

Pastoral Candidacy Portfolio

Doctrine, ministry experience, calling, and pastoral practice

Micah Bennett

Pastor of Discipleship and Teaching

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Pastor of Discipleship and Teaching

Preferred: Micah

MINISTRY SUMMARY

Pastoral candidate committed to expositional teaching, patient discipleship, shared leadership, and the ordinary ministry of a healthy local church.

Ministry emphases: Biblical teaching, member care, leadership development, and local mission

Experience: Seven years of volunteer and staff ministry experience

EDUCATION

Covenant Hills Seminary (fictional)

2018 - 2021

Master of Divinity

Field: Pastoral Ministry

- Biblical interpretation, preaching, pastoral care, and church history

MINISTRY EXPERIENCE

Cedar Hollow Community Church (fictional)

2021 - Present

Director of Discipleship

Location: Cedar Hollow, Tennessee · **Reporting relationship:** Works with the lead pastor and elders · **Scope / size:** Details available during a candidacy conversation

- Coordinates adult discipleship, teacher development, and pastoral follow-up.
- Teaches regularly, develops volunteer leaders, supports member care, and helps evaluate curriculum.
- Established a documented teacher-development process and a consistent follow-up rhythm for new group leaders.

Riverbend Fellowship (fictional)

2018 - 2021

Pastoral Resident

Location: Northfield, Kentucky · **Reporting relationship:** Supervised by the pastoral team

- Participated in preaching preparation, visitation, small groups, and ministry planning.
- Assisted with teaching, member care, and volunteer coordination.
- Completed a structured residency with documented feedback from supervising pastors.

OTHER PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Northfield Public Library (fictional)

2016 - 2018

Community Programs Coordinator

- Coordinated public programs, volunteers, schedules, and written communication.
- Improved program documentation and volunteer onboarding consistency.

TEACHING AND PREACHING

Cedar Hollow Community Church (fictional)

2021 - Present

Adult Bible teacher and occasional preacher

- Teaches adult classes and preaches when invited by the elders.
- <https://example.com/micah-bennett/sermons>

Personal Testimony

I grew up around a local church where Scripture, prayer, and ordinary Christian faithfulness were visible. I learned the vocabulary of Christianity and knew how to appear attentive, but familiarity with church was not the same as resting in Christ. I measured myself against people I considered less disciplined and assumed that being respectable, useful, and religious made me acceptable to God. That confidence allowed me to acknowledge mistakes without facing the deeper pride, self-rule, and unbelief beneath them. The people around me could see outward steadiness, yet I did not understand why I needed mercy rather than simply improvement.

As these truths became personal, through patient teaching in the Gospel of John and conversations with older believers, the holiness of God and the purpose of Christ's death became personal rather than merely familiar. I began to see that sin was not only a list of obvious failures; it was my refusal to love and trust God as He deserves. I could not repair that breach through discipline or ministry activity. I cannot identify one dramatic moment that explains the whole change, but over several months God used His Word to dismantle my self-reliance. I confessed my sin, turned from the hope of establishing my own righteousness, and entrusted myself to Jesus Christ—His righteous life, sufficient death, and bodily resurrection—as my only hope of forgiveness and life. (*John 16:8–11; Mark 1:15; Ephesians 2:8–9*)

At the center of this change was the good news of Jesus Christ. The gospel I believed is the good news that the holy and gracious God acts to save sinners who cannot rescue themselves. Jesus Christ, truly God and truly man, obeyed where we have rebelled, bore judgment in the place of His people, rose bodily from the dead, and reigns as Lord. Forgiveness and reconciliation with God are gifts of grace, received through repentance and faith rather than earned through moral achievement, family background, theological knowledge, or ministry usefulness. Christ's resurrection assures me that His sacrifice was accepted and that everyone united to Him will share His life. My confidence before God therefore rests outside me—in Christ and His finished work. (*1 Corinthians 15:1–4; Romans 3:23–26*)

