

Tim Learns More about the Ministry

Remember that yesterday we heard how Tim finally got up the nerve to ask Pastor Paulsen about being a pastor. Then Pastor invited him to come along on a hospital visit. Let's see what happens next.

Tim hopped into Pastor's car after getting permission from his mom. They headed to the hospital.

"So, do you do this a lot?" Tim asked. "Visit people in the hospital, I mean?"

"Yes and no," Pastor said. "Some weeks we have quite a few members in the hospital. Some weeks we have none." He stopped at the red light and changed his tone of voice. "Mrs. Birch is very sick. The doctors told her family that she will probably die soon. So I'll do a devotion with her, and then I'll talk with the family too."

"What will you say?" Tim asked.

"Well, I'll remind them that Jesus died and rose for her, and she believes it. If he decides to take her to heaven, that's sad for them . . . but good for her. She gets to see Jesus."

"Is it hard to do that?" Tim asked. "To talk about dying and things like that?" Tim felt a little nervous about the whole situation, and he didn't even have to say anything! He was just along to observe.

"It's only hard," Pastor said, "because you know how sad the family is, but it's . . . it's a *privilege* to remind them that this person they love is going to heaven, where she won't be sick or sad anymore. And someday they'll see her again. As a pastor, I get to do that. I get to tell them that good news. That's pretty special."

"What else?" Tim asked. "What else do you do during the week?"

"Well, I study God's Word a lot, to get ready for my sermons and classes—and to feed my own faith too. I baptize babies and give communion to our members, sometimes in their own homes if they can't get to church. I talk to people who are struggling with different kinds of problems. I conduct weddings and funerals. I visit people in town who are interested in our church. I go to meetings and help to keep the church and school running smoothly. Oh—and I'm taking the youth group canoeing this weekend!

"I guess the best way to explain it is that I share the good news of Jesus and help people in their lives as Christians." They turned into the hospital and parked. Pastor turned off the car and looked Tim in the eye. "And you, Timothy, could do it. You could be a pastor."

Mark 16:15: [Jesus said,] "Go into all the _____
and preach the _____ to all creation."

Discussion

1. What were some of the things Pastor told Tim he did in his work as a pastor? *Study God's Word, preach sermons, teach classes, baptize people, give communion, talk to people who were having problems, visit people who were interested in the church, go to meetings to help the church and school run smoothly, lead youth group, and so on.*
2. Why was Pastor on his way to the hospital? What would he do there? *He would do a devotion with Mrs. Birch and talk to her family, comforting them with the gospel, the good news that Jesus died and rose for Mrs. Birch, and if she died, she'd go to heaven.*
3. Why did Pastor call his work a "privilege"? *He felt blessed to be able to share the good news of Jesus with people. He said it was "special" work.*
4. Which of those things Pastor mentioned does your pastor do? *All of them and probably other things as well. Lead the students to be specific: "Pastor did the wedding for my cousin and her husband. Pastor baptized my little brother. Pastor goes to the school board meetings with my dad." Share things he has done for you and your family as well.*
5. What is the one thing that all pastors' work has in common? *Serving people with God's Word. In all they do, pastors share God's Word in one way or another.*
6. Let's look at Mark 16:15: What two words are missing there? *World, gospel.* Who is this command of Jesus for? *Lead the students to two answers: First, God calls certain people to do this work publicly—like Pastor Paulsen and other teachers, pastors, staff ministers, missionaries, professors, and others. Second, every Christian is to spread the good news about Jesus. This command is for all of us, even kids!*
7. Which of those things that pastors do would you enjoy doing? *Answers will vary. Let the students be honest. Some of the pastor's "jobs" may seem a bit daunting right now. That's okay. Remind the kids that they would have plenty of training before they'd have to do those things. (More on training for ministry tomorrow.) Note: Allow the girls to answer this question as well; remind them that God has reserved the office of pastor for men, but that some of these ministry tasks are also done by teachers and other called workers.*

Activity – Special Training: Discuss how pastors learn Greek because the New Testament was originally written in Greek. If they look up the passage, they will see that these Greek words are translated "preach the gospel." Try to pronounce the words aloud. Maybe your pastor would be willing to lead this short exercise and/or show the students his Greek New Testament. (Grades 3-5 also do a short Greek exercise. That activity is part of their Lesson 4.)

Prayer: Thank you, Lord, for the pastors and teachers who serve our congregation and our synod. Make them strong to do the work you have called them to do. Strengthen our faith too, and show us how we can serve people with our lives. Amen.

Optional Hymn: 898 Send, O Lord, Your Holy Spirit