

# Etiquette for Pastors:

## How To Honor Guests Ministers in Your Church

by Michael Cameneti

When I think of ministry and the fivefold ministry gifts, the concept of *honor* immediately comes to mind. However, in our day and age, society seems to have lost the heart of honor. Sadly, even many of our churches have pushed honor to the wayside, treating ministers without reverence and respect.

How significant is honor? In Mark 6:1-6 (*NKJV*), we find an account from the ministry of Jesus that reveals the consequences of treating a minister dishonorably:

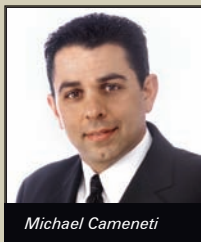
Then He [Jesus] went out from there and came to His own country, and His disciples followed Him. And when the Sabbath had come, He began to teach in the synagogue. And many hearing Him were astonished, saying, "Where did this Man get these things? And what wisdom is this which is given to Him, that such mighty works are performed by His hands! Is this not the carpenter, the Son of Mary, and brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon? And

are not His sisters here with us?" And they were offended at Him.

But Jesus said to them, "A PROPHET IS NOT WITHOUT HONOR EXCEPT IN HIS OWN COUNTRY, among his own relatives, and in his own house." Now HE COULD DO NO MIGHTY WORK THERE, except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed them. And He marveled because of their unbelief. Then He went about the villages in a circuit, teaching.

The phrase "without honor" found in verse 4 means *to dishonor* or *to place no value on*. The people in this town dishonored Jesus — placing no value on Him — and as a result, He could do no mighty work there. Jesus Himself could not go beyond the honor that was shown to Him.

This principle is still true for us today. When we dishonor, or demonstrate a lack of value for, ministers or ministries, we limit what God can do in our midst through them.



Michael Cameneti

In 1988, Pastor **Mike Cameneti** founded Faith Family Church (originally Canton Christian Fellowship), which he and his wife Barbara still lead today in Canton, Ohio. In addition to pastoring, Mike also writes a regular article in Canton's local newspaper, *The Repository*, and has a television and radio program. I have known Mike for approximately 17 years and have watched him lead his church from a young, new congregation to become one of the strongest churches in the United States. He is a strong Bible teacher, firm on the principles of the Word of God, and his marriage and family are supreme examples of what a minister's family should be like. I am an avid fan of Mike and Barbara Cameneti and their church, and I'm excited to have Mike as an IMPART contributor.

— Rick Renner

## ★ Honoring the Fivefold Ministry Gifts: A Scriptural Admonition

As members of the Body of Christ, we must always value and esteem the fivefold ministry gifts that God has placed in the Church. These men and women are not just people; they are *gifts* from God, and He desires that we honor them. This admonition is evident in the words of the apostle Paul:

**And we urge you, brethren, to recognize those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. Be at peace among yourselves.**

1 Thessalonians 5:12,13 NKJV

In this passage, the word “esteem” means *to deem highly* or *to consider highly*. Paul instructed believers to esteem ministers “very highly,” which simply means *super abundantly* or *excessively*.

Let me speak from a pastor’s heart about this matter. When our church invites guest ministers to Faith Family Church, our desire is to honor and respect them in accordance with the Word. Since we believe that the Lord directed these preachers and teachers to our church, we endeavor to receive from them all that God has placed in their hearts to give to us. These guest ministers are called by God to impart truth to us and enrich our lives. We therefore believe it’s imperative to let them know that we value and honor them, just as the Lord does. We don’t merely look at these men and women of God from a natural standpoint; we look at the gifts and callings God has placed in them. And as we honor and respect the gifts, we help pave the way for our guests to operate in the highest level of anointing possible.

## ★ How To Honor Your Guest Ministers

What are some of the ways you can show honor to guest ministers?

My wife Barbara and I have hosted visiting teachers and preachers every year since we founded our church in 1988. As a result, we’ve had the privilege of working with a variety of ministers and ministries. Our experience in this area, coupled with our heart to honor and bless our guests, has led us to develop certain guidelines that help us plan and prepare for their time of ministry with us.

Before we look at this list of guidelines, however, let me stress that each church is unique. Every pastor

should establish his own guidelines according to what he’s comfortable with in his own heart and then apply those principles to the way he treats his guest ministers. My hope in sharing the guidelines we’ve established at Faith Family Church is that they might help other pastors develop some ideas of their own.

What have we learned at our church over the past 20 years?

**1. Be led.** Endeavor to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit, and after prayerful consideration, extend invitations only to those you sense a leading in your heart to invite. This would also apply to those who contact you directly to express their desire to minister in your church.

**2. Prepare the way.** From your guests’ travel arrangements and food preferences to their audio/video and product-table needs, do your best to take care of every aspect of their time with you in advance of their arrival. For example:

- If you will be making travel arrangements for your guests, let them know you will do your best to fulfill their preferences regarding airline, arrival and departure flight times, and seating.
- For those who wish to make their own travel arrangements, ask that they forward a copy of their invoices so you can process a travel reimbursement for them. Most will gladly do so; however, some ministers prefer to make their own arrangements and cover their own travel expenses as a blessing to the church.
- If the guest’s spouse will be accompanying him or her, offer to cover those travel costs as well.
- Let your guests know in advance what audio and video capabilities you have so they can plan accordingly.

Planning ahead and establishing the expectations of both parties helps prevent confusion and eliminate erroneous assumptions, both of which can lead to awkward moments for the pastor *and* the guest.

