

~Other Speakers S-Z: David Servant:

A pastor makes another wrong assumption if he thinks that his teaching responsibility is primarily one of delivering weekly public lectures. Jesus' teaching ministry consisted not only of public sermons (and for the most part, it seems they were fairly short), but also of private conversations that were initiated by His inquisitive disciples. Moreover, such conversations were not limited to one half-hour of one day of the week at a church building, but occurred along seashores, in homes, and walking along dusty roads, as Jesus lived His life in full view of His disciples. That same teaching model was followed by the apostles. After Pentecost, the twelve taught "in the temple and from house to house" (Acts 5:42, emphasis added). They had daily interaction with the community of believers. Paul also taught "publicly and from house to house" (Acts 20:20; emphasis added).

At this point, if you are a pastor, you may be comparing your teaching ministry to that of Jesus and the first apostles. Perhaps you are even beginning to wonder if what you have been doing is what God intends for you to do, or are you just doing more of what hundreds of years of church traditions have taught you to do. If you are wondering, that is good. That is very good. That is the first step in the right direction.

Maybe you've thought even further. Perhaps you said to yourself, "Where could I ever find the time that such a ministry would require, teaching people from house to house, or involving them in my daily life so that I primarily influence them by my example?" Now that is a wonderful question, because it could lead you to keep wondering if there is something even more wrong with the modern concept of the pastor's role.

Perhaps you even thought to yourself, "I'm not sure I would want to live my life so closely with people in my church. I was taught in Bible school that a pastor should never get too close to his congregation. He must keep some distance in order to maintain their professional respect. He can't be close friends with them."

Such a thought reveals that something is indeed very wrong with the way things are so often done in the modern church. Jesus was so close with the twelve that one of them felt quite comfortable leaning his head on His breast at a common meal (see John 13:23-25). They literally lived together for several years. So much for keeping a professional distance from one's disciples in order to successfully minister to them!