

# THE CARE AND FEEDING OF A NEW PASTOR

Before introducing a new member into your family, remember ownership shouldn't be taken lightly. Taking care means paying attention to physical and emotional needs by providing nutritious food, clean drinking water, and the opportunity to live in a safe home. It also means providing ample play time, plenty of exercise, and mental stimulation.

## THE BASICS FOR YOUR NEW ADDITION – FOOD, WATER AND SAFETY



### PROVIDING HIGH QUALITY FOOD

The busier he gets, the easier it becomes to overlook the essential food he needs to sustain and grow. The best food you can provide, is for him to know God's people are praying for him. On his part, he needs to be immersed and growing in God's Word. Add your gift of encouragement to this food and you will find that his energies will be refreshed and when he is refreshed, he is far better able to refresh you.

### AVOID GIVING EXCESSIVE AMOUNT OF TREATS

This can lead to weight gain or health problems. Remember, restricting treats can be hard, especially when he looks at you with puppy dog eyes. With this in mind, don't feed food that is bad for him - reinforcing sermon content that may entertain but doesn't nourish. Do that often enough and soon that Pavlovian training will condition him to offer you non-nutritional junk food that may taste good but it won't provide the biblical, Holy Spirit empowered nourishment needed to give strength for what is ahead.

We tend to be drawn to those whose style, values and opinions most closely resemble ours. While understandable, there is danger when this leads to a spirit of comparison that our new family member needs to follow the behaviours and skill set of someone else. Celebrate the gifts he brings, rather than trying to rig someone's else's harness that clearly doesn't fit.

### HYDRATE REGULARLY

Regularly refresh him by letting him know his ministry has impact and is valued. It's true, there is some possibility this hydrating might result in him getting a swelled head but there is far more danger of him becoming crippled from a dried up heart.

The best way to help him stave off drought or to prevent 'hydration run off', is to give him words of encouragement. While verbal encouragement is good, what's written is better.



The impact of what is written is powerful and has the potential to be an encouraging reference point for a long time to come.

## **PREVENT HIM FROM WANDERING AWAY AND GETTING LOST**

Help him to keep his identity tag firmly attached to his Master. The danger of popularity can confuse and cause him to respond to those who seek his attention by offering best treats or who call with loudest, most persuasive voice. But the Master's voice is the only One who should be heard. Be certain to regularly check in with him to help keep him on track with Jesus as 'first love'.



## **CARING FOR HIS HEALTH**

### **VACCINATIONS ARE ESSENTIAL**

Diseases are common in church kennels – so much so that common diseases often go unrecognized. Untreated, things like gossip and criticism spread and before long, they become a dangerous and fast spreading epidemic. Conduct regular checkups to ensure his health, his family's health, and the church family's health remain strong.

One of the best ways to do this is by being a people centered on Christ who commit to focusing on the best in him, the best in one another, and by celebrating the unique gifts each one brings. This does not mean ignoring what shouldn't be ignored but it does mean correcting and restoring in love.

## **USE REGULAR PARASITE PREVENTION**

It's important to regularly treat against heartworms and roundworms. As the pastor biblically challenges and confronts, stepping into areas that may be unpopular and sometimes squeeze too tight, be supportive as attackers circle. Don't let him stand alone against these attacks. Be quick to circle around to respond with readiness and speed.

Others can ward off these maladies by being a people of obedience who forgive, laugh, and pray as he and leadership lead out with courage. Done well and you will soon find that a spirit of joy rises up that serves as a powerful defense against infection and disease.

## **WHEN INFECTION TAKES HOLD, MAKE CERTAIN THERE IS 911 CARE TO WHICH HE CAN SAFELY TURN**

Sometimes caregivers are so busy tending others that they fail to recognize their own need of care. Be on watch, paying attention to behaviour that often gives signs that something isn't right. If you wonder about such things, don't wait. Come alongside and ask. You never know, your inquiry and loving encouragement may be exactly what is needed to bring healing.