That new faith began to take shape through ordinary life in Christ's church. God established me through ordinary life in a local church. Older believers invited questions, modeled honest prayer, and showed me that maturity includes receiving correction without hiding. A patient small-group leader taught me to read whole passages rather than collect isolated answers. Serving in unnoticed roles exposed how much I wanted recognition, while dependable friends helped me learn to confess sin specifically and repair

strained relationships. Corporate worship, the Lord's Supper, preaching, fellowship, and practical service gradually moved Christianity from private conviction into shared life. The church did not become evidence that I had arrived; it became the community in which grace kept making my remaining pride, impatience, and fear visible and treatable. (*Acts 2:42–47; Hebrews 10:24–25*)

God's work in me remains unfinished, but it is not uncertain. Today I see God's grace less in dramatic claims than in changed direction. I want to understand Scripture, pray honestly, love people patiently, and repent when my words or decisions harm others. People close to me have seen greater willingness to listen, receive criticism, and remain present when a problem cannot be solved quickly. I still battle impatience, the desire to control outcomes, and the temptation to find identity in useful work. Those weaknesses keep teaching me that ministry activity cannot substitute for communion with Christ. I depend on daily Scripture and prayer, weekly worship, candid friendships, rest, and the correction of the church. In seasons of disappointment, I am learning to lament without withdrawing and to receive God's care through other believers rather than presenting strength I do not possess. Slow growth has made me more patient with the unfinished work of grace in other people. My testimony is not a finished spiritual résumé; it is confidence that the Christ who saved me remains faithful to complete His work. (*Philippians 1:6; John 15:4–5*)

Call to Ministry

My desire for pastoral ministry developed through ordinary opportunities to teach, disciple, and care for people rather than through an expectation of receiving a title. As I studied the pastoral epistles and watched faithful elders serve, I became increasingly willing to accept the hidden responsibilities of ministry: preparing carefully, knowing people, addressing conflict, protecting the vulnerable, and remaining accountable. Teaching was initially the most visible attraction, but over time the burden broadened into a desire to help a local church mature through the patient ministry of the Word, prayer, and shared leadership. I learned to distinguish a desire to be heard from a willingness to be responsible for people.

That inward desire was not left to private interpretation. I did not want that inward desire to interpret itself. Pastors, teachers, and church members observed my service and encouraged me to continue developing gifts in teaching, discipleship, organization, and member care. Their affirmation was concrete: they entrusted classes, invited me into pastoral follow-up, evaluated sermons, and asked me to help train volunteers. They also identified limitations, especially my tendency to move toward a solution before listening long enough and my need to delegate earlier. That combination of encouragement and correction has been more valuable than unqualified praise because it has located gifting inside the life and judgment of the church.

The church also gave that affirmation shape through preparation and responsibility. My church confirmed this direction by increasing responsibility under supervision rather than simply affirming an aspiration. A pastoral residency provided structured feedback in preaching preparation, visitation, small-group leadership, and ministry planning. Seminary study strengthened biblical interpretation and theological judgment, while mentors repeatedly connected classroom work to actual people and congregational decisions. In my present role, the elders continue to review my teaching and leadership, and I remain accountable to them as both a staff member and church member. Education and mentoring have been important means of stewardship, but neither replaces character, demonstrated service, or the continuing discernment of a local church. (*Acts 13:1–3; 1 Timothy 4:14*)

Real ministry experience then tested both the desire and the affirmation. Real responsibility has refined my expectations. Coordinating adult discipleship taught me that a clear plan does not remove the need for patient communication, and that volunteer development is slower and more relational than producing

material myself. One poorly explained change created avoidable frustration for several teachers. Listening to their concerns, acknowledging my haste, and rebuilding the process with their participation taught me to value clarity and shared ownership. Other closed doors have helped separate a calling to serve Christ's church from attachment to one position. The fruit I can name is modest but real: teachers have received more consistent preparation, leaders have clearer follow-up, and I have become more candid about limits and mistakes.

For these reasons, my present direction is settled enough to pursue and humble enough to test. I presently believe I should pursue pastoral work centered on biblical teaching, discipleship, member care, and the development of other leaders. A pastor of discipleship and teaching role fits the gifts and experience that have been most consistently affirmed, though I remain open to adjacent responsibilities in which those capacities can meet genuine congregational needs. I would enter a candidacy process prepared to explain my convictions and record honestly, but also prepared to receive a church's judgment about fit. My confidence is not that private desire guarantees an office. It is that Scripture, sustained desire, tested character, observable service, church affirmation, preparation, and providence together provide sufficient reason to pursue this work humbly.

