

8 reasons to be a bi-vocational pastor

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MCMINNVILLE, Tenn. (BP) -- Should any pastor be bi-vocational? It's a question that has been around for a long time. In order to give an informed answer, it would help to understand what we mean by "bi-vocational."

The basic understanding of the term is a person who has two vocations. When used in regard to a pastor, it indicates the pastor has another source of income beyond the church.

The term "part-time" is not an accurate way to describe a bi-vocational pastor. He may be receiving a partial salary, but he is still a full-time pastor. The best way to define a pastor who receives all of his income from a church is fully funded, not full-time.

Here are just a few of the myths about bi-vocational pastors and churches:

1. If a bi-vocational pastor had enough faith, he would just quit his job and trust God to meet his needs.
2. If a bi-vocational pastor were a good enough preacher, he could get a bigger church.
3. A small congregation doesn't deserve to be called a church.
4. A church is not a real church if it does not have a full menu of activities.

So, should any pastor be bi-vocational? The answer is "yes" if any of the following conditions apply:

1. If he is inspired by the example of the Apostle Paul. Paul supported himself by making tents (Acts 18:3) while he focused on preaching the Gospel and starting churches. He refused to be a burden to others (2 Thessalonians 3:7-9).
2. If he is willing to work so a small church can have a pastor.
3. If he does not view this church as a stepping stone to a bigger and "better" church.
4. If he is willing to invest his life in a small church setting which may never be able to pay him a full-time salary.
5. If he is interested in taking the light of Christ into the marketplace of the world.
6. If he would like to see his church invest more of its money in ministry and missions.

7. If he is committed to planting a church in a community where there is little or no Gospel witness.

8. If he feels led to be an intentional bi-vocational pastor, perhaps because he has a business or career that God had provided and is using to provide for his family. Many of these experience a call to ministry later in life.

Yes, there are many cases where a pastor would be bi-vocational. Why would anyone be critical of a man who is willing to work double duty so he can provide for his family, while giving pastoral leadership to a church that needs him?

Without a doubt, our Lord said "well done" to the Apostle Paul after he finished his work on earth. Without a doubt, He will say the same words to many bi-vocational pastors and their families, who have answered the call and been willing to sacrifice and serve in unsung places for the glory of God.

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