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insights for today's minister.

# FOR PREACHERS ONLY

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**The Preacher's Call**

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**The Minister As a Person**

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**The Preacher and His Home**

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**Getting Started in the Ministry**

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**The Minister and His Preaching**

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**The Minister and Divine Leadership**

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**The Minister and Authority**

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**J. T. PUGH**

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by J. T. Pugh

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# 1

## The Preacher's Call

The most solemnly important duties that anyone can undertake are involved in the office and work of a minister of the gospel. This point is clear when we recognize the titles by which the Bible designates a minister. He is a "watchman," a "witness," a "teacher," a "pastor," an "evangelist," a "minister of Christ," an "ambassador for Christ," and many other appellations equally significant. Who can doubt the weighty responsibility conferred by the preaching of the gospel?

Into this office no one may enter unbidden. "And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron" (Hebrews 5:4). The United Pentecostal Church recognizes the necessity of a divine call, and in her economy it is considered improper and dishonest for anyone to take upon himself the office of public preaching or divine administration before he is divinely called. Licensing and ordination are administered

upon the assumption that the selecting hand of God has preceded the hands of the presbyter y. No accrediting commission that the church might convey is valid in God's sight unless the applicant for the ministr y knows and feels in his own heart that he has been called by God to preach.

Thus preaching is not altogether a learned profession. We can refer to it as a profession in that it should carry with it ethics and respect peculiar to its field. But the holy ministry is more than a profession. It is a vocation and more, a sacred call. It is not a pursuit chosen from among many equally obligatory, but one accepted upon the persuasion and conviction that "I have been called to preach." While Christ was upon this earth, He selected from a larger group of disciples those who were later to minister the Word, but He did not transfer to them the right of appointing their successors. This prerogative He still retains, and He calls His ministers now, as He did then.

### **There Must Be a Definite Call**

The problems and discouragements associated with the ministr y make it imperative that every Pentecostal preacher be convinced of his calling. More than one good person has given up under fire and returned to secular work in grave doubt that he was ever called to preach. To exert pressure upon a likely ministerial prospect to announce his call immediately is an unjust and dangerous practice. This decision is one that the prospect must arrive at for himself. Thus he approaches the sacred grounds of divine choice and human will. In this place there is only room for one person and his God. The recognition that this decision will involve the rest of his life should caution

all not to meddle with a matter so far-reaching and personal. Perhaps there are some who struggle along with a haunting doubt that they were ever called of God. If they resign from the ministry, they face an awkward situation under another person's ministry. It hurts a person to fail and admit that he was wrong in his aspirations. Some carry such scars to their grave. How it pays to be careful in influencing anyone to announce his call to preach!

After a person has arrived at such a decision for himself, of course, it is in order to offer all encouragement to qualify himself and pursue his calling heartily. Most of the time a person who has a real call from God becomes willing and eager to do just that. Necessity is laid upon him. His choice is not a preference among alternatives. Ultimately he has no alternative. The call of the eternal is in his soul. He feels very deeply that "woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel" (I Corinthians 9:16).

Paul stated the strong impetus of his call in Colossians 1:28-29: "Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily." We also read in II Corinthians 5:20: "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."

There may be diversity of opinions regarding the evidence of this call to preach. However, all can agree that there are some basic motivations inherent in truly called ministerial aspirants. One of the first evidences of a ministerial call is a strong heart hunger for a close fellowship with God.