My Doctrinal Statement

A Note on Theological Conviction and Humility

I hold these convictions sincerely and believe they faithfully represent the teaching of Scripture. At the same time, continued study of God's Word has deepened my awareness of my own limitations and my need for theological humility. I desire to be firm where Scripture speaks clearly, cautious where faithful believers differ, and always willing to have my conclusions tested and corrected by the Word of God.

Theological labels can be useful shorthand, but they are often defined differently, exist along a spectrum, and rarely communicate a person's convictions completely. For that reason, I do not assume that any single label or theological system represents all that I believe. I seek instead to state my convictions plainly, distinguish essential doctrines from secondary matters, and pursue the principle: in essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; and in all things, charity.

Scripture and Hermeneutics

I believe the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments are the inspired, true, trustworthy, authoritative, and sufficient written Word of God. Scripture is the final rule for faith and practice and should be interpreted prayerfully according to its grammatical, historical, literary, theological, and canonical context. God makes Himself known through creation, providence, and conscience, rendering humanity accountable, while the saving wisdom that leads to faith in Christ is revealed through Scripture and the gospel. I affirm that Scripture is infallible and true in all that it affirms. Its truthfulness must be understood according to literary form, ordinary language, historical context, and authorial intention.

Key texts: 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21; Luke 24:27; Acts 17:11; Romans 1:18-21; Romans 2:14-16; Psalm 19:7-9; John 17:17

God and the Trinity

I believe in one living and true God, eternal, holy, wise, loving, and sovereign, who exists eternally as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Persons are distinguished by their personal relations, yet share one undivided divine essence and act inseparably toward creation. God created, sustains, and governs all

things without becoming the author of sin or removing human responsibility. I affirm both God's exhaustive sovereignty and meaningful human responsibility while declining to define precisely how divine ordination and creaturely freedom are reconciled.

Key texts: Deuteronomy 6:4; Matthew 28:19; Exodus 34:6-7; Ephesians 1:11; James 1:13; Deuteronomy 30:19

Jesus Christ

I believe that Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God, fully God and fully man, one Person in two distinct and inseparable natures. Conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary, He lived without sin, died as the saving substitute for sinners, rose bodily, ascended, reigns, intercedes, and will return in glory. He remains forever fully God and fully man and is the only Mediator between God and humanity.

Key texts: John 1:1-14; Colossians 1:15-20; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4; 1 Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 7:24-25

The Holy Spirit

I believe that the Holy Spirit is fully divine and personal. He inspired Scripture, glorifies Christ, convicts the world, regenerates and indwells believers, unites them to Christ, produces holiness, distributes gifts, and empowers the church for worship, witness, and service.

Key texts: John 14:16-17; Acts 5:3-4; Titus 3:5-6; Ephesians 5:18

Creation, Humanity, and Sin

I believe that God created all things from nothing and created man in His own image, male and female, and that this distinction belongs to the goodness of His created order. Men and women are equal in dignity and worth before God and are called to glorify Him in their bodies. Manhood and womanhood are gifts of God to be received with gratitude and lived in faithful obedience to His Word. Humanity fell through Adam and Eve into sin, corruption, suffering, and death and cannot return to God by human effort. Satan and other fallen angels oppose God but remain finite creatures under His authority. I affirm God as Creator while leaving the age of the universe and earth unspecified. I affirm the truth and authority of Genesis 1 while leaving the duration or literary structure of the creation days unspecified. I affirm God's purposeful creation of life while leaving the precise biological mechanisms unspecified.

Key texts: Genesis 1:1-31; Genesis 1:26-27; Romans 3:10-23; Ephesians 2:1-3; Hebrews 11:3; Colossians 1:16-17

Gospel and Atonement

I believe that the gospel announces God's saving work through Jesus Christ, who fulfilled all righteousness, died for sins, was buried, and rose bodily. God commands all people to repent and believe the gospel. Saving faith is personal reliance upon Jesus Christ and His saving work, and salvation is by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, to God's glory alone. I affirm that Christ offered Himself as the once-for-all sacrificial substitute whose blood makes atonement, propitiates God's righteous wrath, and cleanses from sin.

