to think about: meet Bill...

He’s a 34 year old married man at church. He has two children under 5. He’s over-stretched at work and has tensions in his marriage. He’s a fellowship group leader, but is spiritually in bad shape. Recently, he found himself attracted to a woman in his workplace: he opened to her and found her a great and sympathetic listener. He came close to a terrible fall. He decided to seek help.

He spoke to Fred at church, who was sympathetic about his work-life balance, but had nothing else to say. Then he met Brian, an elder, who referred him to the pastor.

He talked with the pastor, who listened carefully. He told him that he needs to love his wife (Eph. 5), be a good father (Eph. 6) and flee temptation (1 Cor. 6). He told him to read his Bible regularly and make fellowship group a priority. He urged Bill to see this as a crisis point – if he doesn’t act now it will be too late.

Bill is chastened and glad for some serious direction. He determines to change. Things improve slightly, but the pressure then increases. His wife becomes depressed and needs psychiatric help. The church family provides meals and lifts for her to hospital appointments.

Bill is still struggling, and a much more serious “incident” occurs with his co-worker. He is devastated, but can’t tell anyone at church what has happened. So he begins to lead a double life.

- **Some questions to think about:**

What has the church done well?

Where are the gaps?

Has Bill received pastoral care?

“Speaking the truth in love”: genuinely Christian conversation¹

The power of words

Proverbs 10:11, “The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life, but the mouth of the wicked conceals violence”

Matthew 12:34-37, “... For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.

³⁵ The good person out of his good treasure brings forth good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure brings forth evil. ³⁶ I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak, ³⁷ for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.”

Speaking with a Biblical agenda

Ephesians 4:29-30, “Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. ³⁰ And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.”

1. Consider the person only what is helpful for building others up
2. Consider the problem as fits the occasion
3. Consider the process that it may benefit those who listen

Putting it into practice

1. It's hard!
2. Being honest about our own struggles and sins
3. Moving towards... our brothers and sisters
4. Time... meals... walk... sharing life
5. More interested in knowing than being known
6. Some things *not* to say!²
7. “How can I pray for you?”

Let's pray!

- What should we be praying for our church as a whole?
- From what we've been learning today is there anything specific that moves you to
 - Thanksgiving and praise
 - Confession
 - Petition / ask for the Lord's help

¹ See “Talk”, chapter 7 in *Relationships: a mess worth making*, by Timothy Lane and Paul Tripp.

² See two short blog articles at www.ccef.org: (1) “What not say to those who are suffering” and (2) “More things not to say to those who are suffering.”