**How to honour God: Honour your leaders (Hebrews 13:7, 17; Mark 6:4)**

***Pastor Datuk Kee Sue Sing***

Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith. (Hebrews 13:7)

Have confidence in your leaders and submit to their authority, because they keep watch over you as those who must give an account. Do this so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no benefit to you. (Hebrews 13:17)

# Introduction

A young child once told a pastor that when he grows up, he would give money to the pastor. Amused, the pastor asked the child why. The child answered him, “Because my daddy says you're one of the poorest preachers we've ever had."

While we may laugh at this joke, the truth of the matter is pastors and church leaders are subjected to constant criticism and discouragement, yet are always expected to receive these hurtful words with grace, and not be discouraged. Some church members think that because they only see the church leaders only once a week, they assume in bad faith that the leaders do nothing much for the remaining 6 days of the week.

The truth could not be much further. The pastors and church workers work tirelessly for the needs of the church, such as visiting the sick and the grieving, giving time and counsel to those who seek them, teaching the Word, preparing for the sermon for the weeks ahead, strategising to meet the needs of the poor, the needy and their communities… so on and so forth. They are doing such things at the cost of having a better salary package in the marketplace, as well as their mental, physical and emotional health. It is no wonder then that many start strong for the Kingdom of God, but few are able to end well. It is difficult to sustain a ministry when they who sacrificed so much, receive constant discouragement and criticisms from the people around them.

The Big Idea for the message this week is:

Honour our spiritual leaders as God demands; for that would not only do them good, but also benefit us.

The word *honour* here refers to the Greek word ‘*time*’ (tee-may), which means to treat as precious, weighty or valuable.

# Why we are to honour our leaders (1 Thessalonians 5: 12-13)

## They work hard among you

“Now we ask you, brothers, to respect those who work hard among you…” (1 Thessalonians 5:12a)

The Greek word used in the bible for ‘*work hard*’ is ‘*kopiaō*’, which means to grow weary, tired, exhausted or to exert oneself physically, mentally, or spiritually because of toil, burdens or grief.

Ministry work is hard. The hours are long and the work laborious, although this is not recognised by many just because the leaders do not talk about it. In their hours of work, they bear witness to a lot of heartaches and headaches, because they are tasked by the Lord to care for the flock.

## They are over you

“…who are over you in the Lord...” (1 Thessalonians 5:12b)

‘*Proistēmi*’ is the Greek word for “*who are over you*”, which means both ‘*ruling’* and *‘caring’.* We need to recognize the authority in the context of the Bible is God’s design to protect and bless, not controlling and onerous.

### Leaders will give an account

“Not many of you should presume to be teachers, my brothers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly.” (James 3:1)

Leaders will need to answer to God on the faithfulness of those who he/she has led.

### Bring Joy to the leadership

“…. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you.” (Hebrews 13:7c)

As leaders are chosen to lead in a godly and responsible manner, we as members need to learn to be obedient. Strive to bring out the best in them. Unless the leader commits scriptural error, give them the honour and respect as they serve, so that they may experience the joy of the Lord.

### They admonish you

“… and who admonish you.” (1 Thessalonians 5:12c)

‘Noutheteō’ is the Greek word for ‘*admonish*’, which translates to ‘*counsel / warn / caution / reprove gently’*. It means that the leaders will provide instruction based on the Bible, correct unholy behaviours, and speak truth into our lives in love.

### They model for you

“...Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith.” (Hebrews 13:7b)

We are instructed to look into their lives and observe their faith. Check your heart when watching. Do not watch to judge and criticize. Let us “hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work. Live in peace with each other.” (1 Thessalonians 5:13)

# :maxresdefault.jpgHow we are to honour our leaders

Stand behind them. Give them words of encouragement. Honour them with your time and love. Meet their needs as they meet the needs of others. Do not let them feel lonely because they serve.

## Encourage them

* Express personal concern

“Greet all your leaders and all the Lord’s people.” (Hebrews 13:24a)

In the olden times they greeted each other 'shalom'. This meant not only 'peace be with you' but how is your whole beimg. Get to know them personally and ask them about their lives. See that the total well being of the leaders and their families are taken care of.

* Be generous to them

“The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honour, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching.” (1 Timothy 5:17)

Provide for them with your time, money and kind words. Let them be able to thank God for meeting their needs and abundance beyond that.

* Don’t be a constant naysayer

No one likes Debbie Downers and Judgemental Jims. Give appreciation to leaders when you receive encouragement and blessings from their words or actions.

* Write personal notes

Personal notes of appreciation and encouragement are rare, and highly appreciated by the receiver. Give one today!

* Remember special occasions

Wish them well on their birthdays and anniversaries.

