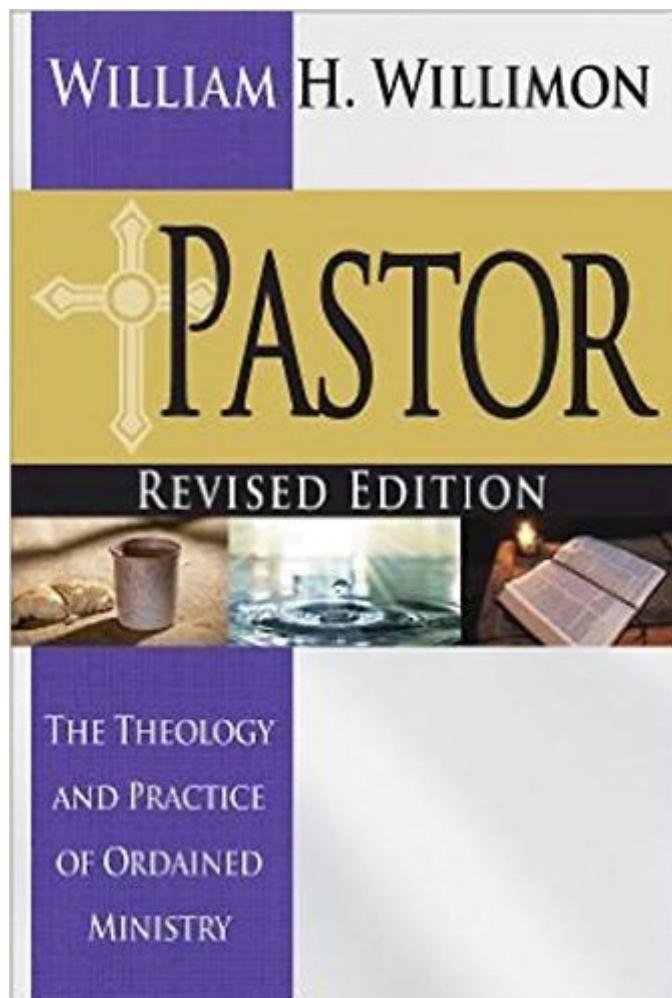


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Pastor: Revised Edition: The Theology And Practice Of Ordained Ministry



Synopsis

Ordained ministry, says Will Willimon, is a gift of God to the church "but that doesn't mean that it is easy. Always a difficult vocation, changes in society and the church in recent years have made the ordained life all the more complex and challenging. Is the pastor primarily a preacher, a professional caregiver, an administrator? Given the call of all Christians to be ministers to the world, what is the distinctive ministry of the ordained? When does one's ministry take on the character of prophet, and when does it become that of priest? What are the special ethical obligations and disciplines of the ordained? Pastor: Revised Edition explores these and other central questions about the vocation of ordained ministry. It begins with a discussion of who pastors are, asking about the theological underpinnings of ordained ministry, and then moves on to what pastors do, looking at the distinctive roles the pastor must fulfill. The book also draws on great teachers of the Christian tradition to demonstrate that, while much about Christian ministry has changed, its core concerns "preaching the word, the care of souls, the sacramental life of congregations" remains the same. Ordained ministry is a vocation to which we are called, not a profession that we choose. To answer that call is to open oneself to heartache and sometimes hardship; yet, given the one who calls, it is to make oneself available to deep and profound joy as well.

Book Information

Paperback: 400 pages

Publisher: Abingdon Press; Revised ed. edition (February 16, 2016)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1501804901

ISBN-13: 978-1501804908

Product Dimensions: 6 x 1 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 12.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 starsÂ See all reviewsÂ (41 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #138,687 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #195 inÂ Books > Christian Books & Bibles > Churches & Church Leadership > Church Leadership #343 inÂ Books > Christian Books & Bibles > Churches & Church Leadership > Pastoral Resources #2693 inÂ Books > Christian Books & Bibles > Theology

Customer Reviews

Throughout "Pastor," it is easy to tell that the author, William Willimon, has 25+ years as a church pastor with all the ups and downs that come with that particular calling. From beginning to end, this

book is filled with encouragement for pastors, and lay leaders alike, as they struggle through the bad times and breeze through the good times. One of the key aspects of this book is Willimon's emphasis on the fact that pastors are fallible human beings just as much as anyone else in this fallen world. Pastors cannot, and their people should not, expect them to do everything right or have the perfect answer to every question. This helps pastors remember that they are still just people. On the other hand, Willimon also reminds us that pastors are also people who are called out by God. According to Willimon there are two basic views of the pastor: "...the first view leads to a 'high' theology of ordination in which the minister is 'appointed by Christ to take Christ's place as host at the table.' The other view leads to a 'low' theology of ministry where someone is merely 'called out from among the people to help.' We need not choose between the two. ...The first stresses the gifted, grace-filled quality of ministry...the second asserts the functional, community-derived quality of Christian ministry" (39). I found Willimon's discussion of "the needs of the people" extremely helpful. He argues that as pastors we try to meet all of the needs of our people all of the time. However, what we should be doing is trying to educate our people as to what are real needs in life and what are wants and desires. As the author points out, "...in this culture desire becomes elevated to the level of need..."

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