

CHARGE TO THE MINISTER

I charge you, first of all, to love God supremely. The intensity of this relationship will determine the spirit and motivation and performance of your entire ministry. Cultivate that love for God that you are now experiencing through secret devotion, constant prayer, and the careful study of God's Word. God does not share His Lordship with another. Let every demand upon your time and strength be subjugated to the growth and development of your life in its intimate relationship to Jesus Christ.

I charge you, secondly, to be a servant of God to people. The calling of the Christian minister is primarily that of a servant. Guard against the multiplicity of ministerial duties which will tempt you to choose the non-essential functions and so fragment your ministry that it dissipates its very strength. It will behoove you to remember that people are more important than things, institutions, rules or schedules. Yours must be the work of the preacher, an evangelistic voice interpreting God's Word in apocalyptic days; yours must be the work of a pastor, whose heart never becomes hardened through intimacy or familiarity with the congregation; yours must be the work of an administrator who maintains a constant vigil over the organization, carefully delegating authority to others so as not to become encumbered with the endless detail of the administrative office, and yet not shunning the menial task, as if it were below your calling.

Finally, I charge you to keep the spirit of the ministry as Paul presents it in his second letter to Timothy: "Before God, and before Jesus Christ who is to judge all living and dead, I adjure you by his coming appearance and his reign, proclaim the message, press it home on all occasions, convenient or inconvenient, use argument, reproof, and appeal, with all the patience that the work of teaching requires. For the time will come when they will not stand wholesome teaching, but will follow their own fancy and gather a crowd of teachers to tickle their ears. They will stop their ears to the truth and turn to mythology. But you yourself must keep calm and sane at all times, face hardship, work to spread the Gospel, and do all the duties of your calling."