

KEY BOUNDARIES TO ESTABLISH AS A PASTOR

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It may be helpful to identify a few boundaries ministers need to have in place:

Theological boundaries- Ministry should be done with theological integrity; sometimes, ministers may feel obliged to compromise their theology; e.g. in performing controversial marriages; "private" baptisms, Christian funeral services for non-religious people, etc.

Ethical boundaries- Issues concerning morality and values-- ministry should be done with integrity; e.g. a minister may feel pressured to compromise on ethical convictions by tolerating poor (if not illegal) church business practice for the "survival" of the local church, etc.)

Personal boundaries- Private sphere may be violated; personal space needs to be created by finding spaces away from the ministry; this is especially true for clergy living in parsonages connected to the church)

Family boundaries- This is an often overlooked personal boundary. Ministers must be very intentional to draw boundaries around their families. Too often is the privacy of clergy families violated. In many congregations, there are still high expectations on clergy spouses and other family members.

Spiritual boundaries--It is absolutely essential that leaders in ministry block time out for times of spiritual refreshment. Even Jesus got away from his ministry for this purpose.

Economic boundaries- It's easy to get persuaded into making economic sacrifices in the ministry. For example: many clergy are expected to forgo in a "spirit of modesty" an adequate pension plan or other equity-building alternatives.

Professional Boundaries- There is of course a code of professional ethics every clergy person should be morally committed to. These boundaries may vary from denomination to denomination, or even from local church to local church.



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