Key texts: Mark 1:14-15; 1 Corinthians 15:1-4; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Timothy 2:5-6; Mark 10:45; Hebrews 9:26-28; 1 Peter 2:24

Salvation

I believe that the Holy Spirit brings sinners to new life and faith and unites believers to Christ. In Christ they are justified apart from works, forgiven, reconciled, adopted, sanctified, and assured by God's promises. God will raise, perfect, and glorify His people, and their works will be evaluated without becoming the ground of acceptance. I believe both that God graciously chooses and that sinners are genuinely responsible to repent and believe. I decline to define the logical order between election, foreknowledge, grace, and human response beyond what Scripture clearly states. I also believe that no sinner can come to Christ apart from the prior convicting and enabling work of the Holy Spirit, while leaving the precise nature and extent of that enabling grace undefined. I hold that regeneration, repentance, and faith are inseparably joined in conversion and decline to impose a logical or causal order where Scripture presents them together.

Key texts: Ephesians 2:8-9; Romans 3:21-26; John 3:3-8; Romans 8:29-30; Ephesians 1:4-5; 1 Peter 1:1-2; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; Titus 3:4-7; 2 Corinthians 5:17; John 1:12-13; Titus 3:5-7

Church and Mission

I believe that Christ is Head of the universal church and gathers His people in local congregations for the Word, prayer, worship, fellowship, discipline, service, and mission. The church makes disciples, proclaims the gospel, practices mercy and justice, protects the vulnerable, and remains accountable to lawful authority. I entrust infants and other persons incapable of conscious response to God's perfect justice and mercy without defining the extent of their salvation.

Key texts: Matthew 16:18; Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 2:42-47; Ephesians 2:19-22; Mark 10:14; 2 Samuel 12:23; Genesis 18:25

Baptism and the Lord's Supper

I believe that Christ appointed baptism and the Lord's Supper for His church until He returns. Baptism in the triune name identifies a person with Christ and His visible people. The Supper remembers and proclaims Christ's death, expresses communion with Him and His church, and anticipates His return.

Key texts: Matthew 28:19; Romans 6:3-4; Luke 22:19-20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

Church Government, Offices, and Gender Roles

I believe that Christ governs His church through His Word and Spirit and appoints biblically qualified leaders to shepherd, teach, protect, and equip His people. Church authority is accountable and ministerial, never absolute.

Key texts: Acts 14:23; 1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 4:10-11

Spiritual Gifts

I believe that the Holy Spirit gives gifts to every believer for Christ's glory, the church's edification, and witness in the world. Gifts must be exercised in love, humility, order, accountability, and submission to Scripture. God remains sovereign over healing and miracles.

Key texts: 1 Corinthians 12:4-13; 1 Corinthians 14:1-5; James 5:14-16

Israel, Covenants, and the Kingdom

I believe that the Old and New Testaments reveal one sovereign purpose of God centered in Christ and unfolded through biblical covenants. Jewish and Gentile believers are reconciled in Christ, and God's kingdom, inaugurated in Christ, will be consummated at His return.

Key texts: Genesis 12:1-3; Jeremiah 31:31-34; Romans 11:25-29; Mark 1:14-15

Last Things

I believe that Jesus Christ will return personally, visibly, bodily, and gloriously. The dead will be raised, every person will face His just judgment, and God will renew creation and dwell forever with His

redeemed people in embodied resurrection life. I affirm watchful expectation of Christ's return while leaving the relationship between prophetic signs and the gathering of the church unspecified. I affirm Christ's bodily return, resurrection, judgment, and final kingdom while regarding the precise nature and chronology of the millennium as a secondary matter.

Key texts: 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 1 Corinthians 15:20-26; Revelation 20:11-15; Revelation 21:1-5; Matthew 24:21-31; 2 Thessalonians 2:1-4; Revelation 20:1-6; 1 Corinthians 15:24-28

Marriage, Sexuality, Life, and Public Ethics

I believe that Christian holiness includes love, truth, justice, mercy, sexual purity, generosity, peacemaking, and faithful stewardship. Marriage is an exclusive union of one man and one woman intended by God to endure until death; singleness is honorable. Every human life bears God's image, and biblical forgiveness never eliminates prudent boundaries, civil justice, or the reporting of crime.

