



The Enneagram Goes to Church Wisdom for Leadership, Worship, and Congregational Life

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"More Christians are aware of and interested in the Enneagram than ever before, so it's time for the church to take notice. Todd Wilson provides a winsome and engaging exploration of how church leaders and church members can use the Enneagram to foster spiritual growth. Todd writes from his robust pastoral experience and is able to help Christians understand how the mysteries and wisdom of the Enneagram align beautifully with a sincere Christian faith."

—Hunter Mobley, Enneagram teacher and author of *Forty Days on Being a Two*

"Pastoring Is About People."

After months of sitting with the Enneagram and sharing in its insights, my mind turned from me, my marriage, and my family to another extremely important part of my life—my work as the pastor of a church.

What about the church? I remember thinking. Does the Enneagram have anything helpful to say about pastoring a congregation, working with a staff, or leading people? What about preaching, worship, or congregational care? Could the Enneagram help me think about all these churchly things?

My mind was abuzz with these thoughts. I couldn't help but think that the Enneagram had something unique—something essential—to add to the life and ministry of the church, to my ministry in the churches I was called to serve.

But what?

WISDOM ABOUT PEOPLE

When I was called to Calvary Memorial Church in the Autumn of 2008, I was the church's thirteenth pastor in its one-hundred-year history. I was only thirty-two at the time, and this was my first senior pastorate. Located in the heart of Oak Park, Calvary was the largest evangelical congregation in the area, drawing worshipers from many of the surrounding suburbs.

A quarter century earlier, world-famous evangelist Billy Graham had dedicated the church's new building, and then-president Jimmy Carter sent a congratulatory note that was read on the occasion. This was Calvary, no ordinary congregation.

When I received the call to serve Calvary, I was embracing a church brimming with pride, layered in tradition and, it must be said, quite demographically and socioeconomically complex, at least partly by virtue of being planted in the middle of the Village of Oak Park, an urban-suburban community right next to the city of Chicago.

At the time, I felt well prepared to take up this otherwise daunting responsibility. I was, thankfully, the beneficiary of a great theological education, wonderful pastoral mentors, and a number of fabulous church experiences. I had lots of friends rooting for me, and my wife and family were cheerfully by my side. What did I lack?

As it turns out, one very, very important thing—especially for pastors.

Wisdom.

I lacked wisdom about people—who they are and how they work.



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EXCERPT



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Todd Wilson is the president and cofounder of the Center for Pastor Theologians and the former senior pastor of Calvary Memorial Church. He holds a PhD from University of Cambridge and is the author of *Mere Sexuality* and *Real Christian*, as well as coauthor of *The Pastor Theologian*.

Sure, I knew plenty about Greek and Hebrew, biblical exegesis, systematic theology, homiletics, leadership and organizational development, Christian education, small groups, missions, and spirituality. Indeed, I was a bona fide expert in the Bible, with degrees and publications to prove it.

But when it came to people—empathetically shepherding and sensitively engaging them in their manifold personalities and diverse ways of seeing the world, I was hardly an amateur. I had at best only a middle school understanding of who people are and how they work.

How I wish I would have known the Enneagram back then!

The Enneagram would have saved me from a thousand pastoral blunders and served me so well in guiding a complex congregation in the ways of Jesus. The Enneagram would have given me wisdom—just the kind of wisdom a pastor needs and yet just the kind one has such a hard time gleaning in seminary.

Don't misunderstand me. There really is no silver bullet for pastoral success. The Enneagram certainly isn't that. Pastoring a local church is not for the faint of heart, and the Enneagram is not a panacea for pastoral problems. Church work is always messy, often exhausting, usually tedious, and at times heartbreaking. Every pastor will tell you that. There's no getting around it.

But here is the enlightening truth every seasoned pastor already knows. We human beings are magnificent, mysterious and, yes, maddening creatures. We are fascinating and frustrating. We are curious and complex. We are beautiful and baffling—all at the same time.

And let's face it, pastoring a church is, if nothing else, *an intensely people-oriented business*. The pastor is called, as chief among many responsibilities, to know and love and serve and support all these delightful puzzles we call "people" sitting in the pews on Sunday morning.

Of course, leading a church is about a lot of things. Yes, it's about ministry and missions, buildings and budgets, care and connections, God and the gospel. This is all gloriously and splendidly true. *But at its root, pastoring is about people.*

Central to pastoral ministry is the *ecclesia*, the church, what the ancient creeds know as the "communion of saints," and what the biblical witness refers to as "the body of Christ." Pastors are called to dirty their hands serving this Spirit-wrought gathering of God's people, precious ones made in God's image and redeemed by Christ's sacrifice.

Therefore I repeat myself. Pastoring is about people—shepherding, serving, leading, and loving people. Nothing less. Which is why I'm convinced that I would have been a much better pastor if I would have known the Enneagram—for the simple reason that this fascinating personality typing system is filled with insights into who people are and how they work—precisely what pastors need.

Because pastoring is about people.

—Taken from the Introduction, "Pastoring Is About People"



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