

**East Mississippi Baptist State Convention
Mid-Winter Board Meeting/Pastor's Conference
February 5, 2022
Rev. Dr. Ecclesiastes Goodwin, Convention President**

**‘Practical Components for a Healthy Pastor and Church--
Post Pandemic’**

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Practical defined: suitable to be used or put into effect; useful

Components defined: an important part of a whole

Healthy defined: sound, wholesome, strong, functioning, well

Since the topic says components for a healthy Pastor and Church it is inferring (to indicate indirectly; to imply) that the pandemic (Covid 19) has caused some unhealthiness in Pastors and Churches. Also, since the pandemic is still going on, it is *still* causing unhealthy things in Pastors and the Church. As a result, in this session of the Pastor's Conference we want to...

- 1) Look at some of the most prevalent and unhealthy things that happened to Pastors and Churches.
- 2) Look at what we need to do to get Pastors and Churches healthy again.

How Pastors Were Made Unhealthy

1. Many Pastors have gotten lazy in ministry in wake of the pandemic...this is unhealthy – Romans 12:11; II Timothy 2:15
2. Pastors were harmed financially...this is unhealthy
3. Many Pastors became or were exposed as being ‘hirelings’ – John 10:11-13
4. Many lost physical health from contracting Covid 19 or from medical professionals having to delay much needed medical care and treatment that normally would have been done if it wasn't for the pandemic...as a result, many Pastors lost their lives.
5. Pastors lost needed interaction with other Pastors...this is also unhealthy – Proverbs 27:17; Ecclesiastes 4:8-12
6. Mental, physical, and emotional strain has been prevalent...thus causing depression, anxiety, and stress...this too is unhealthy.
7. Many Pastors became spiritually out of touch or lacked the intimacy they once had with God...that is not healthy – Psalm 91:1-4

8. Marriage and family relationships became strained.
9. Pastors lost and/or were stripped of (at the least weakened) in their oversight and authority in the church. Everybody but God and His word was telling us as Pastors how to pastor and ... 1) how to run the church 2) what the church is 3) what worship is 3) how worship should go 4) and that the Church is not even **essential**. This is unhealthy – I Pet. 5:1-4; Heb. 13:7, 17; John 10:1-5
10. Many Pastors lost their church during the pandemic.

How Pastors Can Become Healthy

When something has become unhealthy, necessary steps must be taken to restore health. Here are steps that need to be taken...

1. Have a time of confession, repentance, and recommitment with God. This cannot be done quick or without spiritual self-examination – II Chron. 7:14; I Cor. 11:28-30; II Cor. 13:5
2. We must check and re-examine everything in our lives for meaningfulness, effectiveness, productivity, cost-efficiency, time management...*plus* check our motives behind what we do in our ministry, in our marriages, and in our families. This is so that God can get the best from us and so that we do our very best. I would like to suggest two ways to accomplish this
 - 1) A Pastoral shut-in week
 - 2) A personal journal of 'betterment'
3. Get our finances in order and keep them in order. If we have difficulty in this area, or have a lack of discipline in this area... do not be ashamed to seek help. We must *stop* being careless, foolish, and unbiblical with money. We must *learn* to trust God – Jer. 17:5-8; Pro. 3:5-10; 11:28; 16:20; 28:26
4. We need to reteach our Biblical role and the authority given to us by God. I didn't say threaten, brow beat, yell, fuss, criticize, or be a dictator, but I said reteach it biblically.
5. Start really taking care of ourselves physically, emotionally, and mentally.

Two suggestions

 - 1) Start a Zoom session in our convention what I'm calling *Let's talk about it for Pastors and Preachers* to meet every other month (6 times a year)
 - 2) Start a phone tree with our closest and most trusted Brothers to check on each other, encourage each other, and to *listen* to each

other. This would be done at your leisure or according to your need

Unhealthy things that happened to our Churches

1. We lost Pastors due to Covid 19.
2. The benefits of coming together physically were lost.
3. Members lost income and jobs.
4. Finances fell way off in churches.
5. When meeting together resumed, members attendance had fallen way off.
6. We experienced a loss of closeness in the body (church).
7. The lack of interaction with the under-shepherd (Pastor).
8. Sin increased in the lives of many members.
9. Apathy toward God occurred and was exposed.
10. Stress, strain, and mental health issues developed.
11. Sickness due to Covid, the long-lasting effects, and even death.
12. Members stopped reading and studying their Bibles.
13. The church's ability to minister, worship, and evangelize became limited.
14. Some churches closed and others are headed that way.

How to Make the Church Healthy Post Pandemic

1. Repentance from wrongs done during the pandemic must take place – II Chron. 7:14; I John 1:9
2. Start formulating plans and put them in place with the core group you have in order to go forward once the pandemic is over.
3. The Pastor must go seek those who have fallen away when the pandemic is over – Luke 15:1-6
4. Examine all aspects of our church, ministries, programs, finances, etc. Check for efficiency, worth, necessity, better money management, etc. Since so much was lost during the pandemic, we cannot afford to try to start out post pandemic with anything dead or about dead – I Peter 1:3; 2:5.
5. The church will need sermons of strength, encouragement, stability, discipleship, faith, and trust in God; not hype and 'feel good' messages.
6. Meet with auxiliaries and ministries that did survive. Hear the plans of those leaders for recovery and offer approval, correction, and direction from us (the Pastorate) to them.
7. The Pastor must work diligently to re-establish Shepherd/sheep relationships.

8. Teach, teach, teach, teach, and teach some more – Matt. 28:10
9. Provide a spiritual seminar or workshop for the members (the church as a whole) to be able to recover and get better established financially. I recommend that our churches operate from an annual budget and not a week to week/month to month operation. If we don't know how to establish this as Pastors, bring someone in who does. There is no shame in that. We were not called as Pastors and Preachers because we know everything there is to know about pastoring a church, but to preach and teach what He says and use the resources He has provided.