

# Five Challenges Facing the Church

---

By Steve Higginbotham

- Preaching For “The Choir” But Not To “The Choir.”

The church doesn't need professional pulpiteers to please the church. Rather, what the church needs are men of conviction who will preach not only “for” the church but “to” the church, challenging her ethics, calling for repentance, upholding God's doctrine, and leading the church out of mediocrity.

- Youth Ministry That Caters To the Strong & Beautiful.

It's easy to fall into the trap of catering to the advantaged. The first century church stumbled here too. They were blinded by status. The rich, the beautiful, the strong and athletic...these people are “easy to love.” But we need youth ministry that doesn't ignore the poor, unpopular, and discarded, and equally reaches out to them as well as the strong and beautiful.

- Shepherds Who Shepherd the Flock, But Not the “Fence Jumpers.”

It's easy to oversee those who are compliant, but shepherds must also be willing to go, search for, find, and safely return the sheep who have left the flock and jumped the fence. Elders can easily “busy themselves” with the compliant, but they must manage their time to go after the “fence jumpers,” too.

- Deacons Who Work at Not Working.

The term, “deacon” is not a title, but a work. It is an agreement to become a special servant of the church. When a deacon stops serving in that special capacity, when he stops desiring to work, when he seeks to do escape work, he needs to reevaluate his agreement.

- Members Who Maintain the Premises, But Won't Maintain Their Promises.

When the bulk of the congregation's work revolves around the building, grounds, fellowship meals, activities, and weekly worship, the church will suffer. The church needs to remember to maintain the promise they made to make Jesus Lord of their lives. That promise demands a level of commitment that has to be taken outside of the premises and into the world.

While these aren't the only challenges the church faces, they do identify five that we can begin working on today. I long for the day when the greatest challenge the church faces comes from the Devil and not ourselves.