

Eldon Is Retiring

How does one say good bye? After 42 years of ministry and 3 years working with VCNMidwest I have decided to hang up the cell phone; find a cookie and drink a cup of coffee.

One of the profound passages of Scripture is Paul's farewell to the elders from Ephesus. The Apostle called for them to catch his swan song while he was at Miletus. That message is timeless in its describing a philosophy of ministry. Let me draw a number of principles for us:

1. Paul was compelled to spend time with people while recognizing he was serving not them but the Lord. Acts 20:18b-19a "...I lived among you the whole time from the first day that I set foot in Asia, serving the Lord..."
2. Attitudes are foundational: Paul says, "...with all humility and with tears and with trials that happened to me..." Acts 20:19b
3. Clarity and multi-faceted ministry is the standard. "I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable and teach you in public and from house to house." Acts 20:20 Then: "for I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God". Acts 20:27
4. The Message is simple: Acts 20:21, "testifying ...of repentance toward God and of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ."
5. The Apostle had his enemies so why should not most pastors have critics. "After my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock..." Acts 20:29 Error can even come within the church: Acts 20:30, "...and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things..."
6. Guard against greed: Paul says, "I coveted no one's silver or gold or apparel." Acts 20:33
7. Be an example of working and caring: Acts 20:35: "In all thing I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak...it is more blessed to give than to receive."

So there you have it. Paul does a superb job of reminding all of us why we are here! Losing sight of the goal and doubling our efforts is a definition of a fanatic. I pray that the leaders of our churches will not lose sight of the calling we have from God. To Him be the glory!

Pastor Eldon Carlson