Key texts: Genesis 2:18-24; Romans 12:1-2; Romans 13:1-7; James 2:1-9

Authority and Scope of This Statement

I believe that Scripture alone is the final and infallible authority for Christian faith and practice. This statement is a subordinate summary of present doctrinal convictions, does not exhaust Scripture's teaching, and must remain open to correction by the Word of God.

Key texts: 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Acts 17:11; Jude 3

Philosophy of Ministry

The following convictions describe how I seek to serve Christ's church and the pastoral judgments by which I am willing to be evaluated.

Biblical Foundations

Scripture is the final governing authority for the church's doctrine, worship, mission, and pastoral care. I believe faithful ministry begins with confidence that Scripture is breathed out by God, authoritative in all it affirms, and sufficient to form the church in faith and obedience. Sufficiency does not eliminate careful judgment, historical learning, or attention to human experience; it means those resources serve rather than govern the Word. I seek the author's intended meaning through grammatical, historical, literary, and canonical context, allowing clearer passages and the Bible's unfolding storyline to inform difficult texts. Doctrine and application should arise from that work rather than from isolated phrases. The gospel remains central because the life, atoning death, bodily resurrection, reign, and return of Jesus Christ reveal both the church's message and its pattern of life. Grace does not merely begin Christian life; it trains believers toward holiness, frees them to repent, and sustains patient ministry. (*2 Timothy 3:16–17; Luke 24:27; Romans 1:16–17*)

Worship and Ordinances

Gathered worship should be saturated with Scripture through reading, preaching, singing, praying, and the visible proclamation of the gospel in the ordinances. That priority shapes both the order of service and the pastor's preparation: each element should be intelligible, connected to the gospel, and chosen for congregational edification rather than novelty. Leaders serve the congregation's intelligent and heartfelt participation rather than staging a performance for observers. Musical and cultural forms may vary, but the content and purpose of worship must remain governed by God's character, Word, and saving work. Corporate prayer deserves substantial attention because it teaches dependence and gives the church language for praise, lament, confession, intercession, and mission. Baptism should be joined to credible profession, discipleship, and accountable church belonging. The Lord's Supper should be observed regularly with clear explanation, self-examination, gratitude, and pastoral care. Differences on secondary

questions should be handled honestly and charitably rather than obscured. (*Colossians 3:16–17; 1 Timothy 2:1–6; Matthew 28:18–20*)

Shepherding and Formation

Christ ordinarily forms His people through accountable local churches devoted to the Word, fellowship, ordinances, prayer, mutual care, and mission. Within that life together, believers should be known, taught, served, corrected, and sent. Meaningful membership makes mutual commitments of doctrine, care, worship, service, mission, and accountability visible. Elders should know the people well enough to pray intelligently, notice absence and suffering, encourage growth, and address persistent sin. Church discipline must be patient, proportionate, and restorative, seeking repentance, protection, reconciliation, and the honor of Christ rather than institutional control. Discipleship is therefore not a program owned by staff but the shared work of helping one another follow Jesus through truth, example, prayer, encouragement, and correction. Pastoral counsel should be biblically governed and compassionate, attentive to embodied suffering, trauma, and limits, and willing to involve qualified medical or clinical care when appropriate. (*John 10:11–16; Matthew 18:15–20; Colossians 1:28–29*)

Leadership and Equipping

Church authority is ministerial and accountable: leaders serve under Christ's Word rather than exercising personal or unreviewable control. That accountability should be embodied through qualified plural leadership that supplies shared wisdom, complementary gifts, continuity, and protection against isolation. Healthy teams require clear responsibility, honest communication, freedom to raise concerns, and evaluation tied to agreed purposes rather than personality. The aim of pastoral leadership is not to gather every meaningful task around professionals. Christ gives leaders to equip the saints for ministry, so church structures should help members recognize gifts, grow in character and competence, receive feedback, and accept fitting responsibility. Delegation should include authority, resources, coaching, and review. Developing others may appear slower than doing the work personally, but it better reflects the maturity and shared service described in the New Testament. (*Mark 10:42–45; Acts 14:23; Ephesians 4:11–16*)

