

Giving Your Pastor Feedback After a Sermon...

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“Good sermon.” “Helpful!” “Interesting.” “Awesome message.” “Thanks, Pastor!” Pastors hear these sorts of comments after sermons from time to time. Some may come more frequently than others. But if you ask most pastors who care about feeding the flock and who have literally emptied all that they have in that hour of heralding, many who approach them after sermons unknowingly do not provide helpful feedback. It’s not necessarily bad. It’s not necessarily harmful. It’s just not the *most* helpful. Preachers have heard the standard lines that people give on their way out of the church building when they give a brief word before heading home. Ministers have heard those. But feedback that is *more* helpful and more thoughtful is what every pastor needs. Here are a few helpful pointers in giving your shepherd *helpful feedback after he has preached the Word of God to you*.

- 1. Be specific in your feedback.** Try to frame your feedback around what the message taught you, reminded you, convicted you, and how you need to change in light of the preached Word. Perhaps share one thing that you learned about God’s character, one thing that you saw of Christ & His glory in the text, and one way that the Spirit convicted you of a specific sin that you must mortify. Fight the generalization & be specific.
- 2. Be careful not to flatter.** Don't necessarily -- and always -- tell your pastor: "Great sermon!" Be assured of this, the devil has already told him that as soon as he sits down when he's through preaching. Satan wants to puff up your pastor and flatter him so that he trusts in his eloquence and not in the Spirit to accomplish the work -- even after the proclamation is through. If it was a good sermon, tell him *what* helped you as your shepherd guided you into the text. Be careful not to flatter him: his eloquence, his finesse, his skills.
- 3. Be diligent to apply.** In all honesty, the best way to encourage your pastor is just to do what God says in His Word. As your pastor preaches and makes the Word clear, walk in obedience. Perhaps it’s one month, or six months, or even one year later. You approach your pastor and carefully, prayerfully, and thoughtfully share with him how a sermon way back when really impacted you and how you specifically confessed your sin, deliberately put on righteousness, and have seen the Spirit enable you to walk in new habits in further conforming you to Christ!
- 4. Be periodic and intentional about loving your shepherd.** Preaching is the hardest work on the planet. It is also the most weighty and serious work. Preachers will stand before Almighty God and give an account for everything that he has said from the pulpit. If that isn’t enough, he'll stand before God and give an account for how he cared for every individual soul that God mercifully entrusted to his shepherding care. Encourage your shepherd. Care for your shepherd. Love him. Pray for him. Support him. Serve him. Minister to him thoughtfully!
- 5. Be careful what you say and how you say it immediately following the sermon.** Yes, your pastor is a merely a man. He's human. Your pastor, as a faithful herald of God, has just poured everything he's got into the faithful, clear, powerful, dependent, urgent, persuasive preaching & crying forth of God's Word. Careful with the immediate questions that begin with, “Did you realize you mispronounced...” or “I disagree with you on this point...” This is not to suggest that there's not a time for helpful sermon feedback. But perhaps a phone call or an email the following week with a desire to get together over coffee to open the Word and discuss further might be more appropriate and more loving for his own emotions. Additionally, be careful: after the pastor has preached a sermon, try not to ask: "so, how are you doing?" Or, "What's up?" Your pastor, if he is a faithful spokesman for God, is exhausted, emotionally, physically, and mentally drained -- literally. He just gave birth to the sermon that he's been working on for the past week. Rather than trivial conversation, thank him for directing your mind to Scripture, your heart to Christ, your will toward joyful obedience.