**The Pastor: A Memoir**

Many pastors today aren't sure how to describe their vocational calling or explain why it matters to the rest of the world.

In the introduction to his new book, *The Pastor: A Memoir*, Eugene Peterson addresses this crisis head-on: "North American culture does not offer congenial conditions in which to live vocationally as a pastor. Men and women who are pastors in America today find that they have entered into a way of life that is in ruins."

Most of us are familiar with Eugene Peterson's translation of the Bible known as *The Message* as well as his many other books.

*The Pastor: A Memoir* is his autobiography which mainly explains his work as a pastor in one church for almost 30 years. Peterson never really set out to be a pastor. He had training in semetic languages and was planning to be a professor. But as often happens, God had other plans. He became the founding pastor of Christ Our King Presbyterian Church in Bel Air, Maryland. After leaving the pastorate he became professor at Regent College. Now he has retired to his native Montana.

I wish I had been able to read this book at the beginning of my ministry. Peterson is totally transparent about the highs and lows experienced in ministry. He takes on church marketing, mega pastors, and the church's too-cozy relationship to American glitz and consumerism to present a faith-filled job description of what being a pastor should mean today.

Peterson lifts the pastoral office to a whole new level of meaning for us. He defines a pastor as "the person placed in the community to pay attention to what is going on right now between men and women with each other and with God-this kingdom of God that is primarily local, relentlessly personal, and prayerful without ceasing."

Pastor, this is a "must read" book for not only you, but also your laymen.

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