## **NO MATTER WHAT, DON'T NEUTER YOUR DOG**

Breeding is what the church is to be about. So while we all have preferences, the goal of the church is for many to, both come to and grow in, transforming faith in Christ. So instead of *'the music's too loud, the services too long, the fervency's too much, the newcomers too many, the changes too hard'*, be willing to follow where God is leading under his leadership. Hold to God's promise, *"every place the sole of your foot treads, I will give to you"* and watch the family grow.

### **GROOMING**

#### **BRUSH AND KEEP HIM CLEAN**

Brushing and cleaning regularly helps reduce shedding, keeping his coat in good condition and knot free. One way to keep him well groomed is to love and embrace his family. Knowing that they are well cared for, will put his heart at rest.

Scripture also encourages us to speak the truth in love, so, as truth is given, sometimes to encourage, sometimes to exhort, sometimes to rebuke, be certain words are framed in love – that means from him and to him.



This grooming can also help him avoid picking up debris that can weigh him down and cause him to become comfortable with dirt he is not meant to wear. Be proactive. Don't wait until his fur is matted and the sheen is gone. The danger of the rescuer, a role he easily adopts, is becoming blind to his own need of rescue.

Help him to not rush off to every 'crisis' that calls, rather help him understand, he is to be one of several who respond. This means helping him set boundaries that prevent him from the inevitable exhaustion and burn out that comes from an unhealthy desire of 'pleaser' who tries to be, 'all things to all people'.

### **EXERCISE, SOCIALIZING, AND PLAY**

#### **PROVIDE PLENTY OF EXERCISE THAT GETS HIM AWAY FROM HIS NORMAL RUN**

Even if he never seems to tire out, being constantly on the run, even chasing after good things, it's important to protect his immediate family who need the 'best' of his time, not the leftovers at the end of the day. Sometimes the thrill of running with others blinds him to the fact that his family is being shortchanged. Re-direct him home when his energies are running in the wrong direction.

## **STIMULATE HIM WITH REWARD-BASED TRAINING**

One of the best rewards that can be given is for him to watch others get actively engaged in obedience training. Nothing will please him more than to watch people become more and more like Christ. Understand, he doesn't expect mastery from the pack any more than he should expect it for himself. The goal is 'becoming', despite setbacks and distractions, as we all become more and more like the One we call Master.

## **SOCIALIZE WELL**

Many pastors are social animals that welcome being approached. Take the initiative and make yourself known. As he gets to know the pack, help him by repeating your name again and again

Be aware, some pastors are often pre-occupied before a Sunday morning service, thinking about the ministry they are about to give, so it is usually not the time to approach to shed some long held burdens. That said, this doesn't apply to matters of urgency or concern that understandably press, but understand, his time to deal with issues at that moment are limited.

After the service is entirely different. Generally, this isn't a time to ignore or keep distance. Coming near is especially important after he's broken open a meal for others to enjoy. If God has used what has happened that morning, let him know. If you need prayer, ask. If you have a concern that requires greater time, set up a time to meet.

What this time ISN'T for, is for you to unload critique, judgment or correction. If things have arisen that are of concern, set up a time during the week to talk. This does **not** mean sending an e mail or other forms of one way communication which are so easily misunderstood and often communicate in ways that are harmful. Scripture is very clear, if we have an issue with someone, we are to go to them. Sending an email is not 'going' and does not allow a mutual exchange of perspectives which most of the time brings a far deeper level of understanding, often getting to issues that underlie the concerns.

So, remember these principles as you care and feed your new family member, and you should have many years of happiness ahead. Scripture reminds, "*Whatever you do, in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.*" Col 3:17

**SO, AS YOU BUILD BONDS OF MUTUAL LOVE AND RESPECT, LIFE  
TOGETHER WILL BE INCREDIBLY RICH AS YOU WATCH YOUR  
FAMILY:**

**TRANSFORM, GROW AND THRIVE!**