**3. Welcome your guests with open arms.** Plan to have someone (whether it is you or

a person you designate) greet your guests upon their arrival and assist them with their luggage and transportation. Help them get settled in, answer any questions they may have, and provide them with a list of people's names and telephone numbers whom the guests can contact if they need anything.

**4. Help them feel at home.** When preparing your guests' accommodations, do what you can to make them feel more at home. For example:

- Supply their hotel room with a gourmet gift basket, beverages, and snacks based on their preferences.
- Whenever possible, process the hotel check-in paperwork in advance so that you can provide your guests with their room keys upon arrival. This not only ensures that the room is directly billed to the church, but it also allows your guests to retire to their rooms without having to wait in line in the hotel lobby.
- If your guests' stay is prolonged, consider delivering a fresh supply of beverages and snacks to their room mid-stay. If their accommodations include a kitchen or kitchenette, consider stocking it with foods you know they will enjoy.

**5. Allow them their freedom.** Consider providing your guests with a vehicle for their private use. Although many guests leave the hotel only to minister, most appreciate knowing they have the freedom to run an errand, go to the gym, or visit a local park or shopping center on their own.

**6. They need to eat, but not necessarily with you.** Whether you plan to make reservations at local restaurants or host a meal at the church or in your home, be mindful of your guests' time and stay flexible when making arrangements for their meals. Perhaps they don't eat past 7:00 p.m. Maybe they'd prefer a fresh sandwich from the local sub shop sent to their room so they can spend more time in prayer and study for the services. Whatever the case may be, your guests shouldn't be made to feel obligated to join you to eat even though you are covering the costs of their meals.

**7. Prepare the congregation.** Let your church know about upcoming guest speakers. Invite the congregation to join you in prayer for the upcoming services, and encourage them to come out expecting to receive!

**8. A laborer is worthy of his reward.** In First Timothy 5:18, the apostle Paul said, "For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his reward." This verse refers to a minister coming in and teaching the Word to a church. From these words, you can see that it's a scriptural instruction to give offerings and honorariums to ministers who are invited to your church to sow the Word into the hearts of the congregation. When you honor your guests with generous giving, you are honoring the Word of God!

At Faith Family Church, we believe that any minister who sows the Word into our congregation is someone God wants to bless, so we strive to bless that guest minister "above and beyond." I consistently seek to impart to our congregation the heart to give and be a blessing by ministering on finances based on First Timothy 5:18. Then I encourage everyone in our church family to participate by giving in guest-minister offerings. Additionally, we believe it's always better to sow more into an offering than the initial amount received, so we always add to the guests' offerings just to bless them. We feel strongly in our hearts that we cannot out-give God and that He will supply all our needs as we sow into the lives of others.

**9. It's not over until it's over.** After the services come to a close, there's still plenty to be done in preparation for your guests' departure. Just as you planned ahead for their arrival, plan ahead for their departure by having someone (whether you or someone you designate) meet your guests at the hotel to assist them with their luggage and transportation to the airport.

**10. Finally, be sure that those who assist you in your ministry have the same heart you do toward your guests.** Whether an individual plays a behind-the-scenes role or will interact directly with the guests or their ministry, he or she is a reflection of you





and should be passionate about blessing and serving your guests with excellence.

### ★ Honor Guest Ministers to the Best of Your Ability

When my wife and I first started hosting guest ministers at Faith Family Church, we didn't have the resources to do all the things I have noted. Nevertheless, we always endeavored to provide for our guests' needs, to treat them with the honor and respect they deserved, and to operate in excellence regarding their care while they were our guests.

Again, each church is unique, and there are a variety of factors that affect what resources are readily available when planning and preparing for a guest minister's time at your church. But if you purpose to do your best, I can assure you that you will discover innovative and creative ways to demonstrate honor and respect to God's gifts whom He has placed in His Body! **I**

#### PROFILE

■ **Michael Cameneti**, senior pastor of Faith Family Church in Canton, Ohio, is an anointed teacher of the Word of God, known for boldly proclaiming the goodness, faithfulness, and mercy of God. Passionate about winning the lost to Christ, the drive of Michael's heart is to "...go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15 NKJV). Today many believers stand together with Pastor Michael and his wife, Barbara, as God continues to direct and guide each phase of ministry at Faith Family Church.

you can

Do all the good you can,  
By all the means you can,  
In all the ways you can,  
In all the places you can,  
At all the times you can,  
To all the people you can,  
As long as ever you can.

— John Wesley



## When You Evaluate Your Life and Ministry, Is Something Missing?

**T**ake a quick inventory: Do you live with a conscious awareness of the day when you must give an account to the Lord for your every word and silent thought? Have you noticed that you have become desensitized to coarse or untruthful communication? When was the last time you grieved the Holy Spirit? Do you even know?

Your response to these questions is an indication of the course you're following and the destination you will achieve. If success or lasting satisfaction seems to be eluding your life and ministry, **Michael Cameneti** may help you discover the missing ingredient in *your* life.

In his book *The Missing Ingredient to Success*, Cameneti is very direct in letting you know that *the fear of the Lord* is precisely what he is referring to as the crucial ingredient for lasting fulfillment and success. He presents a simple but strong truth: Failure to honor God in all things will lead to ruin — if not immediately, then eventually. Relating one practical application after another, Cameneti gives examples to demonstrate the many ways we can slip in our fear of the Lord.

This book will help you run a personal checklist to determine if one or more of these very areas are an open door to destruction and defeat in your life. Order your copy of this book today, and find out how you can blend in the missing ingredient to your own recipe for success!

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