

Principles of Serving Under A Senior Pastor

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When understanding how to serve effectively under a senior pastor, it is important remember some basics about people and human nature. Afterall, we are all created by the same God! We have His image within us. The senior pastor is no different from you in this respect.

Human Nature:

We love it when we are treated with love and respect.
Therefore, do all you can to serve your senior pastor with respect.



Human Nature:

We “bristle” when we are mistreated, belittled, or threatened.
Therefore, don't threaten the senior pastor by your actions that may be interpreted as undermining his authority.



The Challenge of Submission

It is not a “natural” thing to submit to another person. Our human nature strives for independence from a very early age. One of the first words you ever spoke was likely, “No” or “Mine.” Some of the most powerful scriptures regarding submission were written in reference to the Roman government or slave-owning masters!

“Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to curry their favor, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord. Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.” Colossians 3: 22-24



“Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ. Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not people, because you know that the Lord will reward each one for whatever good they do, whether they are slave or free.” Ephesians 6: 5-8

“Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human authority: whether to the emperor, as the supreme authority, or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right. For it is God's will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish people. Live as free people, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as God's slaves. Show proper respect to everyone, love the family of believers, fear God, honor the emperor.” 1 Peter 2: 13-17



“Slaves, in reverent fear of God submit yourselves to your masters, not only to those who are good and considerate, but also to those who are harsh. For it is commendable if someone bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because they are conscious of God. But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God. To this you were called because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.” 1 Peter 2: 18-21

“Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, whoever rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong... Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also as a matter of conscience.” Romans 13: 1-5

Is submission “blind”?

Submitting to authorities doesn't cause you or expect you to be “blind” to the situation. If a situation is not the best for the children, or for your ministry team, you can't ignore it.

Submission affects **HOW** you react to the situation,
not **IF** you react!



Remember, God has placed you as a shepherd of the children!

Is submission weak?

Submission is correctly defined as “Power under control.” None of the early disciples were weak. They remained passionate and focused, even while submitting.

Submission affects **HOW** you react to the situation,
not **IF** you react!



How to lead while submitting

God didn't place you in a ministry leadership position unless He wanted you to lead! Leaders move toward a vision! Leaders don't back down easily. Leaders use their passion constructively.



When you disagree with something the senior pastor says or does regarding the children’s ministry.

Pause, Pray, Consider!

1. **Pray for understanding and direction.**

- Ask God to help you see the situation through his eyes.
- Ask God to direct your thoughts, words, and actions.



2. **IF the situation must be addressed** (it affects the children or team members in a significant way).

- Compliment the senior pastor in his leadership strength.
- Ask him to help you understand all that went into his decision.
Emphasize that you want to better understand how to support him.
- Humbly share your views, and how you see this decision affecting the children or the ministry team.



3. **If there is no change in the decision, serve faithfully!**

- Be positive about the decision to your team.
- If necessary, plan to “cushion” the possible negative results.



NEVER put the safety of the children or your team at risk. If necessary, be prepared to “take a hit” for the children or your team!

The “Bottom Line”

- ★ **Serve the Lord FIRST.** Honor the Lord by serving those in authority over you respectfully and professionally.
- ★ **Earn your senior pastor or ministry director’s respect** by your faithful, humble, respectful actions toward him.
- ★ **Trust God** to take care of you and the children!

