

Vancleave Church of Christ Weekly Newsletter

Dedicated to spiritual encouragement and local Christian ministry

December 12, 2021

Scripture Reading: Psalms 34:8

Our Senior Pastor, Part 1 *by Duane Patton*

Never in the New Testament text is there a reference to, an example of or the authority for the “senior pastor” concept at the local church. Yet, both the term and the office are being applied in many congregations today. Usually, “senior pastor” refers to the role of the main or preacher where others within the local church are working in a preaching capacity. Biblically speaking, a faithful Christian male can function locally in a mixed assembly (where both men and women are present) as a pulpit minister / evangelist and yet never serve as a pastor. Likewise, one who is scripturally qualified to be a pastor serves as one with at least another or among others in a given congregation. Of course, this pastor may also preach, but his role is not necessarily that of a preacher. How did the concept of the “senior pastor” develop since no New Testament justification exists to support it? Consider the following with respect to verifiable church history.

The church began around AD 33 (see Acts 2). After a few hundred years, several teachings of purely human construct became accepted as “doctrine.” The local, public organization of the church as described in New Testament Scripture was distorted by church leaders. The one-man-rule over multiple churches concept soon became the accepted, public order. Local pastors ruling over individual congregations (i.e., God’s design) were eventually absorbed into/replaced by a Roman-styled government. This departure from God’s word eventually represented a corruption of God’s plan for the organization of the local church (cf., **Acts 20:29, 30**).

A very noble reformation followed this departure from God’s will, but it failed to restore New Testament church organization. In fact, a restoration of the true church was not largely in view at that time, only a reformation of a grossly distorted system of faith. Sadly, the results of reformation retained many vestiges of the former, corrupt church organization. Among these was the one-man-rule, now loosely recognized as the role of “senior pastor.” In a sense, the reformation eliminated only certain key errors of doctrine while the general organization of the fallen church remained much the same but with different names and some new roles applied. Next week we will discover the real identity of our Senior Pastor!

Seeking first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness...

Services:

Sunday

9:00 AM Bible Class
10:00 AM Worship

6:00 PM Worship

Wednesday:

6:00 PM
Prayer & Bible Study

Local Works of Faith:

Sunnybrook Children’s Home
Gulf Coast Bible Camp
Local Food Pantry
Annual Youth Events
Back-Pack Buddies
The Gospel of Christ TV (Fox 25)
(Every Sunday at 6:30 AM)

Foreign Missions:

Guyana, South America
India

Local Wi-Fi Network Access:

SSID: 2Wire029

Key: 3995723302

E-mail: vcocministry@vancleavechurch.org

Web Site: <https://www.vancleavechurch.org>

Subscribe to these on YouTube:

Vancleave Church of Christ Digital Ministries
The Mississippi Gospel Minute



The eyes of the LORD are upon the righteous, and His ears are open unto their cry. ~ Psalms 34:15

Recent Prayer Requests:

- **Linda Kenney:** Continues to fight chronic bronchitis.
- **Maxine Robinson:** Cut herself accidentally and is having trouble healing.
- **Joe Dorris Box (The mother of Naomi Rouse):** Suffering from a recent stroke.
- **Lou and Bette Dick:** Returning to Indiana for a season. Prayers requested for safe travel.
- _____

Please Continue to Remember These in Prayer

David Hines	Joan Martin	Cindy Stevens	Tonya Organ
Harvey Goldensup	Jack Hayes	Roy Corbin	Mike Kenney
Mary Culbreth	Mark Damron	Paul Langham	Mary McDaniel

Have requests or other announcements? Send email to vcocministry@vancleavemchurch.org

WEEKLY WORD OF ENCOURAGEMENT: ALL “good” things this side of eternity must end, but God has promised eternity to those who love Him! “Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear” (Hebrews 12:29)

Daily Bible Reading Plan for 2021, Week 47

- MONDAY** Acts 11-12
Why do you think God would allow Peter to be freed from prison but James to be killed?
- TUESDAY** Acts 13-14
Paul summarizes the Gospel (so to speak) in one sermon. Do you think his sermon was effective?
- WEDNESDAY** James 1-5
Do you believe that James wrote/taught in a way that is inconsistent with other Scriptures?
- THURSDAY** Acts 15-16
What do you think Paul meant by telling the jailor to “believe on the Lord Jesus” to be saved?
- FRIDAY** Galatians 1-3
What did Paul mean when he said Christians are not “under the law”?
- SATURDAY** Galatians 4-6
How might the works of the flesh be a threat to those who bear the fruit of the Spirit?
- SUNDAY** Acts 17; 18:1-18
Notice how even during times of difficulty the Gospel can change people for good.

“...they received the word with all readiness of mind...” (Acts 17:11)