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Christian Perspectives: honouring your pastor

October has been Pastor Appreciation month. I hope you have thanked your Pastor, his wife and family for all the hard work they do in serving God, His Church and you? The Bible says in I Timothy 5:17, ?Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honour, especially those who labour in preaching and teaching?. Do we really honour our leaders? Do we honour one another? I believe we have forgotten the art of honouring these days. ?Honour' should be one of the words that should describe the Church, along with love, grace, unity, humility and peace. Honour should be a hallmark of how we interact with each other in the Church. In the world honour and respect seem to be fading away at a very fast pace, is the Church following suit? The subject of honour has received much negative attention in the Christian world, in fact we seem to show more disrespect to one another forgetting that it is love and honour that makes us different from the world. The world will know we are Christians because of our love and honour for one another. In the times we live, this world runs rampant with lawlessness, selfishness and greed. When it comes to Government, yes I agree things could be better, but we live in a fallen world and Jesus is not ruling and reigning on earth yet! However, it is our job as the church to pray for and encourage our leaders in Government, to speak life over them not death, for their wellbeing and our own (Romans 13:1-7, 1 Peter 2:13-17). We as Christ's Body the Church, should be leading the way in honour; as we honour God's servants we honour God. Yet, ask any group of Church members what they think about honouring their elders or pastors, and you will get diverse answers. We have lost the art of honour! Some would say ?I honour my Pastor,? that is great, but what about behind their backs? Do we speak death over them and their families, or life? Do you speak up for your leaders when people criticize them or are you silent? As pastors and elders we deal with conflict on a daily basis. We deal with critics all the time and we realize that it is a part of any leadership position; I endorse accountability and fruit inspection! May I also say, there are those who like to fruit inspect more harshly than others. As a pastor, what I believe hurts the most in leadership in the Church, are not the long hours of service (prayer, study, visitation), struggles with finances, time away from family, or the problems people find themselves in and our struggle to help them! These things are all part of our calling as we serve Christ. What hurts most is when unfounded accusations come against us, and then those close to us side with the critics, without taking the time to hear both sides of an event or without knowing the heart and stance of their leader in the matter! Most leaders like myself, think folks know us, but really they don't; if they did, they would say, ?that does not sound like my Pastor, I know his or her heart on the matter?. A lot of times we leaders cannot say much, we are not at liberty to share, because others are involved, so we need to respect other's rights too. This leaves us in a lonely predicament: damned if we do and damned if we don't! In the end we have to trust God to be our defender. We pray, forgive, bless and keep silent as Jesus himself showed us to do! For me this is the most challenging walk as a leader. People demand accountability without love and grace, and in turn, they fail to follow Biblical protocol when it comes to confronting a leader (1 Timothy 5:19). But, what hurts more than that is when our supporters remain silent in the face of intense criticism toward us. I believe people feel afraid to speak up or get involved because they don't want to rock the boat! However, in the end the critics think the silence is agreement with their accusation or criticism! This fuels the fire of criticism even more. For all those who stand side by side with your pastors and elders, keep up the great work! Thank you so much! As leaders we need all the help we can get! Like God, we are out for people's best interests: salvation of your souls, an eternal destiny, and a partnership with God that has a greater purpose than you can imagine. Please stand up; honour and respect your overseers, pastors and elders, if not for them personally, then for their position! God placed them there for your best interest (Hebrews 13:17 ?Obey your spiritual leaders, and do what they say, their work is to watch over your souls, and they are accountable to God. Give them reason to do this with joy and not with sorrow. That would certainly not be for your benefit.?). For pastors and elders this is the greatest gift you can give! Praying for us and our families is a close second! We appreciate your prayers very much, thank you so much! When it comes to our attitude towards our pastors and elders, I always say, ?If you want a better Pastor pray for the one you have!? Prayer changes everything! We need more wisdom and understanding in the times we live to better equip us to get through life in this world. Always remember, pastors and elders are accountable in a big way, not only to our overseers we submit to and who keep us safe and accountable for the service of Christ (Apostles, Bishops, General superintendents), but to God himself! With great fear and trembling we serve Him knowing we will give an account more scrutinizing than the average Christian will ever experience (James 3:1). Let us as a Church get back to honouring God by honouring one another and especially His servants, who He has called to be a gift to the Church (Ephesians 4:11-13). This kind of honour glorifies God, and as a Christian that is a great honour in itself. Let us show the world honour brings blessing!. Please thank and bless your Pastors and their families this Sunday! Always keep your Pastors in your prayers! May we give honour and glory to God Forever!
Blessings Rev. Gord Horsley