**Paul Never Called**

**Himself a “Pastor”**

Jesus said, “Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven. Do not be called leaders; for One is your Leader, that is, Christ.” (Matthew 23:9-10). These words shocked me when I was a young Christian. I couldn’t believe there were religious men who wore black garments, and were being called “father” in the spiritual sense. Then my first phone call to one, he would not even talk to me unless I address him as “father so-n-so”. Which Jesus had told his followers not to do.

So how can a religion claim to follow Jesus, but demand the honor of being called “father”? This doesn’t shock me now. Men love honor, and Jesus warned against it. The same might be true of the common use of the word “Pastor” as a title. There are clearly pastors in the church, but probably not what you are the thinking. “He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers,” (Ephesians 4:11). Paul calls himself an apostle, (Eph. 1:1), but he never calls himself a “pastor”. He wasn’t. In the New Testament each congregation is to have it’s own set of pastors, shepherds (plural). They have qualifications, “An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach… He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity (but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?)…” (1Tim. 3:2-7). These pastors are called elders, overseers in other passages (Acts 20:17 “Elders”, 20:28 “overseers” and told to “shepherd” the church of God.”)

Foolishly, peopled think they can organize the church in anyway they want to do, as if God hasn’t already thought through this before hand. He did. Look for it. “When they had appointed elders for them in every congregation” (Acts 14:23). Notice the plural noun “elders”. Again, “To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, including the overseers and deacons” (Philippians 1:1). Notice the plurals, “overseers”, “deacons”. God never set up a single man over a local congregation. The single pastor system is unscriptural. And it can easily be abused by one man. Having at least two men creates a check and balanced system. This one man “pastor system” began quickly in the second century, after the apostles had died. The next step, in the unscriptural arrangement, was when one pastor was over more than one congregation. What did Paul call himself? “To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach …” (Eph. 3:8). Dan Peters