## Defend them

“Alexander the metalworker did me a great deal of harm. The Lord will repay him for what he has done. You too should be on your guard against him, because he strongly opposed our message. At my first defense, no one came to my support, but everyone deserted me. May it not be held against them.” (2 Timothy 4:14–16)

Firstly, if you are a witness to a person bad-mouthing or criticising a leader, pray for wisdom and defend your leader. Make sure that they are not treated like a floor-mat or punching bag. God himself would not allow it, and people who fear God refrained from criticising those who were given authority, even in their persecution. Read these accounts in the Bible:

* When Miriam and Aaron criticised their brother Moses (Numbers 12).
* When prophet Elisha was jeered (2 Kings 2:23-25).
* David spared Saul’s life twice, because Saul was God’s Anointed (1 Samuel 24, 26).
* Paul changed his stance when he found out he had spoken against a (Ananias the) High Priest (Acts 23: 1-5).

Secondly, watch yourself. Do not say anything if you have nothing good or constructive to say to them.

## Pray for them

Five reasons why pastors and leaders need your prayer and intercession:

1. They have more responsibility and accountability – They answer to God.
2. They are more subject to temptation – Satan will always look for ways to derail them.
3. They are more targeted by spiritual warfare – The leaders are at the front lines.
4. They have more influence on others – When a leader falls, the whole church is affected.
5. They have more visibility – They are constant subjects to curses and criticisms.

Pray for them daily – for wisdom, guidance, protection, their marriage and family life. Above all, that they may be Spirit-filled.

**Conclusion**

When honour is given to the leaders (God’s Anointed), you honour God. To dishonour them is to scorn the One they serve. God’s blessings have rested on DUMC for many years thanks to the practice of love, respect and honour by both the leaders and all the members. Let’s not ever take this for granted.

Sermon summary contributed by Adeliyn Lim

Prayer points contributed by Ngui Yuen Loong





SERMON: HOW TO HONOUR GOD: Honour Your Leaders

**Pray:**

* We as church members will increasingly appreciate the tireless work put in by the leaders.
* We will respect the leaders and come alongside them, be more co-operative, be friendlier, be more helpful instead of bickering and complaining from a distance.
* We will talk positively when we are admonished by our leaders.
* We will defend the integrity of our leaders.
* We will be generous to our leaders.
* We will keep our leaders in prayers regularly for God’s protection and anointing.

***Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith. (Hebrews 13:7)***

**MINISTRIES & EVENTS: The Sharing Corner**

The Sharing Corner operates every weekend 30 minutes before and after weekend celebrations from 16/17 April to 14/15 May (except 07/08 May). If you have any pre-loved books, toys, games, clothing and household items, please consider blessing others.

**Pray:**

* Church members will be generous in giving their pre-loved items to bless others.
* The generosity of the church members will be fanned through this initiative and they will continue to care for the poor and destitute.
* The items collected will be channelled to those who can make good use of them.
* The lives of the recipients will be touched.
* The volunteers will be blessed for their labour of love. The love of God and the love of people will be powerful motivations for them.

***Whoever oppresses the poor shows contempt for their Maker, but whoever is kind to the needy honours God. (Proverbs 14:31)***MALAYSIA MY NATION: SARAWAK STATE ELECTIONS

***7 MAY 2016***

**Pray:**

* The Election Commission will carry out their duty to ensure a clean and fair election. They will not be biased.
* The caretaker government will not abuse their power to gain unfair advantage.
* The people of Sarawak will elect a government that will lead to eventual honouring of the agreement when Sarawak joined the Federation of Malaysia.
* The rich resources of Sarawak will be put to good use to develop the state and improve the lives of the people.
* The people will vote for those who really can bring a change to their lives, providing the basic necessities, education, transport and other things that give them a fair chance in life.
* Freedom of worship will always be honoured and respected.

***Choose some wise, understanding and respected men from each of your tribes, and I will set them over you. (Deuteronomy 1:13)***

* **A TRANSFORMED WORLD: Ivory Sales in Kenya**

***Kenyan President ordered the burning of 105 tonnes of ivory and rhino horns worth an estimated USD 150 million. The Kenyan government is making a clear statement in its wish for a total ban of ivory sales. Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) has banned commercial ivory sales in 1989 but one-off sales are still permitted, encouraging illegal poaching of the animals. The Kenyan government seeks a total world ban on ivory sales in an effort to save the elephants and rhinoceros.***

**Pray:**

* People will treasure God’s creations and will not drive any species to extinction for temporal wealth.
* CITES will work out a more effective way of preventing illegal poaching.
* The administrations of the various countries will have the political will to take measures to protect the endangered animals.
* The administrations will also set up policies to ensure the animals and their habitats are not threatened by development.
* Endangered species worldwide will get more protection to ensure their continual survival.

***The righteous care for the needs of their animals, but the kindest acts of the wicked are cruel. (Proverbs 12:10)***