Mission and Contextual Wisdom

The gospel and biblical commands do not change, while methods, schedules, forms, and programs should be evaluated with contextual wisdom and pastoral patience. The church is sent to make disciples by bearing clear witness to Christ locally and among all peoples. Leaders should equip believers to speak the gospel naturally, accurately, and courageously within the relationships God gives them, while the congregation prays, gives, sends, partners, and develops workers for cross-cultural mission and healthy church multiplication. The message and commands of Scripture do not change, but methods, schedules, programs, and institutional habits require continual evaluation. Understanding a community can help a church communicate and serve wisely without allowing demographic preference or cultural pressure to govern its identity. Contextual listening should include relationships with neighbors, civic servants, schools, mercy ministries, and other faithful churches. Such listening identifies real needs and cultural assumptions without allowing urgency or popularity to replace biblical priorities. Change should therefore be led with theological clarity, careful listening, proportion, and patience. Programs should be treated as tools rather than permanent measures of faithfulness, and leaders should be willing to preserve, revise, or end them according to their actual service of biblical priorities. (*Matthew 28:18–20; Acts 1:8; 1 Corinthians 9:19–23*)

Character and Ministry Commitments

I aim to serve through prayer, the Word, sacrificial love, patient leadership, honest evaluation, prompt repentance, and trust in God for results. Character and faithfulness in ordinary relationships matter more than visibility, charisma, or institutional growth. Pastoral structures should protect the qualifications Scripture emphasizes: self-control, hospitality, gentleness, faithfulness, teachability, good reputation, and integrity in the household. Leaders need meaningful accountability, appropriate boundaries, and relationships in which correction can be offered without fear. I want to lead with conviction and humility, acknowledge limits, repent promptly, and distinguish God-given responsibility from the illusion that I can control results. A church should expect me to pray, labor in the Word, love people sacrificially, communicate honestly, develop others, evaluate ministry without defensiveness, and remain present through slow or difficult seasons. It should also expect that my private practices will support rather than contradict public teaching: ordinary devotional life apart from sermon preparation, honest stewardship, appropriate rest, careful speech, fidelity in relationships, and willingness to seek help before strain becomes secrecy. I want important decisions to be made with fellow leaders who can question

assumptions, hear affected people, and record responsibility clearly. When serious allegations arise, leaders should neither protect an institution nor presume guilt; they should secure safety, report as law and policy require, preserve evidence, avoid conflicts of interest, and use fair outside help when warranted. Numerical growth can be received with gratitude, but it cannot excuse compromised character, neglected people, or methods that contradict the message. Neither should a difficult season automatically be interpreted as failure when the church is pursuing biblical faithfulness with patience. When plans fail, the proper response is not concealment or blame but truth, learning, and renewed dependence on Christ, the chief Shepherd of His church. Over time I hope faithfulness will look less like a collection of impressive moments and more like a durable pattern of truth, prayer, courage, gentleness, shared service, and hope. *(1 Timothy 3:1–7; 1 Corinthians 4:1–5; 1 Peter 5:2–4)*

Preaching and Teaching Philosophy

Biblical Authority and Purpose

The preacher serves under the Word of God and possesses no authority to replace its meaning with personal preference. The authority of preaching belongs to God's Word, not to the personality, office, or rhetorical skill of the preacher. The preacher therefore serves under the text and must make its meaning, force, and implications clear rather than using it as a pretext for preferred ideas. I ordinarily aim for the main claim and shape of a sermon to arise from the main claim and shape of the passage. Because Scripture is one unfolding revelation fulfilled in Christ, preaching should help hearers understand each text within the whole counsel of God and its legitimate relationship to the gospel. The purpose is not information alone. Faithful preaching calls unbelievers to repent and believe, strengthens believers in worship and obedience, and equips the church to recognize and speak biblical truth. (*2 Timothy 4:1–2; Acts 20:27*)

Interpretation and Preparation

Ordinary preaching should explain and apply the main point of a biblical passage in a manner faithful to its structure, context, and purpose. Preparation begins with repeated reading, prayer, and attention to the passage's grammar, historical setting, genre, literary flow, and canonical location. I write a concise statement of the author's purpose before deciding how the sermon should be arranged. Biblical and systematic theology help test conclusions and connect the text to the rest of Scripture without flattening its particular contribution. Original languages and responsible commentaries clarify questions I cannot resolve by English reading alone, but they should remain servants of understanding rather than displays of expertise. I then identify what the text assumes, commands, promises, exposes, and commends, asking how those realities meet the actual congregation. Prayer belongs throughout this labor because disciplined study cannot create spiritual life or faithful response. (*Nehemiah 8:8; 2 Timothy 2:15; Luke 24:27*)

Proclamation and Application

Clear explanation establishes meaning, fitting illustration aids understanding, and pastoral application presses truth toward faith and obedience. In delivery, explanation establishes what the text means, illustration helps hearers see and remember, and application presses truth toward faith and obedience. Applications should arise from the passage and account for different hearers: the doubting, the suffering, the complacent, the mature, the young in faith, and the unbeliever. I want authority and warmth to coexist. Earnestness is appropriate because God has spoken, while pastoral patience is necessary because people often change slowly and carry burdens the preacher cannot see. Series planning should normally include sustained exposition while also attending to canonical breadth and significant pastoral needs. Clear structure, concrete language, and disciplined length help the congregation follow the argument rather than admire the preparation. (*James 1:22; 1 Thessalonians 2:7–12*)

Dependence, Character, and Growth

Preparation and delivery require disciplined labor joined to prayerful dependence on the Holy Spirit and a life that remains open to correction. Preaching requires disciplined labor joined to dependence on the Holy Spirit and a life that remains open to correction. I pray for understanding, love for the congregation, courage to say what the text says, and humility about my own blind spots. Trusted pastors and members should be able to evaluate clarity, faithfulness, tone, application, and delivery. When I misstate a fact or mishandle a text, I should correct it plainly. The church's teaching ministry also extends through classes, groups, counseling, mentoring, and homes. I therefore want to develop other teachers and review our teaching with fellow leaders. (*1 Corinthians 2:1–5; Colossians 3:16; 1 Timothy 4:15–16*)

Family and Personal Example

Character and Household

Public ministry must be supported by the same character expected in ordinary relationships. If married or responsible for children, a pastor must not treat church activity as permission to neglect covenant promises, caregiving, presence, or repentance at home. Family members possess their own callings and gifts; they are not unpaid extensions of a pastoral job description. I want household leadership to be visible in sacrificial love, dependable presence, listening, shared wisdom, and prompt confession rather than control. Hospitality should be generous but sustainable, and private family experiences should never become sermon material or candidacy evidence without appropriate consent. A church may rightly consider observable household faithfulness while also respecting the dignity and boundaries of every person involved.

Integrity and Ministry Boundaries

Integrity requires concrete practices, not confidence in good intentions. I welcome ordinary financial controls, transparent reimbursement and compensation processes, disclosure of conflicts, and accountability in the use of church resources. Sexual faithfulness and digital integrity require clear boundaries, honest relationships, and prompt confession when temptation or failure occurs. Counseling and ministry relationships need appropriate settings, clear scope, careful records or consultation when warranted, and referral when needs exceed pastoral competence. No counselee, volunteer, employee, or congregant should be cultivated into unhealthy dependency. Public visibility must not create a separate standard, immunity from questions, or an identity built around a platform. My online speech should be truthful, restrained, charitable, and consistent with pastoral responsibility.

Rhythms, Accountability, and Correction

These commitments require more than private intention; they require durable rhythms and accountable relationships. Faithful ministry also requires rhythms that acknowledge creaturely limits. I want to work diligently, prepare carefully, remain available for genuine needs, and also practice ordinary rest, worship,

friendship, exercise, and unhurried time with people closest to me. Exhaustion and secrecy are not evidence of spiritual maturity. Trusted elders, peers, and family members should be able to ask difficult questions and raise concerns without retaliation. When correction is warranted, I want to listen before defending myself, examine the concern honestly, repent specifically, and repair harm where possible. When facts are disputed, fair process and patient investigation protect everyone involved. Regular review of workload, availability, and emotional health should make course correction normal before a crisis forces it. These relationships and rhythms help resist both neglect and compulsive overwork and make long-term service more credible.